New media, publishing in the humanities, and CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture

Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek, *University of Halle-Wittenberg, Deutchland*

ABSTRACT. In his paper, Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek discusses selected aspects of new media and scholarship and publishing in the humanities. The wider context of the paper is the intersection of globalization, the situation of the humanities, the teaching and study of literature, and their relationship and increasing dependence on new media technology, and how this situation impacts the humanities today while the humanities remain cautious and even reluctant with regard to publishing scholarship online. Starting with a brief introduction and argumentation of the pedagogical values of new media technology and its parallel implications for higher education, Tötösy is drawing on the example of the Purdue University peer-reviewed, full-text, and open-access journal "CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture" to present aspects of the said situation of new media and publishing in the humanities.

KEYWORDS: *Education and publishing, Humanities scholarship and publishing, Knowledge management, New media technology*

Introduction

In this paper, I discuss several aspects of new media, the digital turn, and the humanities by focussing on the pragmatic side of knowledge transfer and knowledge management as such pertain to the field of publishing. Generally speaking, scholars in the humanities are cautious about new media technology in general and about online scholarship in particular. Among the debates and many examples of this caution and reluctance perhaps the most basic criticism is with regard to reading in its varied contexts and how new media technology from the by now "traditional" medium of television to new media such as the World Wide Web impacts reading negatively. What tends to be left out in the

logic of the argumentation about reading is that "reading today, unlike in the past, is no longer the principal available instrument for acculturation" (Petrucci, 1999, p. 361). More importantly for the debate about reading is that there is no evidence that reading in whatever mode, traditional or in new media, would be in peril. To the contrary, the vast majority of reading surveys in the industrialized world and virtually all publishers' statistics show that there is more reading today, proportionally speaking, than ever before, and this situation includes all segments of society (from the many sources on this, see Ghesquiere, 1997; Ibsch, 1996; Tötösy, Kreisel 1992; Tötösy, 1998). Of course, this is not the case when it comes to scholarship and one of the many problems with the criticism towards reading impacted by new media technology is that in many an influential text there is no differentiation made between two types of reading: that of primary texts and that of scholarship. This lack of differentiation - resulting in the use of the argument against new media in scholarship - is of course important in wider context than what I intend to discuss here. At the same time, the observation with regard to the specific context of scholarship and reading remains that "scholars still doubt that the electronic text has much of a role in humanities, particularly literary scholarship" (Warwick, 2001, p. 49). This general view in the humanities of scholarship online is oddly in contradiction to both the pragmatics of publishing as well as to the epistemological contexts of new media where, for instance, the perspectives of reading online and the functionalities of hypertext - a basic function of new media and online publishing - make the application and use of scholarship online *a priori* relevant (on this, see Van Looy, Baetens, 2003; Landow, 2006). Indeed, on the pragmatic side - which is what I am concerned with here - in *The Draft Report of the American Council of Learned Societies' Commission on Cyberinfrastructure for the Humanities and Social Sciences* (November 5, 2005) the opinion is expressed starting with "Libraries, archives, and museums are cultural infrastructures. So are schools for that matter. So are university presses. In the humanities, textual editing (which cuts across disciplines and communities of practice) contributes to the growth of cultural infrastructure, since it creates critical editions for scholarship in a number of disciplines, and these critical editions in digital form are another form of cultural infrastructure" (p. 11) and concluding that "We believe that a major, concerted,

and structured investment in the capacities of the humanities and social science scholarship to operate in the digital world will help transform these fields of knowledge and the digital world itself" (p. 58). Following the release of the *Draft Report*, "The Chronicle of Higher Education" (the premier journal of higher education in the US) published a paper confirming the importance of new media and digital publishing.

John M. Unsworth, dean of the graduate school of library science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, was the chair of the 11-member commission that wrote the report. He said in an interview that development of cyberinfrastructure for the humanities should coincide with digital efforts in the sciences. "What we're hoping to insert into development of cyberinfrastructure here is an awareness of both the needs and the contributions of the humanities and the social sciences", he said. "We can't afford to have a separate but equal cyberinfrastructure for the humanities and social sciences". In drafting the report, Mr. Unsworth said the commission debated how to take a "reasonable" position on open access. "That's a complicated issue," he said. "Publishers and libraries are both critical parts of the infrastructure here, and they have different perspectives on that". The Open Content Alliance, a group of libraries and corporations that are working on an open-access digital archive, is hailed in the report as a model. The Alliance "has shown that commercial, non-profit, and university content creators can cooperate in powerful ways to increase open access to cultural resources", Mr. Unsworth said, adding that the more closed and commercial digitization efforts of Google also have value. The nature of scholarly culture in the humanities and social sciences might hinder the adoption of some of the recommendations of the report, he said in an interview, after reading an advance copy of the report. He was especially struck by the call for collaboration in the humanities. "The humanities are very much the culture of the solitary scholar", Mr. Wells said. "And yet it is very clear that the future is collaborative, and technology is not only an enabling factor in that collaboration, but it's also driving the users and consumers of information to a more collaborative understanding" (Carlson, 2006). Indeed, what Wells suggests in the Chronicle paper is evident in scholarly discussions and publications in the humanities, generally speaking, namely that the overwhelming majority of opinions is that publishing scholarship

