



THE Exchange

THE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN
UNIVERSITY PRESSES

SUMMER 2001

CONTENTS

September 12, 2001 / 1

Enabling Globalism / 1

Letter from the Editor / 2

Toronto: Hearing the Voices / 2

National Academy Press Looks
Before it Leaps / 3

Paul Rohmann / 4

The Role of Managing Editors in
University Press Publishing / 5

Calendar / 8

STAFF

Editor: Brenna McLaughlin

Assistant Editor: Matthew Brand

Condolences

For everyone who lost a loved one or friend in the September 11 attacks, our hearts are with you.

Brenna, Heather, Ian, Linda, Matthew, Peter, Rachel, Susan, Terriann, Tim

September 12, 2001

by Peter Givler

It's difficult to know what to say, I think, because it's difficult to know what to feel. We're still numb. As I write this, the day after the bombings, the view from my office window is almost ordinary. The sun is shining, the sky is blue. I can hear sirens coming and going, but there are always sirens coming and going in New York. To the south, the smoke hanging over the city looks like a bank of fog, incongruous on such a sunny day, but not threatening. There's hardly any traffic. It could be a quiet Sunday morning in Manhattan, except that it's Wednesday, and we're all haunted by nightmare images. Buildings spouting flame, smoke and debris boiling up as if from a volcano, bodies pinwheeling.

I'm also haunted by a story. The evening of the day John Kennedy was assassinated, John Coltrane gave a concert at UCLA. The time for the start of the concert came and went. The audience kept waiting, in a state of mind you can imagine. An hour and a half late, Coltrane and the band walked on stage, set up and started to play, no announcements, no introductions. They played "My Favorite Things" for 45 minutes, stopped and walked off stage. A friend who was there said that people were weeping, and clapping, and wouldn't stop. Finally, Coltrane brought the band back out and they played "My Favorite Things" for another 30 minutes.

That story has always moved me deeply. It says something about our primal need for art, about the difficulty of expressing our deepest griefs, about the power of elegies, and the gratitude we owe those who, when we're speechless with sorrow, can speak the words we know but cannot say.

And that story, which is also about a gifted musician deciding that the best tribute he could offer to a slain President was to do what only he could do best, reminds me that continuing to do what we do best, however feeble and ineffective it may feel right

continued on page 4

Enabling Globalism

by Colin Day

This talk was given on June 18, 2001, at the AAUP Annual Meeting Plenary Session "Globalization and the Changing Publishing Environment" in Toronto, Ontario. Other speakers included Joanna Gertler, President of Oxford University Press, Canada, and Cynthia Enloe, Professor of Government and International Relations at Clark University. The session was moderated by Ken Wissoker, Editor-in-Chief at Duke University Press.

The author would like to acknowledge his new colleague Mina Kumar who has had considerable influence on his thinking about these issues. A version of this article will appear in The Chronicle of Higher Education in late 2001.

Globalization and Globalism

As I sat at my computer writing this talk, a steady flow of container ships came past my window arriving and leaving the world's busiest container port. *The Economist* recently described the Pearl River Delta as the world's largest manufacturing region. Those manufactured goods pour out on container ships to all corners of the world. So as I sit at home, I see globalization manifest outside my window.

But, I want to argue that this is not the globalization that we should be focusing on as scholarly publishers. I want to make the case for *globalism* not *globalization*. This is a distinction that I will develop and clarify as I go along.

continued on page 6

Letter From the Editor Toronto: Hearing the Voices

by Timothy Muench

This issue of *The Exchange* was prepared in what now seems to be two different eras. The strange and terrible events of this past week are impossible not to address, particularly in a field whose purpose is communicating ideas and knowledge to the world. Peter Givler's letter is our first attempt to articulate scholarly publishing's mission in face of these terrorizing attacks.

It was surprising to see how much of the material already prepared seems relevant and necessary still. Colin Day's challenges to us on globalism are now even more urgent—we must create viable venues for the sharing of knowledge and understandings across all borders, for look what has happened in a world where understanding is so dangerously thin. Tim Muench's reflections on the 2001 Annual Meeting stress many of the aspects of our field that hold out the most hope: talking about ideas, sharing experience across boundaries, learning from our past and planning for the days to come.

