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## **Liberation through Cooperation: How Library Publishing Can Save Scholarly Journals from Neoliberalism**

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## COMMENTARY

# Liberation through Cooperation: How Library Publishing Can Save Scholarly Journals from Neoliberalism

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## ABSTRACT

This commentary examines political and economic aspects of open access (OA) and scholarly journal publishing. Through a discourse of critique, neoliberalism is analyzed as an ideology causing many problems in the scholarly journal publishing industry, including the serials crisis. Two major efforts in the open access movement that promote an increase in OA funded by article-processing charges (APC)—the Open Access 2020 (OA2020) and Pay It Forward (PIF) initiatives—are critiqued as neoliberal frameworks that would perpetuate existing systems of domination and exploitation. In a discourse of possibility, ways of building a post-neoliberal system of journal publishing using new tactics and strategies, merging theory and praxis, and grounding in solidarity and cooperation are presented. This includes organizing journal publishing democratically using cooperatives, which could de-commodify knowledge and provide greater open access. The article concludes with a vision for a New Fair Deal, which would revolutionize the system of scholarly journal publishing by transitioning journals to library publishing cooperatives.

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If there is cooperation, we can be in solidarity; and if we have solidarity, we can progress without masters, that is to say, under the rules of freedom and justice, and social and economic emancipation. Thus, we look ahead and if there is a word we must repeat, it is this one: SOLIDARITY. We are invited to promote a culture of solidarity, trying to create a network of institutions so that the ideals of indisputable goodness, which rely on broad social support, are embodied in community and economic life.

—Armin Isasti, *Second Letter from Mondragon: Cooperativism in the United States (The Right to Dream)*

## INTRODUCTION

Academia has lurched from crisis to crisis in scholarly communication for too long. The failure to solve the decades-long “serials crisis” in scholarly publishing is the result of many factors—transnational, conglomerate publishers protecting billions of dollars of profit, stymied librarians, and a loss of faculty power in corporatized universities. The public remains mostly locked out of a system based on exclusion and exploitation. Despite an increase in global open access (OA) and some modest reforms, the OA movement has failed to develop a critical consciousness that grasps the root cause of serials crisis. A structural analysis along with a struggle over values and ideas is needed to properly challenge the dominant system.

In this paper’s discourse of critique, neoliberalism is presented as the ideology causing systemic problems in scholarly journal publishing, including the serials crisis. Understanding and confronting neoliberalism could enable the OA movement to develop the language, tactics, and strategies needed to achieve more widespread solutions. Reform has proven inadequate, as open access itself is being neoliberalized through the rise of article-processing charges (APCs), a commercial form of OA. New ways of organizing are needed to fulfill the public’s rightful claim to a democratic form of open access that treats knowledge as a common good. In short, a revolution is in order. Canada and Latin America, through *Érudit* and *SciELO*, have taken greater strides in this direction. In a discourse of possibility, a post-neoliberal system of journal publishing that could create democratic OA by merging theory and praxis and developing new modes of solidarity and cooperation is discussed. The paper concludes with a vision for realizing this through a New Fair Deal, which would transition journals to library publishing cooperatives.

## NEOLIBERALISM AND SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING

Neoliberalism has grown since the 1970s to become a powerful and global political and economic ideology that permeates nearly all areas of human activity. Like other systems of domination, neoliberalism operates best in the dark, which explains why its attack on scholarly publishing and the resulting serials crisis is not well understood. Major problems with certain OA efforts, as well as a better way of organizing a post-neoliberal system, become clearer after analyzing scholarly publishing as a political and economic activity. Therefore, a deeper understanding of neoliberalism, a dangerous hegemonic structure that favors a small number of wealthy elites, is in order.<sup>1</sup>

Henry Giroux (2014), an expert on neoliberalism's assault on higher education, defined it in an interview with Michael Nevradakis as

an ideology marked by the selling off of public goods to private interests; the attack on social provisions; the rise of the corporate state organized around privatization, free trade, and deregulation; the celebration of self-interests over social needs; the celebration of profit-making as the essence of democracy coupled with the utterly reductionist notion that consumption is the only applicable form of citizenship. But even more than that, it upholds the notion that the market serves as a model for structuring all social relations.