online is not something the humanities should embrace and that positive moves towards and views of the World Wide Web as a depository and medium of knowledge is supported by opinions published outside of the scholarly world (see Cader, 2000). Lynda Williams and Lorne Flagel state correctly about the situation of literary journals for example that such journals "never have enough money to publish as much, or as frequently, as they would like, for distribution to as many readers as they desire […] one might predict that literary journals will abandon their print form and appear solely on the Web" (Williams, Flagel, 2005, p. 115). While the situation of literary journals Williams and Flegel discuss is somewhat different from the situation of scholarly journals in the humanities, what they are describing stands for the publishing of scholarship online. In sum, there are numerous examples - published as empirical evidence as well as anecdotal - with regard to the problematics of the publishing of humanities scholarship online, whether subscription-based or in open access. This state of affairs is evident in my own experience as editor and publisher of scholarship in the humanities as I illustrate below. As editor of an online scholarly journal in the humanities - I publish with Purdue University Press "CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture" I experienced a large number of issues against the publishing of scholarship online. For example, in 2003 I have had three mid-career scholars withdraw their submissions because they were advised by colleagues, the head of the department, or the dean against publishing online because such would not be accepted as a *bona fide* publication for the purposes of tenure and promotion (even if, as in this case, the publication would be peer-refereed). Or, the lack of interest for online journals in the humanities is apparent on the Web page of the US Library of Congress where there are a large number of links to web publishers in the sciences while there is not a single one such publisher listed for the humanities (instead, in the US the scholarly community organizes itself with digital libraries - at universities or independent - funded through government and private support).

The humanities and publishing scholarship online

The reluctance to embrace online scholarship in the humanities is evident in such important scholarly associations as the US-based CELJ: *Council of Editors of Learned Journals*. Until recently, although

the association recognized the importance of online publishing, at the same time it was reluctant to reward such efforts, thus indicating in no uncertain terms that in its current perception online publishing is not something that they embrace and this is stated on the official Web site of CELJ: "As we all know, electronic publishing is here and spreading; CELJ needs to keep up with this. But as must be the case, contests such as this recognize what is currently happening among a specific constituency. We need to see what the extent of electronic publishing actually is among the CELJ member journals".[1] In June 2003, the CELJ executive decided to accept nominations of online journals for its prestigious awards; more recently, in August 2006, the CELJ began to set up an award committee for the evaluation of online journals for its awards. Another example is the situation with citation indices.

There are countless examples one can cite to illustrate "ludditism" - or, if one is forgiving, simple-minded backwardness - prevalent in the humanities (I should note that in my discussion I am dealing with the situation in countries where the availability of computers and access to the Internet for e-mail and to the World Wide Web is not an issue, that is, in industrially and technologically advanced countries). And this objection at times can take comical dimensions: for example, as late as in 2000 a tenured professor of English publishes in "The Chronicle of Higher Education" an article describing how she "held off on using e-mail because it didn't seem necessary", then she tried it - and discovered, *to her dismay*, just how "potent a tool it could be" (Perillo, 2000, p. A64; my italics). Apart from the comical - namely the discovery of e-mail by a tenured professor of English in 2000 - is the issue of accountability: in my opinion, an academic who is not in tune with the demands of pedagogical performance, in this case based on technological advances, is not earning the salary paid. And this is the case in both Europe - where education is financed from taxpayers' money and thus accountability ought to be to the taxpayers by delivery of good teaching - or in the USA where the student ought to be entitled to receive a product (the teaching of the subject matter at hand) commensurate with the money paid for it. It is yet another matter that "The Chronicle" - the main journal of higher learning in the United States - publishes such an item: I doubt that the publication of the article was meant in an ironic context but to me it certainly ends up as such.

