Chapter 10

Publishing

Before mailing out your first application for a tenure-track job, set the goal of publishing (i.e., having *accepted* for publication) at least two article-length pieces; make sure that one comes from your dissertation. While such advice may seem unrealistic, even terrifying, to you at this stage of your career, careful long-term planning and an informed approach to seminar-paper writing can lead quite naturally to the generation of publishable material. The key is to avoid getting too far ahead of yourself since the pressure to publish can sometimes be paralyzing for inexperienced students and professors. Publishing success, on the other hand, can lead not only to exciting job prospects but also the personal satisfaction of knowing you have reached the pinnacle of accomplishment in your field. No one ever forgets the first time.

Generally speaking, the publishing process consists of three distinct phases: the first phase, of course, involves the actual creation of publishable material. If you have not yet read chapter 5, stop and do so now, since it deals extensively with *how to write* a publishable piece, and then return to this chapter. The second phase has to do with the actual mechanics of publishing, the complex procedure of selecting an appropriate outlet and convincing its board to publish your work. The final phase is dedicated to preparing an accepted piece for its permanent appearance in print (or, increasingly, online). Focusing mainly on the second and third phases of the publishing process, this chapter addresses the following subjects:

- The forms of publication in the humanities
- The selection of an appropriate publisher
- The communication and correspondence processes
- The long wait for a response
- The different types of editorial response
- Final revisions and proofing

The Two-Article Goal

There is no reason any more to hire a Ph.D. who has yet to prove she can publish. Because most moderately desirable jobs in the humanities will attract 100 or more applicants, the chair of any search committee can rest assured that many of them will have published one or more articles. Since many, if not most, of these hiring schools will require from the applicant a published book (or the equivalent in articles) for tenure, the chair of the search committee would also be wise to demand an excellent and highly marketable dissertation. Since the appearance of a dissertation chapter in a peer-reviewed journal is something like proof of your dissertation's legitimacy and marketability, your number one priority should be to publish a central chapter from that project. In order to preempt the possibility of a search committee regarding your single publication as a fluke, shoot for two publications prior to sending off those job applications. Your second article can also be from the dissertation, but you will probably benefit more by publishing on a different topic in your field, which demonstrates your range. Again, avoid publishing more than two chapters or about 25 percent of your dissertation material.

Now before you panic, be careful to keep the implications of this two-publication goal in proper perspective. Even if you finish your Ph.D. on time, you will still have six years to get two seminar-paper-length pieces accepted for publication. In your course-work alone, you will write approximately twenty such papers, and you will add another five or six at the dissertation stage. Out of roughly twenty-five papers, then, two will need to be polished enough for approval by a respectable journal's readers. Remember that most graduate students earn their first publication credit while an ABD, which means there is plenty of time to "master" academic writing before sending anything off. While MA students will benefit immensely by establishing professional goals early in their graduate careers, it might be detrimental for some of them to rush what will very likely take many years to accomplish.

As my wording has suggested, the "acceptance" of your work for publication is more than adequate for a competitive run on the job market and may even be preferable to having one or more pieces already in print. Tenure committees are more likely to count articles toward tenure if they bear the name of the tenure-granting institution; since an accepted piece is likely to be revised, expanded, and proofed after a contract has been signed, an assistant professor can note in an article the new affiliation with the hiring university. "Old" articles, on the other hand, will help you to get hired but probably will not count

toward tenure. In an ideal situation, therefore, a job candidate will enter the market with two recently accepted, peer-reviewed articles. You might even establish as part of your contract negotiations that such articles will count for tenure and/or merit raises (though you should recognize that few universities will want to count them).

THE FORMS OF PUBLICATION

While we have been stressing the importance of the peer-reviewed article as an indicator of one's scholarly credentials, several other forms of publication are expected of humanities scholars. A book review or a chapter in an edited collection will never be regarded as the equivalent of a peer-reviewed article, but such publications will certainly strengthen any CV. Several common forms of publication in the humanities are listed and described below in descending order from the most to the least important.

The Peer-Reviewed Monograph

In 2002, then president of the MLA, Stephen Greenblatt addressed a personal letter to all members about a "serious problem in the publishing of scholarly books." Because of considerable budget cuts to university and academic presses, which would prevent many younger scholars from publishing their first book prior to tenure review, Greenblatt implores departments to discover alternative means of evaluating scholarly productivity:

> We could try to persuade departments and universities to change their expectations for tenure reviews: after all, these expectations are, for the most part, set by us and not by administrators. The book has only fairly recently emerged as the sine qua non and even now is not uniformly the requirement in all academic fields.[1]

Greenblatt is referring, of course, to the serious damage to academic presses caused by regular slashes to university library budgets over the past three decades. Kathryn Hume explains why such cuts have so impacted the academic publishing industy:

> In 1970, the standing library order for books from prestigious American academic presses was over eight hundred copies. . . . Around the year 2000, the standing order is about one hundred and seventy copies. Producing an ordinary monograph now costs \$8–\$10,000 in direct costs, and \$16–\$20,000 in indirect costs. . . . To get the \$30,000 back, a press would have to charge over \$170 per book.[2]

According to Hume, most presses lose money even when they sell books for \$50 or more per copy. So how should a current graduate student and future professor respond to these book publishing problems, which she may very well face in the next few years?