But publishing will never stop being a business that must be run day to day, so you will find a report on the first Managing Editor's Workshop, as well as news of a new study of feasible e-publishing ventures. A recap of the National Book Festival will appear in the next *AAUP Bulletin*, and in late fall we will publish a number of reports from Annual Meeting sessions on www.aapnet.org.

Also, you can find on our site a growing bibliography of books from scholarly publishers on topics that will lead to greater understanding and knowledge in the wake of September 11.

And, finally, in a city numb with mourning, the messages of support and compassion that have come from our colleagues have penetrated the isolation and lifted our spirits. Thank you.

Brenna McLaughlin

Delegates to the...meeting of the AAUP chatted about their problems with a frankness that was surprising...Here was a group of dedicated professional people whose individual interests and needs did not divide them but only drew them together. Moreover, any publishing difficulty that I reported...appeared to be old hat to every director or editor or sales or production person there; one could have a useful discussion with anyone present at a moment's notice.

This was a world of publishing much different from the one I had been living in for fifteen years. The people in it, their willingness to share knowledge, the criteria of success, the sense of dedication, the very satisfactions of making scholarly communication work—all distinguished it from the bottom-line psychology of commercial publishing.

This would make a fine description of AAUP Annual Meeting in Toronto on June 16-18, 2001, even though it's about the 1953 annual meeting in New Orleans. The writer is Marsh Jeanneret, who attended that meeting as the newly-appointed director of the University of Toronto Press. Hosting the 2001 annual meeting as part of the celebration of its 100th Anniversary, his press, now headed by George Meadows, helped create the same genial atmosphere that inspired Marsh Jeanneret 48 years ago.

There was much talk about the bottom line, but that's different than "bottom-line psychology." The talk was frank—during sessions on "raising the profile of your press" and "revitalizing your press"—about money, staffing problems, university relations, even legal tangles. Money was the focus of "financial planning for editors," but as MIT's Mike Leonard titled his exuberant chart, the point is to get "Beyond the Tyranny of Numbers." The university press is an enterprise, but it is an enterprise with a mission.

And while the details of the mission differ from press to press, reflecting the

unique character of each, the underlying principles are shared.

Speakers at the Toronto meeting illuminated the formidable challenges the global economy presents to that mission. According to AAUP's statement *The Value of University Presses*, "University Presses contribute to the variety and diversity of cultural expression at a time of global mergers and consolidation in the media industry." But how are we doing? That question was addressed—from different angles—at each of the two plenary sessions.

"Globalization and the Changing Publishing Environment, which brought together Colin Day of Hong Kong University Press (whose talk is reprinted elsewhere in *The Exchange*), Clark University Professor of Government and International Relations Cynthia Enloe, Joanna Gertler of Oxford University Press, Canada, and Duke University Press's Ken Wissoker to look at scholarly publishing's place in the world. It is difficult enough delivering our finished product to nations outside the West, assuming we have identified an audience. But we face even greater hurdles attempting to receive ideas and perspectives from these sources. And if we are able to receive the ideas, do we make them over to appeal to US or other Western readers?

Closer to home, it was slightly jarring to hear a Canadian in the audience protest that the US has a smothering influence on Canada. It sent me right back to Wayne Johnston's perfectly understated reading from his book *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* at the opening banquet. If the independent voice of Newfoundland is drowned out in the larger collective called Canada, and Canada in turn by the US, then how many voices go unheard, and how many dreams unrequited?

Of course there are many and diverse voices and cultures within the

continued on next page

Toronto (continued)

United States and Canada as well as without. Speaker Jay Parini at a plenary entitled "The Public and University Presses" gave kudos to university presses for publishing poetry, decrying its abandonment by commercial publishers. But there are so many voices. Again, *The Value of University Presses*, "University Presses help to preserve the distinctiveness of local cultures through publication of works on the states and regions in which they are based," and, also, "University Presses give voice to minority cultures and perspectives through pioneering publication programs in ethnic, racial, and sexual studies." So many voices.

Those the questions of global and cross-cultural communication seem to loom ever larger today, the scholarly

publishing community has never entirely sheltered itself from its responsibilities to a wider world. In 1963, Marsh Jeanneret traveled to Africa and heard different voices and saw different points of view on scholarly publishing. Jeanneret presciently wrote:

Some African manuscripts of high standard found publishers in Paris or London or the United States, but usually only when they aimed at an international readership. What about regional scholarship, even of a high order, if presented from a purely African perspective?

After travels that included Guinea, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Liberia, and the Ivory Coast, Jeanneret was left with more questions than answers.