A more complicated issue is the World Wide Web, understood here as a medium of delivery and a tool for the presentation of scholarship and for the transfer of knowledge. This new tool is also underrated among a good percentage of scholars in the humanities and I encounter all too often colleagues who have no idea about the WWWeb and if they do have an idea, they do not use it themselves and even those who do use it, for instance for the presentation of course syllabi, do not perceive it as a medium worthy of attention when it comes to scholarship. To me, this lack of interest and attention is no trivial matter for scholarship and the publishing of scholarship nor is it trivial in the pedagogy of the humanities (for more on this, see Tötösy, 2001). Undoubtedly, much of the caution and reservation comes from not only the *a priori* mistrust of new technology residing in the humanities but also because new media does not support or facilitate the traditions of scholarship in the humanities, that is, reflection and reflective reading. Reading scholarship on the screen is not the same as reading a tactile form such as a hard-copy book. I concede that it will take a few more years until technology is developed for the use of hand-held devices to be able to make reading enjoyable. And I also concede that texts longer than 6.000-8.000 words online are difficult to absorb, that is, to have such read in the reflexive mode on the computer screen. But up to 8.000 words the reading and absorption of a scholarly paper is possible and herein lies one of the reasons why the current reluctance is misguided. In particular, the question of online journals is one area where the said reluctance is especially misguided, from several points of view including the question of libraries' ability to pay for hard-copy journals. Some prominent scholars have argued for a few years now for the realization of full-text, peer-reviewed, and open-access online journals, in other words for the existence of journals which are no different from traditional journals except in the mode of delivery: online. Cognitive scientist Stevan Harnad (Southampton University), for example, has argued as early as 1995 - when the Web was just emerging - for the implementation of online scholarship (Harnad, 1995). More recently, another scientist, Nobel in Medicine 1989 Harold Varmus states in an interview that: "Heute birgt das Internet das Potential, die wissenschaftliche Literatur viel breiter zugänglich zu machen - für die Wissenschaftler und für die Öffentlichkeit - indem man digitale

Bibliotheken errichtet. Der größte Teil der Wissenschaft wird durch Steuern finanziert. Deshalb sind wir der festen Überzeugung, daß die Publikationen allen zugänglich sein sollten". (Today the Internet affords us the potential to make scholarship accessible in a much wider way - for the scholars and for the public - with the establishing of digital libraries. Most of scholarship is financed with funding from tax income [in the European Union]. And this is the reason why I believe that all scholarly publications should be available to all in open access; my translation) (Varmus, 2003, p. 29).

As the *Draft Report* of the American Council of Learned Societies and Varmus propose, full-text and open-access online journals and libraries would make it possible to perform online research. This proposal in the inter-relationship of work in the humanities, the study of literature, and new media scholarship and technology is even more controversial than the basic proposal to embrace online journals and the discussion about this extends, obviously, to all sorts of matter such as the contentious issue of distance education in all of its facets, etc. (to reflect on aspects of online research in the humanities, basic sources may include *Skills for Online Searching* (The Internet Public Library, 2003); *Glossary of Library and Internet Terms* (2003); *The World Wide Web, Computers and Teaching Literature* (Johnson, 2003); *RMIT HyperText Project* (Miles, 2003); *Literary Theory and Narrative as Virtual Reality* (Ryan, 2001); the site *Sociological and Ethnographic Research of Cyberspace* at http://www.cybersoc.com; *The Cyberspace, Hypertext*, and *Critical Theory Web: An Introduction* (Landow, 2006); *Hypertextuality and Sociocultural Contexts of Education* (Thumlert, 1997). As it stands, peer-reviewed and open-access scholarly journals online in the humanities in full-text are no more than dozen or so in the world today. While I am sure that this will change in the future, the situation as it is is at best dismal. I now present here, as an alternative and parallel to the traditional hard-cover mode of publishing scholarship in the humanities, the example of the full-text, open-access, and peer-reviewed online quarterly, "CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture": many aspects of the founding and life since its foundation of the journal show the benefits and advantages of online publishing.

An example: CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture (ISSN 1481-4373)
http://clcwebjournal.lib.purdue.edu/

I begin with the issue of citation and its collateral importance of legitimization and recognition of scholarship: the indexing and citation rate of scholarship published in a journal is an important factor of the evaluation processes and evaluation of scholarship *per se*. I should note that I take peer review for granted and obvious in the present case although there are many voices, especially in the natural sciences, with sophisticated argumentation against the current state of peer review. For example, the indexing and citation rate of a journal's published material is crucial for a scholar's career because most universities rate his/her publications in competitions for research funding and tenure and promotion purposes based on the reputation of the journals he/she publishes in. In the case of "CLCWeb" while the journal is listed with and indexed in the most important indices such as the Humanities Index, the American Humanities Index, the Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature, and the International Bibliography of the Modern Language Association of America, I have been trying since 1999 to get the journal to be indexed by the ISI: Institute for Scientific Information Arts and Humanities Citation Index, the most important of such citation indices.[2] The importance and relevance of a journal's indexing with ISI has grown significantly in the past decade, to the point in some countries such as Belgium, for instance, where papers published in a journal that is not indexed with ISI are not viewed as competitive enough for competitions for funding or for promotion and tenure. The processes and state of affairs of humanities publishing with regard to indices and citation rates such as with ISI are most relevant with regard to the context of new media and here is why: with "CLCWeb" we are only now at the stage that "CLCWeb" would be accepted to be indexed, the process has taken forever while ISI states in its Web site that if its conditions are met, a journal's material would be indexed within six months (see http://www.isinet.com/isi/). The reason why ISI did not accept the journal for its citation index was that its evaluation system prescribes - in addition to the quality of scholarship, the timely sequence of publication, etc. to gauge a journal's acceptance on the level of citation in other journals and books published in hard copy. However, this citation