Despite the current crisis in the academic publishing industry, the scholarly "book" remains the most prestigious form of publication in the humanities. Unfortunately, there are few indications that competitive research universities will stop demanding it as the chief criterion for tenure and promotion decisions. My advice, therefore, as chapter 8 suggests (see pp. 156–57), is that you write a dissertation that seems likely to become a book, and that you assume you will need to publish that book for tenure, which may or may not prove to be the case down the road. Though it is important for you to recognize now the centrality of the peer-reviewed monograph in humanities disciplines—as well as the economic crisis that threatens to make it extinct—you need not worry about trying to publish a book prior to graduation. Book publication will become one of your primary goals when you are hired on the tenure track.

The Peer-Reviewed Edited (Book) Collection of Essays

Surely some academics would argue that the edited collection of essays belongs in a lower spot on this list. A strong collection, however, is capable of transforming scholarship in a particular field, and it can also enhance considerably the reputations of both its editor and its editor's department. Solid collections of essays require a tremendous amount of work from editors, who must define the book's topic, coordinate an appropriate list of contributors, edit and copyedit the contributors' essays, write an introduction, and, often, contribute an original essay to the volume. While individual departments are responsible for judging the relative value of a particular collection of essays, it goes without saying that a cutting-edge collection has greater potential for impacting a scholarly field than a journal article. You should not think about editing a collection, however, until after you have completed your dissertation and turned it into a book.

The Peer-Reviewed Journal Article

Still the most basic building block of any academic career, an article placed in a respected journal may be read by hundreds of scholars and

has the ability to influence the author's reputation and the wider understanding of the subject she discusses. Later sections of this chapter will delve rather deeply into the process of publishing an article in a peer-reviewed journal.

Chapters in Collections of Essays

Some such essays are peer-reviewed by the editors themselves or by readers from a press still deciding whether or not to publish the collection. Since the assumption of some academics tends to be that chapters in collections are *not* peer-reviewed even though nearly all of those collections published by university presses *are* peer-reviewed, you should make absolutely clear (and be willing to show) that a particular essay has in fact been peer-reviewed if that is the case. There are several scenarios by which one of your essays might wind up in a collection of essays, and together they reveal the problems in trying to define what constitutes a peer-reviewed article: (1) You come across a Call for Papers relevant to a particular topic on which an editor is attempting to publish a collection. You send the editor (or editors) the piece, which is read and accepted. Is this a peer-reviewed article? One can certainly make the case. (2) Responding to a Call for Papers, you send an abstract or proposal for an essay to an editor or editors. They agree to include your essay in the collection on the basis of this abstract. In this case, you would have to stretch the facts to consider the piece a peer-reviewed article. (3) After delivering a conference paper, you are approached by an editor who asks whether you might be willing to include the piece in her forthcoming collection of essays. This should not be regarded as peer-reviewed. (4) Finally, you are commissioned (by phone, e-mail, letter, etc.) to write an essay for a particular collection of essays. In some cases, commissioned pieces should not be regarded as peer-reviewed. In many cases, though, essays commissioned by editors will have to be accepted by readers at the publishing press. For example, though I once was commissioned to write an essay by editors of an Oxford University Press volume on Renaissance drama, all of the essays were sent out to Oxford readers who judged their worthiness for inclusion in the volume. Because of the difficulties of defining peer-review in relation to collection contributions, you must assess rather carefully the process by which you have published any essay that appears in a collection. Talk to your department head about how you should refer to the piece on your CV. If you determine that you cannot describe the essay as having been peer-reviewed, be sure at least to make clear on your CV that the essay was commissioned if this was the case. Commissions suggest that you have already established a reputation in a particular field, and they are the next best thing to a peer-reviewed acceptance.

For the same reasons that a solid collection of essays is important, the inclusion of your essay in such a volume looks impressive and should be regarded as a sign of scholarly potential and excellence.

The Peer-Reviewed Note or Query

A former professor once explained to me that any idea worth publishing deserves more space than that afforded by a note. I disagree. While it's true that you should never settle for a note where an article is an option, one can easily imagine several situations in which the publication of a note is appropriate. In order to ensure that you are making the right decision to publish a note, seek advice from your advisors and experts in the field, since they may have ideas about how to expand a short piece into a more substantial one.

Book Reviews

The vast majority of book reviews are commissioned by journals so it is unlikely you will land many prior to the publication of your own first monograph. A very few respectable journals, however, read and sometimes publish un-commissioned reviews. While I would not recommend spending any significant amount of time trying to publish a book review, situations do arise in graduate school that lead students to publish reviews. Since I require that my graduate students review at least one recently published book related to the seminar I am then teaching, it makes sense for them to seek a home for the reviews upon which they have so diligently toiled. Usually at least one student each semester succeeds in placing a review in a solid journal.

A well-written book review displays a scholar's critical acumen and authoritative voice. You will learn a good deal about the art of book reviewing simply by reading published reviews in top journals. Like most articles, book reviews tend to be quite formulaic, moving from a description of the book's central argument to a discussion of individual chapters, to a discussion of the book's weaknesses, to a final paragraph that declares the book "a welcome addition" to the field. In writing reviews—whether for class or for publication—try to keep the following ideas in mind:

1. The first question readers will always ask after reading a review is "Do I now know what this book is about?" This sounds simple,

but you may be surprised by how many reviewers prattle on about minute details without ever conveying a sense of the book's major claims or how it is to be situated within previous scholarly discourses. Be sure to recognize not only what an author is arguing, but also the sorts of materials, evidence, and methodology she is using to make the argument.