According to David Harvey (2005), who wrote the definitive book *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, it is a theory of political economic practices that promotes human well-being through individual entrepreneurial freedoms, strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. Along with the elimination of the concepts of the public good and community, neoliberal theory encourages deregulation, privatization, and the withdrawal of the state from social provision (Martinez & Garcia, 2016). Neoliberalism promotes a market culture where more goods and services are commodified, privatized, or financialized to achieve what Harvey calls “accumulation by dispossession” (Harvey, 2005, p. 160). Traditional (subscription-based) scholarly journal publishers embody the four major elements of neoliberalism: the primacy of the “free market,” privatization, deregulation, and using individualism to attack the public good.

### THE “FREE MARKET”

Neoliberalism fetishizes the so-called “free market.” It values market exchange as an ethic

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<sup>1</sup> Neoliberalism is an ideology that is literally killing us as well (see Sullivan, 2017).

in itself, maintaining that social good increases through greater reach and frequency of market transactions (Harvey, 2005, p. 3). Neoliberalism's advocates want to bring all human activity into the market, crediting it as being a site of competition and innovation. This notion is strengthened through rhetoric that deifies "the market," making it appear "omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent" (Buschman, 2013b). However, the market is not a democratic site. Larivière, Haustein, and Mongeon (2015) provide a startling depiction of a consolidated scientific journal publishing industry that is dominated by a powerful oligopoly.<sup>2</sup> This academic publishing oligopoly, consisting of five transnational corporations, produced more than 50% of all articles in 2013. In the same year, just three members of the oligopoly, Elsevier, Springer, and Wiley-Blackwell, accounted for nearly half of all natural and medical science articles. High profit margins (often in excess of 30%) provided capital for the oligarchic publishers to consolidate, monopolize, and internationalize the academic publishing market (Larivière et al., 2015).

Neoliberals use global markets to concentrate and internationalize their power. Capital crosses national boundaries easily and shows no allegiances to local communities or publics. Some recent, high-profile examples of these principles in practice include Elsevier's acquisition of bepress, Mendeley, and SSRN and the sale of the Web of Science to Canadian and Asian private equity firms (Clarivate Analytics, 2016). Springer Nature, whose subsidiaries include Springer Science, Palgrave MacMillan, Nature Publishing Group, and BioMed Central, has been owned by different private equity firms (including at one point the Government of Singapore Investment Corporation) over the years as well (Arnold, 2009; Springer International, 2017).

The market, like neoliberalism, is superficially attractive, but it is actually reductive in nature (Buschman, 2013a). Neoliberal theory is predicated on market actors having the same information and operating rationally, but these conditions usually are not realized. The trend toward monopoly formation is a major tension within neoliberalism and distorts the functioning of markets. The findings of Larivière et al. (2015) show the result of severe market dysfunction in scholarly publishing—that it is a site of market segmentation, manipulation, price collusion, and other distortions. Left unchecked, these conditions worsen over time. Increasingly asymmetric power relationships that develop between monopolists and individuals (or libraries) further undermine the notion that there is a "free market."

## PRIVATIZATION

Neoliberalism calls for the privatization of nearly all forms of goods and services. This

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<sup>2</sup> Oligopoly is a portmanteau of oligarchy and monopoly.

includes either moving or keeping industries such as scholarly publishing under private ownership and control. This is done because the ideology assumes that the private industry is always more “efficient” than the state, and therefore the latter should not or could not perform these services. However, greater wealth disparities and higher prices for the public result when goods and services that are essential to a vibrant democracy, such as scholarly publishing, are privatized instead of being publicly owned. This continues to occur, largely unchecked, because of the economic elites’ remarkable ability to make neoliberalism appear as “common sense.”

Harvey (2005) says that neoliberalism has become hegemonic—so pervasive that it is incorporated into common sense and the way we interpret and understand the world. It appeals to tradition and cultural values, including individual freedoms and human dignity, by conflating itself with democracy and giving the illusion of freedom. Neoliberalism wants one to believe that not only is it both necessary and natural, but, as Margaret Thatcher (2013) claimed, that “there is no alternative.” Debates about the supposed benefits of privatization are short-circuited through the use of utopian promises, which include lower costs for consumers, higher efficiency and productivity, and the removal of bureaucratic hurdles (Harvey, 2005, p. 65). However, these promises usually do not appear, and neoliberalism’s ability to appear as “common sense” is misleading and disguises real-world problems.