2. See Thomson at http://scientific.thomson.com/index.html

3. Telephone conversation with the ISI office (New York), 12 February 2007

rate is obviously a moot point for online publishing at this point because of the overall lack of online journals in the humanities and because scholars - in turn because of the reluctance to embrace new media publishing - rarely if ever cite material available online in hard-copy journals and books. It is only very recently - since 2006 - that ISI changed its approach towards online journals in the humanities recognizing the rarity of such and the reluctance of the humanities to recognize and adapt to online publishing and thus decided to accept Web statistics of hits, for example, as a factor of citation instead of insisting on citation in printed journals only ("CLCWeb" has, on the average, 7.000 hits per day, from across the globe).[3] Thus, while I am critical of the fact that ISI did not allow for attention to the particular situation of the humanities and online publishing in their complexities, the good news is that they appear to have caught on.

The history of the online journal I edit, "CLCWeb", and publish since 2000 with Purdue University Press is one of my dissatisfaction with traditional publishing in the humanities, in particular with regard to the length of time for a peer-reviewed paper to appear in print, in the US and Canada on average up to three years. Right after I received my Ph.D. in comparative literature at he University of Alberta in 1989, I was appointed assistant editor of the "Canadian Review of Comparative Literature/Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée" and I then published the journal in the traditional mode for almost a decade, 1989-1998. At the same time, here, too, I looked for avenues to improve and at the time an innovation in itself, I published beginning with 1989 the first *desktop-published-with-print-from-camera-ready-copy* humanities journal in Canada. After the journal's editing and publication was passed to another editor in 1998, the advantages of a peer-refereed, public-access, and full-text journal published online emerged to me from the observation that with the rapid development of new media technology the humanities must follow suit in capitalizing on the advantages offered by new media technology, in this case the Internet and the World Wide Web. I argued the obvious, namely that the World Wide Web is a viable avenue to serve the dissemination and transfer of knowledge to the benefit of scholarship, the individual scholar, as well as the general public. However, while this may be obvious in fields such as the natural sciences, medicine, or engineering - and, indeed,

in a general context to all - these advantages are not accepted yet in the humanities, much to the detriment of the image, the function, the social relevance of the field, and to the detriment of scholarship and the study of the humanities including the current generation of students (on the use of new media by students, see Carlson, 2002). As said, after passing on the editorship of the "Canadian Review" to my successor, I decided to found an online journal in the humanities and after consultation with colleagues in a number of countries across the globe, it became obvious that the launching of an online journal would make sense indeed and that such a journal would fill a gap on the landscape of scholarship in the humanities in literature and culture. In consequence, an advisory board and associate editors group was struck, application for an ISSN number was processed with and obtained from the National Library of Canada (1481-4374), the listing, archiving, and mirroring of the new online journal with the National Library of Canada (as of 2005 renamed Library and Archives Canada) has been arranged, etc. (the journal is also mirrored and archived in two additional locations, in the UK with the BCLA: British Comparative Literature Association and in the Stanford University LOCKSS: Lots of Copies Keep Stuff Safe system http://www.lockss.org/lockss/Home). Interestingly, at the time, in 1998, most national libraries would not consider online publications to give an ISSN number and as far as I know, it was "CLCWeb" that received the first ISSN number of an online journal in Canada from its then National Library (after several calls to the Library and some argumentation); in countries such as Germany, for example, several years passed until ISSN numbers were made available for online journals.