2. Provide enough samples of the author's own language to do her justice. Be extremely careful when recasting an author's major points in your own language. There's a heavy burden of responsibility on every reviewer's shoulders.
3. Feel free to comment on matters such as style and issues pertaining to the book's apparatus (index, bibliography, etc.).
4. Attempt to balance the need to be fair and moderate with the expectation that you will point out the book's weaknesses. No book is perfect, and all of your readers know it, so unequivocal praise may actually irritate readers. On the other hand, whatever you do, don't be petty. Academe is a small world, and you do not want to offend colleagues who are likely to judge your work over the coming years.
5. Deal with the author's argument on its own terms. The fact that you don't like Marxism is not a good reason in and of itself to slam a Marxist approach. Seek out and try to understand the internal logic of every argument you encounter.
6. Regarding the cliché, final sentence about the book being a welcome addition to the field, think about how you might vary the idea. Think about what the cliché says implicitly and consider recasting the point in more local terms. For example, you may wish to emphasize in closing what happens to be the specific contribution of the book to the scholarly understanding of a focused research topic.

Other Forms of Publication

Humanities scholars also publish encyclopedia articles, op-ed pieces, conference proceedings, and any variety of non-peer-reviewed writings. Always remember that publications such as book reviews and encyclopedia entries can look good on a CV as indications of *additional* scholarly activity, but they should never be regarded as substitutes for or equals of peer-reviewed publications.

PUBLISHING A PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLE

From conception to actual printing, the process of publishing an article is a several-year-long process. As with most things academic, the various

steps involved in publishing an essay need to be learned; there is nothing obvious about any of them. Since chapter 5 outlines the initial phase of the article-writing process, the following material is focused on how you should proceed once you and your advisors have determined that an essay is ready to be submitted for publication.

Selecting a Journal

The first rule of publishing is that quality is far more important than quantity. Your job prospects and, indeed, your reputation will benefit more from one well-placed, excellently written article than three or four insignificant ones. Further, there is no point seeking publication in a mediocre journal unless you have first been rejected by all of the superior ones. The key is figuring out those journals that are superior and most appropriate for your piece.

Of course, by the time you are ready to submit something for publication, you will likely have a good sense of the top journals in your field. Course-work, exams, dissertation research, and most of all, your focused research on the piece, should all combine to suggest highly useful patterns in your mind: the most cutting-edge articles on Shakespeare tend to appear in *Shakespeare Quarterly*. More old-fashioned historical ones tend to appear in *Renaissance Quarterly*. New Historicist ones appear in *English Literary Renaissance*. Heavily theoretical ones in *Representations*. In some cases, though, a majority of Shakespeare articles on the particular topic being researched will happen to have appeared in *SEL*, which would make it a logical choice for an initial submission. You will learn a lot from listening to (and talking to) your professors about those journals that are most important in the field. A recommended practice is to construct a list, relatively early in your Ph.D. career, of the top five journals in which you hope to publish. As the acceptances begin to arrive, cross titles off the list one at a time.

Once you have a general sense of where you would like to see your piece, you'll need to consider several practical matters before narrowing the field. For example, if the Shakespeare piece is over 6,000 words long, *SEL* won't publish it. Or, if you plan to be on the job market in five months, a particular journal's policy of taking six months (pretty much the norm these days) to respond to a submission simply won't work. Now there are two ways in which you can discover the sort of information that will allow you to make informed decisions. The first is to consult any one of the various "periodical guides" that provides information about journals in your field. These extraordinarily

useful guides allow you to search information about journals relevant to your field or topic. The *MLA Guide to Periodicals*, for example, which lists information about most journals in the fields of English, Comparative Literature, and the Modern Languages, serves as a useful indicator of such guides' general effectiveness. A quick glance at "Shakespeare" in the index reveals that at least 11 journals and book presses include "Shakespeare" in their actual titles. If you then were to flip to any one of these journal entries, you'd be able to locate the following information: the editor's name and contact information; the history of the journal; subscription information ranging from the price of the journal to circulation numbers; advertising information; an editorial description of the sort of articles the journal publishes; and submission requirements. This final category is especially important for contributors, who can learn what the maximum length of submissions should be, the average amount of time before a publication decision is made, the average time between acceptance and publication, and revealing statistics about the easiness or difficulty of publishing a piece with the journal. For example, one would learn from looking at the *Shakespeare Quarterly* entry that although the journal receives 250 articles per year, it only publishes 16 of them.

Once you've chosen the journal you would like to submit an article to, the next step would be to consult that journal's own "For Contributors" page. More and more journals are providing an online version of this page. Even if you are completely satisfied by what you've found in a periodical guide, it's crucial that you consult the actual journal's guidelines. Journals often change their editorial policies and, more often, they change editors. You won't want to offend the new editor by addressing the old one in your cover letter. Once you determine that the information in the periodical guide matches up with the information in the journal itself, you should be ready to make a decision about where to send the piece.

Submitting the Article

The periodical guide and "For Contributors" page will also list the journal's preferences for style and mechanics. While no editor is likely to reject your piece because you've formatted according to *MLA* style when the journal uses *Chicago*, she might appreciate the fact that the piece appears as it would in the journal. I *recommend* formatting according to the journal's preferences; doing so should take no more than half a day (save the original formatting as well, since the piece may be rejected). If the journal practices anonymous submissions,

make sure that your name appears nowhere in the article, including headers. Regardless of whether the journal finally prints footnotes or endnotes, manuscripts should always provide endnotes, double-spaced and beginning on a clean page. Now make the requested number of copies, including the electronic disk copy, and set the manuscript aside.