Neoliberalism is resilient and continually finds ways to co-opt movements and commercialize more activity. Ellen Finnie (2016) accurately describes the University of Florida’s partnership with Elsevier, which would link the university’s institutional repository with the publisher’s platform, as a Trojan horse. The agreement will increase the amount of metadata visible in the repository, but access to the full-text articles would only be provided on Elsevier’s website. Finnie (2016) notes that this turns the repository into a “de facto discovery layer for commercialized content.” The partnership promotes more private access to research and has limited public benefit. Unfortunately, the University of Florida also signed a Letter of Agreement with CHORUS to work with Elsevier on monitoring the university’s compliance with federal mandates that require providing public access to certain research (Girard, 2016). The project’s goal was to satisfy public access requirements by redirecting users to commercial platforms instead of providing full-text versions on publicly owned systems. The power of neoliberalism is evident as a public university sought a partnership with the very publishers most directly responsible for causing the serials crisis to satisfy a demand from the public for greater access to research.

## **DEREGULATION**

Deregulation is another essential component of neoliberalism. The ideology fights to keep

the market unregulated and to prevent the government from doing anything that could reduce profit, even if it would protect consumers and the public. The effects of little or no price controls in the scholarly publishing market are easy to see, as both journal subscriptions and APCs are rising faster than the rate of inflation (Shamash, 2016). Harvey (2005) correctly stated that neoliberalism is suspicious of democracy, which explains why corporations seek to expand their freedoms through deregulation.

Campaign contributions and political lobbying have proven to be effective ways to limit reforms in scholarly communication. In 2011, Darrell Issa (R-CA) and Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) sponsored the Research Works Act, which would have prohibited new public access policies and reversed the NIH Public Access Policy. The proposed legislation was withdrawn after intense public pushback and the revelation that both politicians received campaign contributions from Elsevier, a major proponent of the bill (Ghamandi, 2012). Poynder (2016) noted that the academic publishing oligopoly, having long resisted open access, is also “degrading and emasculating green OA policies.” He stated that in addition to successfully lobbying for a twelve-month embargo period for articles subject to the Office of Science and Technology Policy memorandum, commercial publishers have lengthened some of their own embargo periods to four years. These lengthy embargoes are protectionist schemes that prioritize commercial revenue over the public good and are especially indefensible when used to hide health information behind paywalls.

## **USING INDIVIDUALISM TO ATTACK THE PUBLIC GOOD**

Neoliberalism uses the notion of individual freedom and liberty as another organizing principle with wide-ranging consequences. The hegemonic class, through appeals to individualism and a demonization of government, have degraded the idea of the public good, including UN Declaration of Human Rights Article 27, which states that “everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits” (UN General Assembly, 1948). By atomizing the population, social problems that demand collective solutions are transformed into individual failures.

This transformation was accomplished through the Gramscian notion of “predominance obtained by consent” (Ramos, 1982). Gramsci observed that a hegemonic class imposes its worldview, or ideology, within civil society by winning an ideological struggle over the subaltern. This allows them to rule by consent, which means they exercise political, moral, and social leadership in society by crafting a common worldview. Hegemony is maintained for longer periods of time when relying on ideology, which is spread using civil institutions such as the church, schools, and families to hold power as opposed to using coercive insti-

tutions like the police (Ramos, 1982). The decades-long permeation of neoliberal ideology throughout society has quickened the demise of the social contract and increased the quiet suffering of individuals.

The neoliberal university is increasingly unable and unwilling to fulfill its social responsibility. Kelley (2016) asserts that the university is incapable of truly serving the public good as a site of social transformation and enlightenment. Instead, he claims, the university reproduces “our culture’s classed, racialized, nationalized, gendered, moneyed, and militarized stratifications.” The university embodies neoliberalism by encouraging us to think of ourselves, in relation to these issues, as individuals and not collectively. This atomization is also produced in hiring, promotion, and tenure practices and policies, which separate faculty and researchers from a larger social construct. These authors, afraid of questioning the status quo due to their increasingly precarious status within academia, are stripped of their individual agency and conditioned to view publishing as a competition. Understandably, in a quest to merely survive inside the academy, the majority of these alienated authors do not prioritize open access.

## **EFFECTS OF NEOLIBERALISM**

The mask has been ripped off neoliberalism. It has become impossible to disguise the catastrophic outcomes for the 99%, which were produced through utopian promises, propaganda, manufactured ignorance, indifference, and austerity. The subversion of freedom and democratic principles benefits business owners, major shareholders, and C-level corporate managers—the 1%—while oppressing others through hierarchies of race, class, gender, nationality, and sexuality (Harvey, 2005). The tensions and contradictions inherent to neoliberalism, along with its desire to exploit more markets, have led to system failures in both the worldwide economy in 2008 and the scholarly publishing industry. Generations of Americans were told that “a good business climate” was more important than the public good. We were told that government intervention was inherently a bad thing, unless it was used to create and enforce markets and protect private property. Neoliberalism wants to “starve the beast,” yet commercial publishers rely on public and taxpayer-supported universities to provide about 70% of their revenue (Larivière et al., 2015).