The first issue of "CLCWeb" was placed online in March 1999 on the server of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Alberta where I taught at the time. The URL of the journal was provided by the Alberta Faculty of Arts on its server as well as the necessary disk space for the material of the journal (I created and maintained a Website previously, since 1995, for the Department of Comparative Literature and the Research Institute for Comparative Literature; after I discontinued the operation of these sites once the Department created its own official site in 1998, I carried the material such as bibliographies over to "CLCWeb"). The university's Help Desk and the University of Alberta Faculty

of Arts Technologies for Learning Centre (TLC) provided occasional technical help for the journal and its functions such as the "CLCWeb" moderated listserv (for news and calls for papers in the humanities). During its inception in Canada, the set-up and start-up of "CLCWeb" including all technical aspects such as the design of its index page occurred without funding. The University of Alberta and the Department of Comparative Literature did not provide financial help for the establishing or the operation of the journal and moral support was of a limited nature as it was felt to support two journals at the same department - one published in the traditional hard-copy mode (the above mentioned CRCL/ RCLC) and another one online, namely "CLCWeb" - would create tension. I have made attempts to find funding from the SSHRC: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (new technology and the learned journals program) but without success. Unfortunately, the program administrators insisted that "CLCWeb", similar to the requirements for traditional hard-copy journals, must have 200 paid subscribers and the argument that the journal is online and in the mode of free access did not carry any weight. And the argument of the high Web traffic of the journal already with only two issues online or the argument to accept the "hits" on and "session use" of the journal's material in lieu of paid subscriptions as a demonstration of its use in the scholarly community did not persuade the SSHRC to consider funding.

By January 2000 following considerations of and plans for the development of "CLCWeb" and its legitimization on the landscape of humanities scholarship, in cooperation with the journal's advisory board/associate editors I began exploring possibilities to relocate the journal from the Faculty of Arts at the University of Alberta to a university press. After several months of contacts, e-mail exchanges, and discussions with up to a dozen university presses and virtual libraries across North America (US and Canada) and Europe, the editorial board of Purdue University Press approved the relocation to Purdue and the publishing of "CLCWeb" by Purdue University Press and Purdue University Libraries (Purdue University Press is an integral part of Purdue University and functions as such). In my opinion, Purdue's decision is remarkable and far-sighted for several reasons. All other presses and even those who expressed avid interest to host and publish the journal ceased to be interested upon my insistence that the journal should

remain in the open-access mode (presses interested initially always suggested that the journal would have to be published in the paid-subscription mode). Purdue, on the other hand, accepted my argument that "CLCWeb" should remain in the open-access mode because of principles such as social responsibility towards the relevance of scholarship in the humanities, the notion of the Internet and the Web as a democratic venue for the globalisation of knowledge, scholarly communication, and knowledge transfer. Of course, the question of where the money would come from if all online journals were in the mode of open access is valid (more on this below). However, the argument for the mode of public access of online journals in the humanities and social sciences - despite the fact that such scholarly journals online are very few to date - includes the proposition that income for the press by offering "CLCWeb" in the public-access mode is generated by name/brand recognition for the press based on the high Web traffic of "CLCWeb". Thus, with issue 2.3 (September 2000), "CLCWeb" has been published by Purdue University Press and Purdue University Libraries. The journal and all its functions including its Library (e.g., the international directory of comparatists, bibliographies, etc.) and its moderated listserv for news and announcements in comparative literature and culture are supported and assisted in the technical domain by Purdue University Libraries and Purdue University Press.

That the journal has touched a nerve in the humanities is obvious when one takes a look at the Web traffic of the journal (see link to the stats from the journal's index page), by up to 7.000 hits per day, with the correspondingly high level of reading in other categories of use. Of course, this may in some cases be due to scholarship published in "CLCWeb" such as Mabel Lee's paper about the work of the 2000 Nobel Laureate of literature, Gao Xingjian, published in "CLCWeb", 2(2000), n. 3. Another reason for the high use of the journal's material is that "CLCWeb" maintains, in addition to the publishing of articles, a Library with bibliographies, various research material, an international directory of scholars in the field (with links to the scholars' CVs where available), and a moderated listserv - all functions possible online while in hard-copy traditional print such would be prohibitively expensive and circumstantial.

In addition to the matter of relevance to knowledge management, as a peer-reviewed forum of scholarship and in a form that

combines traditional scholarship and practices, and new media scholarship and technology, "CLCWeb" offers the possibility of training and involvement in the study of the humanities in general and in comparative literature and culture in the particular. Owing to the nature of new media scholarship and publishing, editorial assistants can be located physically no matter where. For the above reasons as well as for the reason of assistance needed in the work of the journal, "CLCWeb" appoints graduate student editorial assistants for periods of one academic year (renewable). The tasks of the graduate student assistants include editing, file transfers and formatting, html, bibliography work, the maintenance of the journal's Library including the checking of active/non-active Web links, technical, administrative, and market dimensions and aspects of new media scholarship and publishing, etc. For example, upon an advertisement posted on the listserv of "CLCWeb" in May 2000, in the ensuing two months thirty positive responses from seven countries arrived and since then several graduate students have assisted and still assist the journal. As of the academic year of 2002-2003, the Purdue Program of Comparative Literature is funding the assistantship of a graduate student with the journal.