Your cover letter to the editor should be a very simple affair. Carrying on and on about your argument makes no sense for a variety of reasons but, most of all, because the cover letter is unlikely to get much further than a secretary's desk. Your job is to announce what you are submitting, to request publication in the journal, and to provide enough personal information that the editor will know how and where to reach you (make sure that you provide a professional e-mail address; again, hotpants@lovemail.com won't go over well). Figure 10.1 offers an example of a typical cover letter.

Always use your department's letterhead. You should list as your title, "Ph.D. Candidate." If you would like the manuscript to be returned to you, make sure you provide a SASE. I never bother to do so since I can't imagine sending a rejected article to another journal without first making changes to the manuscript. Once you've covered all these bases, your article is ready to go into the mail. You will probably receive an acknowledgment that your manuscript has been

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UNIVERSITY LETTERHEAD

June 12, 2002

The Chaucer Review
Professors Susanna Fein and David Raybin
English Department
117 Burrowes Building
The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA 16802

Dear Professor Fein and Professor Raybin:

Please consider my manuscript—"Athletic and Discursive Competition in Fragment I of the *Canterbury Tales*"—for publication in *The Chaucer Review*. I have enclosed two copies as requested.
Should you need to contact me, I can be reached by phone at (860) 429-9106 or by e-mail at semenza@uconn.edu. My mailing address is listed below and on the first page of the manuscript. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Gregory M. Colón Semenza
Assistant Professor of English

Figure 10.1 Sample cover letter for article submission

received within a few weeks after submitting it. If receipt has not been acknowledged after a month, call the journal to make sure the manuscript was not lost in the mail. Finally, you should keep in mind that you cannot submit an essay to more than one journal at a time. Some journals demand that authors include a line in their cover letters assuring the editor that their piece is not currently under review by another journal.

The Long Wait

Few things in academe are more irritating than awaiting an editor's response to a manuscript submission. After receiving the acknowledgment of receipt, you should prepare yourself for months of silence. Most journals still claim to return an answer within three months, but few are so timely in practice. Try to be patient. *The MLA Style Manual* advises that you may inquire about the article's status after four months. I usually wait for five months. If you decide to inquire, avoid allowing frustration or anger to pervade what should be a thoroughly professional correspondence. Whether by e-mail or snail mail, your inquiry should provide the title of your article, the original submission date, and your reason for writing, as demonstrated in figure 10.2.

Nine times out of ten, the editor will explain that the piece has been held up because (1) a reader is late in returning the piece or (2) the board has not yet met to discuss the reader's reports. An editor should respond in some way to your inquiries, however. If your e-mail or letter goes unanswered, try calling the office. I once dealt with an incompetent editor who, after holding my submission for more than a year, also refused to respond to any of my inquiries. Eventually, I withdrew the piece and placed it elsewhere, but only after having

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UNIVERSITY LETTERHEAD

February 1, 2005

Dear Professor Jagger:

I am writing to inquire about the status of my article, "Sympathy for the Devil," which I submitted to *You Can't Always Get What You Want* journal on August 15, 2004. I would appreciate any information you might have regarding the piece.

Sincerely,

Lucifer

Figure 10.2 Sample inquiry letter to journal editor

wasted almost 2 years. Most editors will be as frustrated as you by delays since they make their journals look bad, and they typically will respond with as much useful information as they can reasonably provide. They also will appreciate your patience.

Now figuring four or five months as an average waiting period, you'll want to adjust your job market plan accordingly. Since your submissions may be rejected one or more times and since you wish to publish two articles as a graduate student, you should set the following goal: to submit *at least* two manuscripts *at least* one year prior to the time you plan to go on the market. Submitting them earlier would obviously be advisable since cutting things so close to the deadline will undoubtedly cause you a considerable amount of stress when you least need it.

The Decision Process

Journal practices and policies are various and sometimes highly idiosyncratic. Here's what you need to know. Once an editor receives your manuscript, he will glance at it to determine that it is appropriate for the journal and to decide which readers should and should not evaluate whether or not it should be published. If she decides that the piece doesn't meet the standards of the journal (or simply doesn't fit), she will send it back immediately. If the piece seems appropriate for the journal, she will send it on to readers, being careful not to select individuals who are either attacked or unduly flattered in the article. Here's a point that cover letters to editors can address; if your essay happens to be a critique of Marxist theory, you can ask the editor to please avoid sending it to readers who obviously will respond in a negative or closed-minded way. In any case, typical practice is to send a manuscript to two readers, though some journals consult as few as one and as many as five readers.

Readers are typically given a set of questions to guide their evaluations. Figure 10.3 offers an example of a typical form, in this case from the journal *The Eighteenth Century*.

Good readers will go far beyond a simple yes or no, taking time to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of any submission, suggesting how the piece might be improved, and recommending additional sources or relevant information. Generally speaking, the more quickly they read the piece, the more quickly you will hear back from a journal.

Once the editor receives all of the readers' reports, she must determine the next step. If both reports recommend that the article not be published, the editor will likely print out a rejection form letter and inform the author of the bad news. In most cases, rejections are

The Eighteenth Century:
Theory and Interpretation

MANUSCRIPT EVALUATION FORM

Title:
Reader:
Date:
Recommendation (check one):

A. Accept: ( ) Outstanding: ( ) Good: ( ) Acceptable
B. Revise (as specified below) and accept
C. Revise (as specified below) and resubmit
D. Reject

Please explain the reasons for your recommendations below or on an attached sheet; these will be returned to the author anonymously, unless otherwise requested.