I departed from Africa questioning whether our North American Association's assumptions regarding research and scholarly communication were valid. Just what

communications abroad were we seeking to establish or improve? How seriously were we hoping to establish a two-way flow of scholarly books and periodicals? Did university presses suppose that an investment now in establishing international communications would somehow yield a commercial return later on?

Good questions. And we'll continue finding answers.

Congratulations to the University of Toronto Press on its 100th anniversary, for building and sustaining a tradition of scholarly publishing in Canada, including the journal *Scholarly Publishing*, and to George Meadows and the staff for making the torch burn bright.

Timothy Muench is Assistant Director and Controller of AAUP. The Marsh Jeanneret quotes are from God and Mammon: Universities as Publishers (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989).

National Academy Press Looks Before It Leaps Mellon Foundation to Fund Study of New E-publishing Initiatives

by Brenna McLaughlin

The National Academy Press received a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to study new e-publishing initiatives. NAP is well known for their unique offering of all their titles (approximately 2,100 books) online, fully searchable and readable, for free. The study that they are now undertaking with the support of the Mellon Foundation will test possibilities for pricing and delivering that content in different electronic formats.

The original project of putting all content openly online has been a moral and a financial success for NAP. The press is the publishing arm of the National Academies, and their charter includes disseminating as widely as possible the works of the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering, the Institute of Medicine, and the National Research Council. The web site has greatly assisted the press in this mission, attracting more than 15,000 visitors daily.

But the offering of free online full

length texts has not hurt print sales. In a recent article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (www.chronicle.com/free/v48/i03/03b02401.htm), Michael Jensen, NAP's director of publishing technologies, notes that sales of printed books through their web site has risen steadily since the site was introduced—without a corresponding drop in sales through other venues—as people browse a book online and make the informed decision to buy.

While the Press continues to post all contents of books on the site, the Mellon grant will study the feasibility of selling chapter-by-chapter downloadable pdf's. They will be looking to see whether there will be any cannibalization of print sales by adding this option, whether consumers will find such an option attractive, and also testing what consumers are willing to pay.

The study is being overseen by Barbara Kline Pope, director of NAP, and conducted in large part by a team

from the University of Maryland's Robert H. Smith School of Business.

To collect information for the study, NAP is conducting both an online and an offline survey, as well as an online experiment. The offline survey is almost complete, and the experiment, which will test what consumers actually do, rather than what they say they'll do, will go online this fall. The results from the study are expected to be ready for public dissemination in July of 2002.

"It's very unusual for a publisher to actually collect data before making a decision. We feel that it is so important to both determine how effective we've truly been on the Web and also to have data to support where we will go next," says Pope. "This generous grant from Mellon will allow us to stay on the forefront of the e-publishing world and when we publish the results, it will provide the larger publishing industry with solid information on the viability of new business models."

September 12 (continued)

now, is also our best and most honorable response. We are publishers and, whatever else that says about us, at the very least it means each of us has made a personal decision to pursue a career dedicated to the civil dissemination of ideas. With that commitment—probably preceding it—came a commitment to the power of language as both an instrument of communication and a tool for discovery. We are makers of books, but even more we are people of words.

Keeping faith with that commitment isn't always easy. When I was an editor at the University of Wisconsin Press I was offered a manuscript on the bombing of the Army Math Research Center on the UW campus. The bombing took place in 1971; I got the manuscript in 1983 or '84.

The manuscript had problems. It was not written by a scholar, or even a journalist, but by a member of an anti-terrorist unit in the South African National Police, an organization not known for its progressive social policies, or its commitment to human rights. The author had been sent to Madison to research the bombing because the SANP recognized it as a milestone in the history of terrorism: the largest and most destructive car bomb ever built. So the manuscript was long on the bombers, the bomb, and the blast, and short on thoughtful social or political analysis. Still, there had never been anything written about the bombing beyond the newspaper stories at the time, and I thought the book told a fascinating and frightening story: how three feckless and not very bright young men managed to build a formidable weapon out of hardware-store materials and blow up a public building. One of the bombers, moreover, was still at large at the time I had the manuscript.