Further and selected aspects of new media publishing

In the case of online publishing in general, and in the case of online publishing in the humanities in particular, the question of funding, that is, the financial operation of an online journal, is a matter of debate. Most journals published online in all fields opt for paid subscription similar to traditional hard-copy journals and there are several companies and institutions performing such for-profit service (e.g., the Muse Project of Johns Hopkins University). Briefly and concisely put, in my opinion, in the spirit of knowledge transfer and access to knowledge (knowledge management) in the mode of public access made possible with and on the World Wide Web, it is institutions of higher learning who ought to carry the costs from internal as well as external funding such as government funding or private sponsorship. Yet another aspect of the new functions and possibilities of new media technology for knowledge management in the humanities and social sciences is the following: I propose that the availability of scholarly material online (including peer-reviewed journals online in public access) is of great necessity. At the same time, new media technology for knowledge management can make

an impact in another area of scholarly publishing. I take the example of Purdue University, the publisher of "CLCWeb": in addition to the foresight of Purdue to take on the journal and publish it in public access, it is also developing a "print-on-demand program" (called Digital-I at Purdue). This is particularly advantageous for the humanities and social sciences where even in the US with its large population and many universities a scholarly book in the humanities rarely sells over 400-500 copies. The print-on-demand mode of publishing is that a press prints a book (in four colors; the product looks and feels in all aspects just like a regular book) upon order by the customer directly to the press (by e-mail, phone, fax, or order form). Advertisement of the book is traditional, by brochures and leaflets to universities, academics, university libraries, and book stores, etc. In other words, the copy-by-copy print of the book is not only feasible, financially, but advantageous in humanities publishing. And as in traditional publishing, the book has an ISBN number and two copies are deposited with the US Library of Congress. In my opinion, similar to the publishing of "CLCWeb", the print-on-demand program of Purdue University Press is at the forefront in the current development of knowledge management in publishing in the humanities in particular and in publishing in general. Considering that most university presses struggle to survive it is a mystery to me, indeed, why there is not more interest in this solution to the problem of publishing in the humanities.

Conclusion

The above description of some of the aspects of the creation and maintenance of a scholarly journal in the humanities would serve, I believe, as a good example of the why's and how's of publishing scholarship in the humanities and the social sciences online today. Without any doubt, my enthusiasm and aggressive promotion of the open-access publishing of humanities scholarship would, necessarily, include blind spots and handicaps. At the same time, while I do not anticipate much change with regard to online scholarship in the humanities soon despite the obvious advantages of such expressed in the above referred to *Draft Report of the American Council of Learned Societies*, at least I outline, perhaps, good arguments for the humanities why they ought to embrace online scholarship and online journals where all advantages of new

media should be capitalized on. There is no doubt in my mind that the younger generation of scholars do appreciate and recognize the value and importance of scholarship online. As it happens, the paradigm shift takes time, as always. Finally, there is one aspect I believe needs to be mentioned and this is the question of language and the World Wide Web and thus the question of language with regard to the publishing of humanities scholarship online. While it is widely accepted that the *lingua franca* of the Word Wide Web and, in many ways, of scholarship itself, happens to be English, this acknowledgement begs the question of the contentious issue of US-American cultural hegemony (I discuss this problem in my 1998 book *Comparative Literature: Theory, Method, Application* in more detail). Here, suffice it to say that the World Wide Web and new media offer uncharted possibilities and the advancement of knowledge precisely because scholarship in languages other-than-English can be published online and can be accessed anywhere with Internet connection. And this situation would allow for the creation of online journals in humanities scholarship in the widest possible range of languages, in addition to such in English. It remains without saying that under such circumstances and with such possibilities, the perception of US-American cultural hegemony affecting scholarship becomes immaterial and without real significance. It would be humanities scholarship wherever and in whichever language that should take advantage of new media and the possibilities of digitality for the advancement of humanities scholarship: I believe this is a real task, our responsibility, as well as a real possibility to act on.