Figure 10.3 Sample evaluator form (*for The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation*)

accompanied by the readers' reports or at least by a summary of those reports. Some journals refuse to provide authors any feedback, a practice that is obviously inconsiderate and unprofessional. If the readers' reports are split, the editor will send the piece to an additional reader or she will make a decision herself. If the editor determines that the piece should be published or finds that all readers' reports recommend publication, she still needs, in most cases, to bring her recommendation to the next meeting of the journal's general board of editors. Since boards do not meet all that regularly, they often are an additional cause of delay in the publishing process. Only after the board approves the editor's recommendation will she be able to inform the author of the journal's decision.

Reading the Response

Journal submissions are rarely accepted "as is" because good editors work hard to ensure that the strongest possible pieces are published in their journals; it almost always makes sense to request at least some revisions from the author. Generally speaking, editors will respond to your submissions in one of four ways:

Acceptance

Even if you are lucky enough to land an article "as is," you should make it a point to revise according to the reader's reports. While fortunately you will have the freedom to determine which advice to

ignore and which to take seriously, regard the reports as indicators of how most readers will respond to your work. If both readers find fault with your handling of a particular issue, the smart thing to do is to address that issue. Your goal should be to publish the best possible version of the accepted piece.

Acceptance Pending Revision

A majority of your accepted articles will require some revisions. My general policy is to make any and all revisions recommended by the readers and editor unless such revisions alter the meaning or compromise the integrity of the article. Even if you determine that a particular revision suggestion is objectionable, you should try to meet the editor halfway; that is, if an acceptance depends on your revision of five passages and you oppose one of them, you should explain your objection and stress that you have been more than happy to address the other four points. As long as you are not being pigheaded, most editors will respect your decision. Always itemize your significant revisions so that the editor can more easily track and evaluate your changes. The appendix offers an example of an appropriate response to an editor's request for revisions, one which also will apply in relation to our next category (pp. 287–89).

Revise and Resubmit

Whereas an acceptance pending revision amounts to an agreement to publish your work so long as you revise it, an R&R suggests that the piece is not appropriate for publication *but* that the journal would be willing to consider a significantly revised version of it. Since editors gain nothing from encouraging resubmission of pieces they do not hope to publish, you can read an R&R as a positive sign of a journal's sincere interest in your work. As long as you determine that the revision suggestions are reasonable, you *should* revise and resubmit to the same journal as soon as possible. Often an editor will make a decision on the revised piece without even going back to readers. In other cases, he will send it to one or all of the original readers. In rare cases, she will send it to new readers. Chances are, though, that you will be more likely to receive a quick decision on a resubmitted piece than on an original submission. While acceptances are obviously preferable to R&Rs, you should remember that the only truly bad response from a journal is an outright rejection—and even that's fine as long as it's quick.

Rejection

Rejections can be helpful if editors are considerate. A few things to keep in mind: every scholar receives rejection letters. The quicker you

develop the thick skin you will need to survive in academe, the more successful you will be. The key is in how immediately you are able to bounce back from despair. Upon receiving a rejection letter, consult the readers' reports and revise the piece accordingly. Once you complete the revisions and address the readers' concerns, send the manuscript to another journal. If you decide that the readers' reports are useless or unfair, ask a friend to look at the piece. What you think unfair, your friend may be able to explain in more palatable terms. If your friend agrees with your sense of the matter—and happens to be an honest person—then go ahead and reformat the piece for another journal and send it off.

Proofreading and Post-Acceptance Procedures

The first thing to do is have a drink. Experts have just recognized your work as being of the highest quality. Too often in academe, we move onto the next project without stopping along the way to assess and celebrate our achievements. My wife and I have dinner at a nice restaurant whenever another publication is added to the CV.

Once your piece has been accepted, you will likely be contacted by a managing editor whose responsibility is to oversee the proofing stage of the process. This stage will typically consist of three to four steps, depending on the journal's practices. Regardless of what form proofs take, you should make it a point to turn them back over as quickly as possible. Make copies at every stage so that comparison between documents is possible.

The Copy-edited Manuscript

Many publishers will send you a copy of the manuscript itself with editorial markings and marginal queries designed to guide your corrections and revisions. At this stage, authors are still permitted to make revisions so you should approach your review of a copy-edited manuscript as the last chance to make real changes; major rewriting would be inappropriate, of course, but two- or three-sentence length additions, deletions, and minor reorganizing all are acceptable.

"First" Proofs

Next, you will receive either galley proofs or page proofs or both (in two separate steps). Whereas galley proofs typically are translations of your text into single column printed pages, page proofs convert the text into printed pages that will eventually constitute the actual publication. Since substantial revisions are not welcome at this stage (changes

are costly), you should understand that your job is to correct any mistakes that occurred during the transfer from your computer disk or manuscript to the publisher's printer.

Final Proofs

In some cases, you will receive one more set of proofs. Your job at this final stage is to make sure all mistakes have been corrected and that new ones have not been introduced in the process. You may also receive at this stage an order form for offprints of the article. Be sure to order at least twenty (I recommend 100 despite the cost) since you will want to send them to potential employers, colleagues who have assisted you in completing the article, tenure and promotion and merit committees, and other influential people in your field. Some journals no longer provide offprints and others provide what basically amount to stapled photocopies of articles. You may wish to ask editors about their offprints if there's a possibility you'll save money by making your own high-quality copies of the article.