I was advised that I should float the idea of publishing it past a then-senior administrator at the university, a man who at the time of the bombing had been active in the investigation. So I wrote up a descriptive memo and sent it on. A

few days later I got a phone call from the administrator. He still had sitting on his desk, he told me, a scrap of metal from the van that had contained the bomb. The bombing was the worst experience of his life, he said. He still had nightmares about it. The widow of the one victim of the bomb, a graduate student working late in the building, was still living in Madison. She was, he put it, emotionally fragile. Publication of a book about the bombing would only reactivate a very painful trauma for a lot of people. He would appreciate it if I didn't pursue it.

I would like to think that if the manuscript had been better I would have fought harder for it, but maybe if I'd been a better publisher I would have fought harder for it anyway. Who knows? I didn't fight, and that was that.

The experience did bring two things home to me, though. The first is what an enormous footprint a single violent event stamps into the landscape. People are altered forever by it. It can change the lives of an entire community. Its effects continue for years, even decades.

The second is just what an awesomely effective form of communication violence really is. We often talk as though it isn't, but we know it is, and we get its message loud and clear, every time. This is its message: fear, and silence.

There's nothing to be done about the fear except live with it, but it's our peculiar responsibility to be people whose profession is breaking the silence. Most of us aren't poets or musicians. In times of unspeakable tragedy we have to turn to those who are to help us find a voice for our grief. What we can do for ourselves, though, is make sure the fear, and the anger that goes with it, do not keep us from doing our best at what we do best: bringing other people to the words that will give them discovery, and knowledge, and if we're really good at it, a scrap of understanding.

Obituary

Paul Rohmann, Director Emeritus Kent State University Press

It is with regret that we announce the death of Paul H. Rohmann, retired director of Kent State University Press.

Paul's entire career was spent in college and university publishing. After his graduation from Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio, he joined the staff of the Antioch Press, a printing and publishing house operated by the college. During World War II he worked as a civilian technical writer for the Air Force at what was then Wright Field. After the war he returned to the Press, becoming its managing director in the 1950s as well as editor of the *Antioch Review*.

When the college closed the Press in 1969, he went to Kent State University Press, and was its director until 1985. Paul was always an active and valued participant in AAUP, serving on committees, attending annual and regional meetings, and serving on the Board of Directors from 1980-82.

By avocation he was an actor and director in his youth, and an accomplished comic author who published short humorous pieces in *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, and other periodicals in the forties and fifties, and later in *Scholarly Publishing*.

He is survived by his four children, Chris Rohmann of Northampton, MA, Kim Rohmann of Boulder, CO, Meg Rohmann of Louisville, KY, and Eric Rohmann, Director of Sales at Princeton University Press.

The family will scatter his ashes in a private memorial ceremony in late September. In gratitude for the care and comfort he received in his last days, the family has made a donation in Paul's memory to the Visiting Nurses Alliance of Vermont and New Hampshire (VNA/VNH), Hospital Court, Bellows Falls, VT 05101, and invites others who wish to remember him in this way to do so.

The Role of Managing Editors in University Press Publishing

by Theresa L. Sears

The very successful workshop for managing editors held prior to this year's annual meeting in Toronto grew out of a smaller managing editors' forum at the 2000 meeting. Although the Denver Annual Meeting program included a number of sessions with specific manuscript editorial appeal, the managing editors who participated in the forum felt strongly that what was really needed was the opportunity to meet for an extended period to discuss our collective role in academic publishing.

Marilyn Schwartz, Managing Editor at the University of California Press, and I agreed to organize a one-day workshop for the 2001 meeting. Our application for pre-meeting workshop status was approved by the Professional Development Committee, as was our request for funds from the Mrs. Giles F. Whiting Foundation professional development grant to lower the registration fee. The committee then recommended that we spread the workshop over two days rather than squeeze it into one, which we were happy to do.

We decided that the workshop should take the form of a series of roundtable discussions, meaning that its success would depend on the participation of those in attendance. To prepare the ground, Marilyn developed a questionnaire that addressed the main session topics and sent it to every managing editor listed in the AAUP directory. About a third responded, including several who weren't able to attend the workshop. Marilyn and I analyzed the data and provided a detailed summary to each registrant prior to the workshop. We also asked attendees to bring quantitative and anecdotal information pertinent to the various discussion topics as well as sample forms, procedural guidelines, and reports to share with the group.