References

All URLs checked May 2007

Cader Michael (2000), *Never Mind the Friggin' E-Book. It's All About the Web,* "inside: The Business of Entertainment, Media & Technology", pp. 37-38

Carlson Scott (2002), *Students and Faculty Members Turn to Online Library Materials Before Printed Ones, Study Finds*, "The Chronicle of Higher Education", http://chronicle.com/free/2002/10/2002100301t.htm

Carlson Scott (2006), *Humanities, Social Sciences Should Focus on Improving Digital Resources, Report Says*, "The Chronicle of Higher Education", http://chronicle.com/temp/reprint.php?id=c9hf16kk7b59tt72zw6yc7f1h2zd6rfl

The Draft Report of the American Council of Learned Societies' Commission on Cyberinfrastructure for the Humanities and Social Sciences (2005)
http://www.acls.org/cyberinfrastructure/cyber.htm

Ghesquiere Rita (1997), *The Reading Behaviour of Maroccan, Turkish, and Italian Children in Flanders*, in Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek, Irene Sywenky (Ed.), *The Systemic and Empirical Approach to Literature and Culture as Theory and Application*, Edmonton, Research Institute for Comparative Literature, University of Alberta and Siegen, Institute for Empirical Literature and Media Research, Siegen University, pp. 393-405

Glossary of Library and Internet Terms (2003)
http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/hacker/resdoc/glossary.htm

Greco Albert N. (2001), *The General Reader Market for University Press Books in the United States, 1990-9, with Projections for the Years 2000 through 2004*, "Journal of Scholarly Publishing", V. 32, n. 2, pp. 62-86

Harnad Stevan (1995), *Electronic Scholarly Publication: Quo Vadis?*, "Serials Review", V. 21, n. 1
http://www.cogsci.soton.ac.uk/harnad/Papers/Harnad/harnad95.quo.vadis.html

Ibsch Elrud (1996), *How Different is the Other? A Case Study of Literary Reading in a Multicultural Society*, in Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek (Ed.), *The Systemic and Empirical Approach to Literature: Theory and Application.* Trad. Port., Margarida Losa, Isménia de Sousa, Gonçalo Vilas-Boas (Eds.), *Literatura Comparada: Os Novos Paradigmas*, Porto, Afrontamento, 1996, pp. 362-67

The Internet Public Library, Skills for Online Searching (2003)
http://www.ipl.org/teen/aplus/skills.htm

Johnson Eric (2003), *The World Wide Web, Computers, and Teaching Literature*, http://www.dsu.edu/~johnsone/webprof.html [last retrieved march 2007]

Landow George P. (2003), *The Cyberspace, Hypertext, and Critical Theory Web: An Introduction*, http://www.cyberartsweb.org/cpace/

Landow George P. (2006), *Hypertext 3.0: Critical Theory and New Media in an Era of Globalization*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins UP

Miles Adrian (2003), *RMIT HyperText Project*, http://hypertext.rmit.edu.au/

Perillo Lucia (2000), *Instant Mortification*, "The Chronicle of Higher Education", p. A64

Petrucci Armando (1999), *Reading to Read: A Future for Reading*, in Cavallo Guglielmo, Chartier Roger (Eds.), *A History of Reading in the West,* Amherst, University of Massachusetts p, pp. 345-67

Ryan Marie-Laure (2001), *Narrative as Virtual Reality: Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins UP

Sociological and Ethnographic Research of Cyberspace (2003) http://www.cybersoc.com/

Thumlert Kurt (1997), *Hypertextuality and Sociocultural Contexts of Education*, http://home1.gte.net/grnjeans/htext.htm

Tötösy de Zepetnek Steven, Philip Kreisel (1992), *Urban English-Speaking Canadian Literary Readership: the Results of a Pilot Study*, "Poetics: Journal of Empirical Research on Literature, the Media and the Arts", V. 21, n. 3, pp. 211-38

Tötösy de Zepetnek Steven (2001), *The New Knowledge Management: Online Research and Publishing in the Humanities*, "CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture", V. 3, n. 1,
http://clcwebjournal.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb01-1/totosy01.html

Tötösy de Zepetnek Steven (1998), *Comparative Literature: Theory, Method, Application*, Amsterdam, Rodopi

Van Looy Jan, Jan Baetens (Eds.) (2003), *Close Reading New Media: Analyzing Electronic Literature*, Leuven, Leuven UP

Varmus Harold (2003), *'Werdet Teil der Revolution!' Digitale Bibliotheken und elektronische Zeitschriften sollen das wissenschaftliche Publizieren ändern. Ein Gespräch mit dem Nobelpreisträger Harold Varmus*, "Die Zeit", v.26, p. 29

Warwick Claire (2001), *Reports of My Death Have Been Greatly Exaggerated: Scholarly Editing in the Digital Age*, in Domenico Fiormonte, Jonathan Usher (Ed.), *New Media and the Humanities: Research and Applications*, Oxford, Humanities Computing Unit, Oxford U, pp. 49-56

Williams Lynda, Lorne Flagel (2005), *Online Production*, in Dee Horne (Ed.), *Literary Journals in Canada: The Next Generation*, LitCan, pp. 115-48, http://litcan.unbc.ca

Sintesi

Gli studenti e i docenti di materie umanistiche, nonostante la notevole diffusione delle nuove tecnologie di comunicazione in campo formativo, manifestano da sempre una certa resistenza nei confronti dell'uso dei Nuovi Media per l'educazione.