After returning the final set of proofs to the publisher, you will still have to wait several months before the article is actually published. All in all, you will find that the process of publishing an article takes at least a year and, in many cases, *several* years. Your hard work will all seem worth it, though, the first time you see your name in print.

PUBLISHING YOUR DISSERTATION AS A BOOK

The good news is that you will have accumulated experience working with publishers long before you need to begin worrying about publishing your first book. The surprising news is that you'll need to begin working on that book as soon as you are hired in a tenure-track position. Publishing a book—after it is written and completely revised—will take at least 2 years and probably more like 3 or 4, so you shouldn't wait more than 2 years or so to begin shopping it around. Selecting a publishable dissertation topic in the first place is, of course, the initial step in this process, as we discussed in chapter 8. Here I offer a few more tips about the process of turning your dissertation into a book, focusing especially on the creation of a prospectus.

Envisioning the Book

Routledge editor and author of *Getting it Published*, William Germano, rightly emphasizes the differences between dissertations and scholarly monographs, claiming that most dissertations simply don't make good

books. The ones that do tend not to look much like dissertations in the first place: "What an editor is looking for—and sometimes does find—is the book you happened to be writing as you were writing your dissertation."[3] He cites as an example of the problem the long "Review of Literature" chapters that introduce most dissertations (see pp. 168–69). He also complains about the "thesis-plus-four-applications" format employed by many dissertators. That is, the format by which one offers a topic in the opening and then explores it in relation to four texts or case studies in subsequent chapters.

While I agree wholeheartedly with Germano's sense of the difficulties facing revisers of dissertations, I am convinced that the problems are institutional and psychological as well as formal. Over the past 20 years, a major shift has occurred in the academy from a situation in which professors sometimes *chose* to publish their dissertations—often many years after tenure—to one in which young faculty members are *expected* to publish their dissertations immediately. Even though the new model has been in place for more than 20 years, many major advisors continue to treat the dissertation as an animal only loosely related to the monograph. Not all Ph.D. students are ready to write books, it's true, but they should at least be encouraged to write something that looks like a book. What I am suggesting, in other words, is that the old dissertation—with its massive review of literature and "thesis-plus-four-applications" model is extinct. The dissertation has evolved. And in the new academic world, the old dissertation is simply unfit for survival.

One institutional solution to your future problems, then, would be to choose your advisors very wisely (see pp. 37–39). Ask potential advisors how they understand the relationship between the dissertation and scholarly monographs. Ask them whether or not they feel comfortable (and capable) enough to advise a *book* to completion. Ask them what they believe constitutes a reasonable plan for publishing that book once you are hired on the tenure track. From their answers you will be able to extrapolate much about their likely effectiveness as major advisors, and you will be able to make an informed decision accordingly.

The anxieties of many graduate students also explain a lot. On a certain level, the excessive "review of literature" serves as an obvious attempt on the student's part to say, "here's what I know. Look at all of these books that I've read." The "thesis-plus-four-applications" model stands in for an actual argument, which the student may lack confidence enough to pursue. Such anxieties and failures of confidence are likely exacerbated by advisors who draw attention to the differences between books and dissertations: students know they *should be* writing a book but are coached instead to write an archaic, impractical

document, which reinforces their sense of inadequacy regarding the ability to publish a monograph.

Most academics continue to experience "impostor syndrome" long after graduate school. You're not alone, in other words, if you feel anxious or uncertain about your readiness for writing a book. Remember, though, that I am recommending not that you seek to produce an immediately publishable dissertation but, rather, that you write a dissertation that looks and feels like a book. You still will have years to revise it into adequate shape. Merely by envisioning your project as a book, though, you will likely cut down on the sorts of problems that Germano and other editors find so problematic about dissertations. Seize the energy and excitement that comes from imagining your first monograph and channel it into the daily work of writing. By choosing a savvy major advisor willing to guide your writing, and by contending directly with your own anxieties, you'll be more likely to fashion a voice that is your own and a document that can eventually translate into a monograph. (For more information about how to create such a document, see chapter 8.)

Revising and Expanding

Your defense hopefully will alert you to the revisions you'll need to make before your dissertation can become a book. Often dissertators discover provocative new material for additional chapters while conducting their original research; expansion is therefore one of the most common forms of revision. Other dissertators simply need to strengthen the connections between the chapters or to add more contextual information. Regardless of what form your revisions take, don't wait long to begin revising. The summer before beginning your new job is the best time to start, regardless of how distracted you may be by the upcoming move. Even if you are only able to work up a revision schedule and a long-term plan for publishing the book, your time that summer will be well spent. You'll find it extremely difficult to get much new work done the first year or two on the job. Stress levels alone will be enough to affect quite negatively your usual levels of productivity. Revisions are quite possible, though, since they usually involve improving what you've already created.

How Much to Publish

Above I recommended that you publish at least one chapter of your dissertation prior to going on the market, which implies that more is better. But how much is too much when it comes to the publication

of chapters as articles? Young scholars face something of a unique predicament when it comes to answering this question. Since book publishers are less willing to take chances on unproven writers, they will like to see that your work has been given the stamp of approval, so to speak, by top journals. No book publisher wants simply to reprint already published material, though, and so most presses refuse to publish books from which more than 25 percent to 30 percent of the material has been previously published. Therefore, you should aim to publish no more than two chapters from your dissertation.