Based on attendance at the forum in

Denver, and given the financial difficulties many presses were experiencing, we hoped to round up twenty-five registrants for the Toronto workshop. When AAUP's membership manager, Susan Patton, told us there were forty-two registrants, we were bowled over! Unwilling to limit attendance but reluctant to sacrifice an arrangement that would allow for face-to-face discussion, we turned to Susan for help—and were delighted when she was able to arrange for us to meet in a room large enough to accommodate an oversized "open" rectangle of tables and chairs.

***80% of the
managing editors in
attendance were still
at the same press
where they had
gotten their start.***

Workshop participants came to Toronto well prepared and ready to talk, which resulted in lively and informative discussions. Marilyn served as moderator, guiding us through the list of topics, while I took notes; mostly, though, the two of us became active participants. Many voices were heard, representing large and small, public and private presses from all geographic regions.

Over the course of two days we addressed each of the main session topics, which included:

1. *How Editorial Departments Function*—size and structure, in-house staff vs. freelancers, productivity goals, size and composition of seasonal lists, press and departmental workflow, schedules, permissions;

2. *Getting the Most Out of Your Staff*—strategies for hiring, supervising, promoting, and firing, identifying and

training novice copy editors, restructuring departments and jobs, handling stress, avoiding burnout, and fostering job satisfaction;

3. *Working with Temperamental and/or First-Time Authors*—author involvement with freelancers, what's negotiable and what's not, when to involve the sponsoring editor or your supervisor;

4. *Are Editorial Standards Declining or Merely Changing with the Times?*—determining standards, the impact of smaller book budgets, expanding lists, and larger workloads, maximizing the benefits and coping with the limitations of on-screen editing.

We debated, commiserated, and laughed—and offered encouragement to the newcomers among us. We marveled that 80 percent of us were working at the press where we had gotten our start in university press publishing, most often as freelance or staff copy editors or project editors but also as credit managers, receptionists, and typesetters. We talked about how best to ensure a sufficient number of sessions at future annual meetings with direct appeal for managing editors and vowed to gather again in two years for another round of focused, face-to-face discussions.

Later this fall we hope to post a detailed report on the workshop, as well as results from the questionnaire, online at www.aaupnet.org. We'll also reveal some of the memorable one-liners that came out of our meeting, such as the "real" definition of STET: "stop tyrannical editorial tampering," and a useful piece of advice on what to do about the ever-increasing length of manuscripts: "Wherever possible, enforce the basic rule that one picture is worth a thousand words . . ."

Theresa Sears is the Managing Editor at the University of Illinois Press

Globalism (continued)

Globalization and Publishing

As publishers we play our part in globalization. We have our books manufactured in other countries. We sell them throughout the world, although most of our markets are in the developed world; and we co-publish with publishers in other developed and English-speaking countries. If globalization means the physical flow of goods, that basically describes our part in the grand process of globalization.

There are other ways that North American presses participate internationally. In particular, manuscripts are acquired from scholars in other countries, although much of that flow is between developed countries and predominantly between USA, Canada, Britain and Australia.

And then there are translations. But it is hard enough to arrange these from major European languages, that the number from other languages, Japanese and Chinese perhaps excepted, is utterly miniscule. In the other direction, there are a modest number of translations from English into a more heterodox range of languages. But I think very few of us would claim that translations in either direction affect a significant part of our lists.

Globalism and the American Filter

Acquiring foreign manuscripts and translations take us from physical flows of goods to the transfer of ideas. This is what I meant earlier by *globalism*: intellectual exchange rather than goods exchange. I want to argue that we should primarily be concerned with intellectual exchange. Our mission is disseminating scholarship and ideas. Globalism is about fulfilling that broader conception of our mission.

What is characteristic of all the processes that I have mentioned in the brief list of the international activities of university presses? They all involve flows between the Center and the Periphery, or within the Center. Between the West and the Rest, or within the West. And

with two exceptions, one uninteresting and the other important, the flow is from the Center to the Periphery: the message is being disseminated from the West to the Rest. What are the two exceptions? One is the flow of finished books from such places as Hong Kong. I do not see this as raising any issues for the discussion of globalism. This is purely a phenomenon of physical trade—of globalization.

The other exception is the acquisition of manuscripts from authors in the Periphery. Numerically, this is not large, but conceptually there are crucial issues to be considered. What is the typical process? The manuscript arrives and is evaluated by an American editor and nearly certainly by American reviewers applying American perspectives. It's sales potential in the American market will be a major factor determining whether or not it gets published. If the author is referring to non-American phenomena, she will be asked to provide additional explanation so the American reader can grasp the points being made. In brief, it is put through a rigorous American and Americanizing filter. The same could be said with obvious changes of a few words if the publisher is British.