Scholarly publishing has been part of a system that moves away from social justice, increases income and wealth inequality, consolidates economic and political power among the elite, cuts social services and programs, and creates disposable workers. In hindsight, the serials crisis was inevitable. The system worked according to plan. We need to critically reflect on these outcomes and make sure they are not replicated as we identify and construct a new system. Moving from the neoliberal nightmare toward justice requires the

courage to break with the status quo and the development of radically different organizing principles. There has been some encouraging activity around library publishing, preprint repositories, and a demand for more public access policies. However, creating a system of democratic open access requires an immediate decommodification of knowledge and non-market solutions. Principles of privatization and deregulation must be replaced with a system where knowledge is a public good and journals are free for both authors and readers. Finally, individualism would need to be replaced with notions of solidarity, cooperation, and the development of collective agency. Unfortunately, certain OA proposals are not grounded in these principles and are not heeding Kansa's (2014) warning that the open movement ignores the underlying structures of wealth and power at its own peril.

### **APCS: NEOLIBERAL OPEN ACCESS**

APC-funded open access has been critiqued for over a decade (Carnall, 2003; Debnath, 2003; Eysenbach, 2003; Peterson, Emmett, & Greenberg, 2013). Despite the obvious flaws in pay-to-publish OA, there are global efforts currently underway to expand this model on a much larger scale. In addition to conflating gold open access with APCs, these efforts would impede the open access movement by continuing to commodify knowledge, relying on the so-called free market, and increasing authors' precarity through continued atomization.

The two significant initiatives promoting APC-funded OA are the Max Planck Digital Library's Open Access 2020 (OA2020) initiative and the Pay It Forward (PIF) project led by the University of California, Davis, and California Digital Library (Max Planck Digital Library, 2017; University of California Libraries, 2016). Their models essentially promote shifting from subscription journals to widespread APC-funded OA journals. The models describe a frightening future because they would strengthen the same academic publishing oligopoly that created the present crisis. These neoliberal efforts are problematic because they rely on an unregulated "free market" and unduly emphasize individual choice.

Increasing the amount of APC-funded open access would fall into the trap that Buschman (2013a) described where the market is prescribed as a cure for the market's own ills. Lawson, Sanders, and Smith (2015) accurately warned that support for an APC-model of open access is "congruent with [a] neoliberal agenda." They said that efforts in the United Kingdom to promote APCs as the primary way to fund open access, as recommended in the Finch Report, would turn "publishing into a commodity-driven free market, while seeming to support the higher ground of openness and transparency" (Lawson et al., 2015). The PIF study, which included Elsevier and Thomson Reuters as partners, protects the publishing oligopoly. Their proposal would use APCs as a vehicle to transfer library journal

subscription budgets *and* additional streams of new revenue to the exploitative publishing oligopoly. The model claims, though, that by giving authors an APC stipend (“discretionary fund”), a competitive journal market would emerge and costs would drop.

This neoliberal promise of lower consumer prices continues to be perpetuated despite a lack of evidence to support it. The academic publishing oligopoly would become more powerful with additional money flowing toward it. Plutocrats like Stefan von Holtzbrinck, who is both CEO of Holtzbrinck Publishing Group (Springer Nature’s majority owner) and a Senator in the Max Planck Society, would become richer (Max Planck Society, 2017). Instead of working to decommodify knowledge in the public’s favor, the OA2020 and PIF proposals seek to increase publishers’ revenue and serve commercial interests (Geschuhn, 2017; University of California Libraries, 2016). Jeffrey MacKie-Mason (2016), in a blog post used to support the OA2020 proposal, rationalizes its flaws by claiming that it would still create more open access. However, there is no guarantee that APC budgets would keep pace with commercial publishers’ need to satisfy shareholders’ demands for more profit. Furthermore, flat budgets and increasing APC prices would result in fewer articles being published. The APC market would also remain an unregulated market, and the lack of price controls would be exploited by the publishing oligopoly. The movement to create truly democratic OA through nonmarket, noncommercial solutions would be hindered.