Selecting a Press

Just as you learned which journals to aim for, you'll begin to learn over time which book presses are most appropriate for your work. Obviously there are several major presses for humanities scholars—Oxford, Cambridge, Chicago, and so on—that are likely to attract your attention regardless of what you happened to write your dissertation on. But beyond the behemoths, the factors that influence one's decision of where to publish can be highly idiosyncratic and field- or topic-specific. Whereas Bucknell University Press, for example, has little prestige for medieval scholars, eighteenth-century literary scholars rightly view it as a strong outlet. In the old days, accepted wisdom regarded university presses as superior to trade presses. The ascendancy in recent years of several powerful and highly competitive trade presses—for example, Palgrave Macmillan, Routledge, and Ashgate—has significantly altered such perceptions. In fact, trade presses are often far more efficient than university presses, and they tend to have superior resources for advertising and marketing. As in the case of trying to select journals, you'll need to pay attention to where your colleagues are publishing and talk with your advisors about those presses that are right for your work.

Construct a list of 15 or 20 presses with which you'd consider publishing your work, and try to arrange them in order of preference. Once you have created your prospectus, you can begin sending it to four or five of these presses at a time. Avoid sending 20 prospectuses at once for two reasons: (1) you may receive early, useful feedback from editors than you can use to revise the prospectus; (2) you may attract the attention of more than one editor. Let's say that Cambridge and Illinois both agree to read your book: because presses typically demand the exclusive right to evaluate a manuscript, you thank the editor at Illinois for her interest and decide to submit the book to Cambridge, which rejects it seven months later. Now you can't go back to Illinois.

You may also find your choices narrowing over the years for largely unpredictable reasons. Perhaps you will meet an editor at a conference who will express interest in your work. Or maybe a particular press will begin to specialize in books directly related to your dissertation topic. In my own case, an opportunity emerged shortly after I was hired which involved a strong university press's willingness to read my manuscript. Having not yet mailed a prospectus to Cambridge, Oxford, or Chicago, I was faced with a dilemma: should I delay responding and thereby risk turning off the interested press, or should I recognize the difficulty of publishing a book—especially for first-time authors—and go ahead and submit the manuscript? I decided to submit the manuscript. I have never regretted my decision, especially since it allowed me to publish the book early on in my professorial career, but I do not think the other decision would have been wrong either. The point is that you should construct a plan, but you should also recognize the likelihood that you will veer away from it for one reason or another.

Preparing the Prospectus

Once you develop a plan for approaching presses, it's time to begin writing the prospectus. A key feature of any persuasive prospectus is the author's ability to convey the project's contribution in a concise and clear manner. Prospectuses, therefore, should be about five pages excluding the cover letter, though some presses will allot authors as many as 2000 words, which is more like seven pages. Remember that while your extremely focused, perhaps even cutting-edge project might go over really well with colleagues at a conference, editors will be focused on numerous practical considerations. How much need is there for such a book? Is this book likely to sell? How much work will the press need to do to ready this book for publication? Whereas jargon may sound intelligent to you, it will likely suggest to an editor your inability to communicate clearly. Whereas you may view the noncanonical subject matter as progressive, an editor might see it as unlikely to sell. In constructing a prospectus, you must communicate the marketability of the project without surrendering its intellectual integrity. In what follows, I've broken down into typical components an academic book prospectus, two of which can be found in the appendix (pp. 292–98). I do not wish to suggest that all prospectuses must include all of these parts, and the order in which prospectuses arrange the parts also tends to vary. You will find that most presses have clearly defined policies about what they wish to receive from prospective authors. Always consult a press's web site before contacting an editor.

Cover Letter

Your one to two-page cover letter should be simple and to the point: "I have written a book on such and such a topic. Would you be interested in publishing it?" If you have had previous contact with the editor, make sure you remind her of this fact in the opening paragraph. The rhetorical style of a cover letter will vary from author to author, but as figure 10.4 reveals, a solid cover letter will always convey certain important pieces of

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January 3, 2002

Ms. Kathryn Amanarindo
Assistant Acquisitions Editor, Humanities
The Greatest University Press
2715 Charles Street
Bethesda, Maryland 21218–4323

Dear Ms. Amanarindo:

I am writing to inquire whether you would be interested in reviewing my book manuscript, "Sport, Politics, and Literature in Early Modern England," for publication by Greatest University Press. My interdisciplinary work on Early Modern culture and literature ties in nicely with recent GUP monographs on the cultural history of the period, including Ralph Falcon's *Charismatic Criminals*, Paul R. Backson's *Spectacular Sites*, and Tonya Sere's, *Village People*.

Despite recent critical interest in nearly every aspect of Early Modern English popular culture, scholars have ignored sport, exercise, and athletics. This neglect is puzzling since sport occupied an integral position—both literal and metaphorical—in politics, medicine, military science, and art. To the degree that Early Modern scholars have studied "sport" at all, they have tended to conflate athletics and mirthful, disorderly activities such as drinking and gambling. In contrast, my book demonstrates that sport was central to Early Modern conceptions of order, health, and nobility, and it shows how major writers like Shakespeare and Milton used contemporary controversies about sport as a vehicle for social commentary and protest.

The critical response to this project—from colleagues in English, History, and Comparative Literature—has been enthusiastic. Several preliminary ideas are developed in essays published, or accepted for publication, in *SEL*, *Renaissance Quarterly*, and *Prose Studies*.

The completed manuscript, including the bibliography, is approximately 320-pages typescript (78,076 words, excluding bibliography) and requires no special design attention.