To quote Taiwanese scholar Chen Kwan-Hsing: "When the international academic publishing industry is increasingly market-oriented towards the 'US' readership [because 'that is where the biggest market is'], it is increasingly difficult to deal with the question of context; for contextualizing can always mean that critical work has to contextualize for *them* (the US readership) the discourse from elsewhere... works written outside the US are always asked to contextualize when addressing 'local' issues, or even to analyze issues within a language or framework which 'American' academics are familiar with." ("Not Yet the Post-colonial Era: The (Super) Nation-State and Transnationalism of Cultural Studies: Response to Ang and Stratton", *Cultural Studies*, 10(1) 1996).

One response would be to shrug your shoulders and say that you really cannot

ignore the financial constraints that force such contextualization, the pressures that force the use of the American filter in your decision-making. You could also shrug and say that scholars are always going to value a reputation in the USA because they aspire, if not to permanent positions, at least to regular invitations to visiting positions in the USA.

If you are just thinking as a publisher, such responses are explicable and reasonable. However, as university presses with a higher mission, those shrugs are not good enough. I can quote again from Kwan-Hsing: "This is precisely what I meant earlier by reproducing the existing power structure of global capitalism and the political nation-states. The direction of knowledge flow is contingent upon the volume of power positioned within the nation-state structure."

Or to simplify: to shrug is to accept and reinforce the hegemony of American ideas.

I lay that down as a challenge to those of you would prefer to respond and not just shrug. The challenge is to work around the operational environment that makes inescapable the use of American filtering.

Creating an Inter-Connected Web

Now let me turn to another facet of this broad problem. We have seen a flow from the Center to the Periphery in finished books, and a flow of manuscripts from the Periphery to the Center strained rigorously through a Center-oriented filter. How can flows within the Periphery be encouraged, and unfiltered flows from the Periphery to the Center be achieved? Indeed how do we break down the metaphor of Center and Periphery and move to a situation better described as a web of inter-connected and equally privileged, or rather non-privileged, nodes? Or as it has been put in another way: how do we provincialize Anglo-American work?

An attack on this problem has two dimensions: the publishing infrastructure within countries and the mechanism for the flow of texts between countries.

Nurturing National Publishing Systems

Clearly, even if we can bring about the easy and unprivileged flow of manu-

continued on next page

Globalism (continued)

scripts or books between countries, achieve circumferential rather than radial flows, we have achieved nothing if the destination country lacks the mechanisms to get the works actually to the readers. Those of us who have been fortunate enough to visit publishers in developing countries have been made aware of how much we take for granted working in a developed country. Some examples of things that are not necessarily available in less favored nations are a pool of publishing skills, the availability of printing capacity, mechanisms for distributing books, bookstores, and a reliable postal system. Then of course we are saved from the egregious things that actively prevent effective publishing such as censorship both direct and subtle.

For example, in Azerbaijan, where I have consulted several times, there is one printer, government-owned. Clearly anything too critical of the current regime might find capacity fully booked or paper temporarily in limited supply. It is not impossible to sell books in the capital, Baku, although bookstores are hardly common or good when found, and most appear to be controlled by state entities. But there really is no mechanism for shipping a load of books to other cities in the country—there is literally no distribution system, for books or anything much else.

These are just two examples of problems that are multiplied many, many times throughout the world. Should we be concerned? Obviously as publishers we believe in what we do, but we take for granted a healthy publishing sector and see our role as university presses in adding a certain distinctive element to the overall publishing activity. While I do not think university presses are essential, I do believe that free independent and creative book publishers are essential for a full and vigorous democratic society, for a flourishing literary culture, and for the essential discussion of serious ideas. While the need for free

newspapers and magazines is generally appreciated, their main role is an immediate one, whereas books provide the channel for the serious and thorough exploration of ideas that is essential for slowly building a truly strong and mature free society.

But I am preaching to the choir. The conclusion that I want to draw is that any effort to redress the dominance of the Center should also be designed to nurture the publishing houses and the publishing infrastructures of the Periphery. “The parlous state of publishing in Africa is a direct consequence of the relative dominance of British publishing in Africa,” stated Robert Phillipson in his book *Linguistic Imperialism* (Oxford University Press, 1992). Bringing in a multi-national is exactly the wrong way to help individual countries build or strengthen their indigenous publishing houses. Policies must be designed to nurture independence not dependence.