These proposals would also be burdensome to authors and increase their precarious status within academia under the guise of “freedom of choice.” If publishing is a condition of continued employment, then quality work must be guaranteed a means of dissemination. Stipends would fall short of meeting that need. APC-funded open access would further marketize scholarly communication and increase competitiveness among faculty. The academic publishing oligopoly has already demonstrated cartel-like behavior and would exploit their power in the asymmetric relationship with authors. MacKie-Mason (2016) mistakenly believes that authors would “start to exert competitive pressure on publishers to lower [their] prices.” It is hard to fathom, despite his assertion, that authors want or need “an incentive to force publishers to compete on price” (MacKie-Mason, 2016). The serials crisis requires a collective solution, not one that further atomizes authors and leaves them to struggle on their own. It would be difficult for authors to make economically rational decisions in an APC-driven market while under duress to satisfy hiring, promotion, and tenure requirements. Virginia Steel (2016), UCLA University Librarian, also shared many of these concerns in an open letter to the academic community.

A predominately APC-funded system would be a type of economic Darwinism that takes the survival-of-the-fittest ethic to a new extreme. It would be exclusionary and antidemo-

cratic. It would increase inequality by favoring the favored—those with grant funding and at wealthy institutions. It would place too much faith in the magic of markets. It would create new administrative costs. It would fail to reject the neoliberal project and would leave the publishing oligopoly's power entrenched. Most important, it would fail to create sustainable and democratic open access, which is only achievable through decommodification—treating knowledge as a noncommercial public good—and a cooperative way of organizing production.

## COOPERATIVES AND A SOLIDARITY ECONOMY

A post-neoliberal system of scholarly publishing that values justice, equity, solidarity, and cooperation over markets, privatization, profit, and privilege is possible. Publishing cooperatives situated in academic libraries, one of the few democratic and multidisciplinary environments still remaining in higher education, offer the best hope of fulfilling the promise of democratic open access. These cooperatives could revolutionize the system of scholarly publishing by flipping journals in large quantities without an increase to library collection budgets. In fact, a New Fair Deal, where academic libraries creatively decommodify knowledge by directly subsidizing library publishing cooperatives, is possible. Several organizations and proposals have already been developed in this spirit.

A cooperative is a democratic way of organizing that is not exploitative and places human needs ahead of those of the “free market.” Cooperation Jackson, an organization in Mississippi, advances economic democracy in the nation's poorest state by embodying hope and justice. They developed the following list of cooperative principles that can be used imaginatively by library publishers to form co-ops: “voluntary and open membership, democratic member control, sovereignty of labor, autonomy and independence, subordinated character of capital, self-management, internal and external cooperation, education and training, social transformation, and solidarity with others engaging in similar work” (Cooperation Jackson, 2017). Cooperatives are the most democratic way of producing goods and services because they are managed by member-owners who share decision-making power equally. Unlike the largest academic publishers, a co-op would not have outside owners or shareholders and could not be sold to international private equity groups.

Solidarity is crucial to cooperative efforts. Tyler Walters (2012) correctly noted that “a benefit of the cooperative model is that its members wield more market influence together than individually. They also can share in the infrastructure and expertise, as well as spread out the cost burdens associated with scholarly publishing.” It is worth noting that the recently developed “2.5% Commitment” by David Lewis (2017) incorporates many of the values shared across cooperatives. By proposing that universities seed the commons by

contributing 2.5% of their library budgets to create an “open scholarly commons,” Lewis has jumpstarted a much-needed conversation. His proposal’s sense of urgency and recognition of the corrosive effect of profit-seeking are valuable. However, it could be improved upon by advocating for a progressive contribution scheme (as opposed to the flat 2.5%) and the creation of a democratic governance model, which would ensure greater impact. The multinational publisher SciELO, now over twenty years old, continues to expand and reflects the Latin American retreat from neoliberalism and resistance to neocolonialism. To the north, *Érudit* has proven to be a successful partnership between library publishers, journals, and the Canadian Research Knowledge Network, a consortium of universities. *Érudit*, which already publishes over 100 journals and whose content is 95% open access, is actively working to remove remaining embargoes (Appavoo & Lavoie, 2015).

In a white paper, John Willinsky (2017) determined that there is enough money in the Canadian scholarly communication environment to create a co-op that makes all of the country’s journals open access. He also discussed the financial issues facing a transition to a co-op, including using some of the existing subscription money to manage the co-op itself. In an earlier paper, Corsín Jiménez, Willinsky, Boyer, da Col, and Golub (2015) proposed how the American Anthropological Association can transition their journals to an OA cooperative as well. Finally, Kennison and Norberg’s (2014) bold and imaginative proposal for an OA Network provides a detailed framework for scalable and sustainable OA. Developed with the desire for greater OA in the humanities and social sciences, the network could consist of all universities and colleges, donors, grant agencies, and other funders paying annual fees to a centrally managed, democratically controlled fund. The money would be disbursed in a transparent manner to OA publishers and journals, who would be subjected to certain benchmarks (Kennison & Norberg, 2014). The success of *Érudit*, Willinsky’s findings, and the OA Network framework provide the necessary inspiration for a New Fair Deal.