I hope that you will be interested in reviewing my book manuscript. Enclosed you will find a brief prospectus, chapter outline, introduction, sample chapter, and vita. I can be reached by phone at my office (861 486-4723) or home (861 429-9096) and by e-mail (semenza@uconn.edu). Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely,

Gregory M. Colón Semenza
Assistant Professor of English

Figure 10.4 Sample cover letter for book prospectus

information: first, the title and subject of the book (see also pp. 289–92). What is the book about? What sort of audience is it aimed at? Second, it will describe the current status of the manuscript. If the book is not complete, let the editor know when you plan to finish it (for a first book, I recommend sending prospectuses only after you have completed the manuscript). Finally, be sure to state your credentials for authoring the manuscript.

The letterhead will convey your affiliation, but you should make clear your rank as well. A quick mentioning of relevant publications will further demonstrate your qualifications; especially if you have already published parts of the proposed book, say so, since such publications speak to the quality of your project.

Project Description

Avoiding jargon, explain what your book is about. Be sure to highlight your central argument since the editor will want to know how your work advances or contributes something to an existing conversation. The good news is that the job market will have prepared you for summarizing your work in a concise and clear manner. You may even find yourself able to cut and paste sections of your job application or dissertation abstract. Just remember that you should remove all remnants of the "dissertation" from an actual book prospectus. For an example of a project description, see the Appendix.

Audience

In a few paragraphs, explain who will want to read your book. Obviously a larger audience will be more appealing to a press. Especially if you envision the book being useful to teachers or students, say so, since regular classroom use of your book will translate into regular sales for the press. Be very direct in this section since you need to make the case to a press that the book will sell. Consult the prospectuses in the appendix, in addition to studying the example in figure 10.5.

Competing Books

Are there published books similar to your own? If so, in what ways is your book different? In a paragraph, explain. See figure 10.6. In many ways, the "Competing Books" section demands information you should already be quite able to articulate: how is your book to be situated within a larger discourse community?

Chapter Summary or Table of Contents

Should you decide to provide more than a table of contents, limit your description of each chapter to no more than a short paragraph,

There is also a much wider audience for this book, consisting of historians, Dickens enthusiasts, and those interested in imprisonment and the origins of modern psychology. In many ways, our culture has not outgrown the Victorians' fascination with penitentiaries and criminals—with confessions, secret horrors, prison scandals, and the private infliction of insanity. Recent movies like *Murder in the First*, *Dead Man Walking*, and *The Green Mile* bear that out, as do new books by Norvald Morris and Peter Brooks. Though *The Self in the Cell* is "about" a serious scholarly topic, then, it has the power to attract thoughtful non-scholars as well. Just as important, the manuscript is written throughout in language that is sophisticated but accessible to the array of audiences who may take up the book. Readers of *The Self in the Cell* will make important discoveries about Dickens, Charlotte Brontë, and other Victorian novelists, to be sure. But they will also, I believe, come to fuller appreciations of the prison's importance to the development of interior narrative, psychoanalytic practice, and the shape of the modern novel.

Figure 10.5 Sample prospectus audience description

Although *Milton in Popular Culture* would have no direct competition, it can be most closely compared to books on Shakespeare and popular culture or to Milton companions and teaching volumes. The most relevant previous publication is Douglas Lanier's *Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture* (Oxford, 2002). Along with such groundbreaking books as *Shakespeare, The Movie* (Routledge, 1997), *Shakespeare and the Moving Image* (Cambridge, 1994), and *Shakespeare After Mass Media* (Palgrave, 2002), Lanier's work demonstrates the sort of broad interest a study of a canonical figure and popular culture can generate. Unfortunately for Renaissance scholars, such studies have been limited only to one author: Shakespeare. Studies of Milton most comparable to this volume would be Thomas Corns, ed., *A Companion to Milton* (Blackwell, 2001), Richard Bradford's *The Complete Critical Guide to Milton* (Routledge 2001), and Peter Herman's (ed.) forthcoming *MLA Approaches to Teaching Milton*, all of which are aimed at a broad academic audience but none of which deal with popular culture.

Figure 10.6 Sample prospectus "competing books" paragraph

similar to those represented in figure 10.7. As an alternative to creating a separate chapter breakdown, you may wish to describe the contents of the book in the project description itself.

In addition to the cover letter, many presses will request a sample chapter or an introduction. In considering which chapter to send, think both about which chapter is the strongest and which is likely to appeal to the widest audience. Never send an entire manuscript to an editor. The editor will never read it, and she may be annoyed by your ignorance. Once the document is out of your hands, try to exercise the same patience you've learned from dealing with journals.

Chapter Three: "The Literary Context of the *Book of Sports* Controversy" demonstrates the mutually constitutive relationship between literary and political commentaries on sport. Investigating closely several anti-court satires written in the 1610s—including *Eastward Ho* and *The Isle of Gulls*—the chapter elucidates the manner in which dramatists used sport to critique or defend the political policies of James I. The primary focus of the chapter, however, is on James' *Book of Sports* as a reaction to such dramatic commentaries. In short, the king's defense of lawful pastimes is a deliberate attempt to counter his popular reputation as an unlawful monarch.

Figure 10.7 Sample prospectus chapter description

Conclusion

The proverbial pressure to publish can indeed be paralyzing, but it need not be. Like the development of most skills, learning to publish requires knowledge, practice, and multiple failures. The failures and the rejections, you should know, are unlikely ever to cease completely. But such challenges are precisely what make professional writing so stimulating an activity and publishing so rewarding an accomplishment.