Creating a System for Flows within the Periphery

So far I have argued that independent publishing houses are essential, and that it is important to create conditions that encourage them to develop. Now, how do we address the other part of the big picture—enabling the flow of manuscripts and books within the Periphery, between countries that are outside the metropolitan core? In the bad old days, there was only one basic choice: to put books on a ship or perhaps in a plane. Now we have alternatives. Why should we welcome alternatives to the physical movement of books? Because that process is slow, because it is expensive, and because it forces one quality and thus approximately one cost on everyone rich or poor.

If our objective is to expedite the flow of ideas and enable trans-national debate, we do not want a mechanism that inserts a delay of several months into the dialogues one is trying to encourage. So the speed of movement matters. We are mainly talking about the countries outside the developed world and thus a costly process is not practical. The matter of cost also bears on the physical nature of the

book: richer countries will expect a higher quality of production than poorer ones who will be grateful for access to the text however presented. Thus one production run of one physical specification does not suit all.

If physical movement of books does not solve our need to distribute books equally, then how do we solve the problem? We now have a means for approximately instantly and without significant cost shipping works from one country to another. Yes, at last, the Internet lurches onto the stage playing its familiar and well-practiced role as panacea. Simply send the manuscript digitally to another publishing house in another country and leave it to determine the best mode of production and the best means of distribution and promotion. Sometimes that means of production might be using a Docutech, sometimes it may be very traditional printing, sometimes it may be best to leave the work only in digital form and publish it thus rather than on paper.

There are, of course, business and cost issues that need sorting out before this rough vision could become a practical reality. But it would increase the supply of projects available to nascent publishing houses struggling against the infrastructure weakness of their country. By putting the decision-making in to the hands of the local publishing houses, it would result in the choice of methods for production and dissemination that are decided upon, not from outside, but by people who know the country, and who, by the experience of working with these projects, become ever more adept as publishers.

Language and the Hegemony of English

In this second part of my talk, I have shifted from the theoretical to the rather prosaic—from ends to means. But I have not addressed one major practical topic: that of language. Even if we can, to return to my spatial metaphor, convert the structure of the flow of ideas from radial to circumferential, to a web of equally privileged nodes, we are still

continued on page 8

Globalism (continued)

faced with the complexities of many translations. I am afraid I cannot see any solution, aside from the fantasy of good automatic translation, that does not leave us with the hegemony of English, perhaps challenged by Chinese or Spanish. However, it is in truth no longer the hegemony of one English, there are many Englishes differentiated across the globe. We have to consider whether these Englishes should also be put through the filtering and homogenizing process by Anglo-American publishers.

Here again I leave you with a challenge and not a solution, how can we ameliorate the impact of the dominance of English, and accommodate to the

many varieties of the language?

Conclusion

Last January, at the University of Hong Kong, we had a small conference at which scholars came from nearly all the countries of the crescent from Pakistan to Korea. To enumerate: Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines, Hong Kong, the PRC, Japan, and South Korea. The topic was the teaching of American literature in Asia. The caliber of the participants was exceptional. They have much to contribute. I say this not to be patronizing, but to lament that because of all the impediments of the present system the only role they can play is as readers. And they can only do that with

great difficulty. To thus limit their role is to deprive scholarly debates of the participation of actively lively original minds actively contributing ideas, not just receiving them. And minds that bring a fresh, or rather many fresh, perspectives.

So of all the points I have made here, the one I want to return to and re-emphasize is the filtering one. We must help create a system that does not evaluate every project in terms of its sales potential and intellectual relevance in North America. Other voices bringing other perspectives and other contexts must be enabled to speak; and not just to the Center but globally.

Colin Day is Director of Hong Kong University Press.

Calendar

Frankfurt Book Fair

October 10-14, 2001

Frankfurt, Germany

2002 Financial Officers Meeting

March 7-10, 2002

Charleston, SC

2002 Production Managers Meeting

May 29-June 2, 2002

Ithaca, NY

See www.aaupnet.org for an expanded calendar of events and meetings.

THE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITY PRESSES
71 WEST 23rd STREET, SUITE 901
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10010

NON PROFIT ORG. U.S. POSTAGE PAID PERMIT NO. 8048 NEW YORK, N.Y.
--