## THE NEW FAIR DEAL

The ongoing co-option of open access by the publishing oligopoly and the proliferation of pay-to-publish open access models necessitate a New Fair Deal, which could one day supplant the “big deals.” Bringing together library publishers, scholarly societies, journals, academic institutions, and funders on a basis of cooperation and solidarity would be transformative because it would contrast starkly with the antagonism and exploitation found in market transactions. A New Fair Deal would engender democratic and APC-free open access. The Open Access Publishing Cooperative Study found that an overwhelming number of librarians support a cooperative approach (Public Knowledge Project, 2016). Unlike that study’s approach, the New Fair Deal would explicitly shift journal publishing

away from the oligopoly to library publishers and other scholar-led nonprofits such as Open Humanities Press and the Open Library of Humanities. This achieves the necessary break from the profit motive that would always undermine the effort to decommodify knowledge.

The majority of journal publishing would slowly shift to library publishers who partner with scholarly societies, journals, and scholars to request funding from a central, democratically managed fund as described in the OA Network proposal. This is akin to a national single-payer healthcare system. In order for the system to work, all institutions of higher education must contribute based on their ability to pay, which entails taking into account the institution's size and wealth. The co-op would be governed by a board that represents the various funders and publishers, and grant reviewers would be drawn from and remain accountable to the body of funders. Library publishers would be incentivized to form multi-institutional co-ops in order to achieve economies of scale and to make their grant proposals more attractive.

Because library publishers are encouraged to form their own cooperatives, the New Fair Deal would essentially be a cooperative of cooperatives and independent publishers. Library publishers, building on the strength of their institutions, would be well positioned to meet the benchmarks required in the grant-making process. This process would disburse money in a fair and democratic manner. The stability and strength of the central fund would also mitigate risk and allow editorial boards to feel more comfortable switching to library publishers. In addition, the system would serve as a matchmaker between journals looking to leave the oligopoly and library publishers wishing to expand their operations. Revolutionizing the scholarly communication system through cooperatives would be no easy task, but neoliberalism's injustices demand something as radical as the New Fair Deal.

## **DARING TO STRUGGLE**

The Neoliberal University, led by a corporate board and sycophantic, managerial administrators, continues to abandon social and fiscal responsibility and exploit its faculty and researchers in return for a perverse form of institutional prestige. Its hiring, promotion, and tenure policies are codified laziness, codified ignorance, and codified injustice. Although higher education continues its slide into irrelevance for those outside the ivory tower and librarians, faculty, and researchers become more powerless, hope has not been extinguished. Is higher education capable of becoming a democratic public sphere? Can scholarly publishing break from neoliberalism? We must find out through a collective struggle that fuses reflection and action.

We need to accept that pay-to-publish open access is unethical, unsustainable, and must be abandoned. Consider the following analogy: journal subscriptions, like coal, are old and dirty forms of energy. Whereas APCs may have once seemed like a better energy source, it has turned out to be the OA movement's natural gas. It burns cleaner than coal (provides OA), but requires fracking (APCs) in order to extract. Cooperatives represent renewable and clean energy that provides democratic, APC-free open access. Disappointingly, the neoliberal and accommodating OA2020 and PIF initiatives attempt to normalize the publishing oligopoly's commercialization of open access.

Library publishing is a social and economic justice project. It is also an emancipatory project to free ourselves from the cruelty of neoliberalism. This paper's discourse of critique is meant to challenge common sense and unsettle minds. Only through critique and deep study can we understand how power and politics work in scholarly publishing. The neoliberal model of journal publishing is more fragile than it appears and is predicated on fear and complacency. The discourse of possibility is meant to provide the words and ideas necessary for us to develop individual and collective agency and begin operating with greater clarity, courage, and solidarity. These discourses are humble attempts to show how theory and action can be merged and that hope is as important to the movement as risk-taking. That is why the Library Publishing Coalition, Eileen Joy, punctum books, the Radical OA Collective, and every other act of resistance, no matter how small, must be celebrated. Angela Davis, another embodiment of hope, reminds us that "You have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world and you have to do it all the time."<sup>3</sup>

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