Tale resistenza si esprime in primo luogo nell'idea che la lettura su schermo di testi digitalizzati sia un mezzo inadeguato allo studio riflessivo necessario nelle materie umanistiche.

Considerando il rapporto tra scienze umane e Nuovi Media da un diverso punto di vista, The Draft Report of the American Council of Learned Societies' Commission on Cyberinfrastructure for the Humanities and Social Sciences, del Novembre 2005, ha affermato che "Librerie, archivi e musei sono infrastrutture culturali"; come anche le scuole e le case editrici universitarie (University Presses). Secondo il Report, la pubblicazione digitale delle edizioni critiche di testi umanistici è anch'essa un'infrastruttura culturale; di conseguenza, l'impegno dei ricercatori di scienze sociali e umanistiche è auspicabile per promuovere il rinnovamento e la diffusione delle conoscenze e per stimolare lo sviluppo del mondo digitale stesso in senso culturale.

Una questione di dibattito all'interno della discussione sul digital publishing riguarda l'open access e la tutela del copyright. La Open Content Alliance, che riunisce diverse librerie e case editrici statunitensi, costituisce un esempio di come il mondo accademico e quello commerciale possano collaborare per contribuire alla diffusione della conoscenza su larga scala, traendo vantaggio dalla pervasività dei mezzi digitali di comunicazione. Nonostante questo, la resistenza del mondo accademico nei confronti della pubblicazione dei risultati delle loro ricerche online è maggioritaria, particolarmente evidente nel caso della pubblicazione di articoli su riviste telematiche, sia open access sia con accesso limitato agli abbonati.

Il caso della rivista open access CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture, pubblicata online dalla Purdue University Press, testimonia le difficoltà incontrate nella pubblicazione di materiali di ricerca in formato digitale online.

L'autorevole associazione statunitense CELJ-Council of Editors of Learned Journals, per esempio, solo a partire dal 2003 ha accettato che riviste online si candidassero per il premio annuale assegnato dall'associazione e, solo a partire dal 2006, ha istituito una commissione apposita per la valutazione di giornali online.

Il persistente disinteresse del mondo accademico e degli studi umanistici nei confronti di queste iniziative e, più in generale, del World Wide Web è, però, un fatto che merita di essere considerato con attenzione. Se è vero, infatti, che la lettura riflessiva necessaria nello studio delle materie umanistiche mal si concilia con la lettura su schermo, e la prospettiva di poter utilizzare strumenti digitali capaci di riprodurre la lettura su carta è ancora lontana, testi di una lunghezza compresa nelle 8000 parole sono adatti alla lettura online. Quest'ultima considerazione riporta l'attenzione sulle riviste scientifiche digitali, risorsa fondamentale ed innovativa per la ricerca online e strumento valido sia per i ricercatori che per gli studenti.

Il primo numero di CLCWeb è stato pubblicato a Marzo del 1999, presso la Faculty of Arts dell'Università di Alberta. L'anno successivo, l'advisory board della rivista, [di cui l'autore del presente articolo è editor responsabile cfr.] ha cominciato a valutare la possibilità di affidarne la pubblicazione ad una University Press. La Purdue University Press ha accettato di ospitare la rivista sui suoi server e, diversamente dalla maggior parte degli editori commerciali contattati, ha accettato che la rivista mantenesse la sua natura open access, facendo una scelta molto avanzata per quegli anni.

Nella sua nuova collocazione, la rivista ha riscosso un sempre maggiore interesse da parte di studenti e studiosi, con migliaia di accessi giornalieri al sito.

Ulteriore argomento da prendere in considerazione per quanto riguarda la pubblicazione di una rivista online consiste nel reperimento delle risorse economiche. Data la vocazione delle riviste online ad essere un fattore di diffusione della conoscenza e di condivisione di ricerche e materiali culturali, il costo della realizzazione di una tale opera deve ricadere sulle strutture accademiche stesse, eventualmente ricorrendo a finanziamenti governativi o privati.

Un aspetto conclusivo da segnalare riguarda il fatto che la maggior parte le riviste scientifiche pubblicate in versione cartacea sono rigorosamente in inglese, segno della leadership culturale nord-americana: la diffusione di pubblicazioni online, accessibili in tutto il mondo, potrebbe favorire il formarsi di una letteratura secondaria di alto livello non solo in lingua inglese, ma più aperta e multi-culturale.