

DOGS workshop, Friday 1 June 2007
Near East room

Books, articles, essays, etc.:
different types of publications, and what to be aware of when leaping into print

THE SINGLE-AUTHORED BOOK

- Generally the most prestigious type of publication, often a requirement for tenure.
- Choose your press with care (what is its reputation for speed and efficiency? what about its distribution network? is it prestigious enough to satisfy a really choosy employer?).
- First approach the music editor in person at a conference or by email, with a brisk and enticing summary of the book, no more than one page long; with any luck s/he will ask to see the entire ms.
- Prepare the ms with care: especially on a subject that isn't a bestseller, you need to convince the press that you're worth bothering about, and for this perfect grammar, punctuation, vocabulary choice, citation and bibliographic style, etc., are essential, along with clarity of structure and argument and so on. Do NOT send an unrevised dissertation in—presses simply hate that. A dissertation is a genre that is quite different from a publishable academic book.
- The ms will go to two readers, who usually remain anonymous, and should submit reports within 3-6 months. These will usually recommend either acceptance as long as certain corrections are made, or else rejection.
- Read the contract carefully. Ask for clarification on points you don't understand, and get a more experienced, savvy mentor or friend to check it through as well. You need to understand fully what your rights and obligations are.
- Adhere religiously to all deadlines during the production process, and if you are forced to miss a deadline for some reason, communicate immediately with your editor and renegotiate the deadline; it's vital to get a reputation for utter reliability and professionalism, especially if you work on a non-sexy topic. If all goes well, it should take 18-24 months from acceptance to publication.

THE REFEREED JOURNAL ARTICLE

- Research journals in advance: tailor your article to the target journal in terms of content, amount and nature of theoretical engagement, length, citation style, etc.
- Research the reputation of the current journal editor: is he or she known for turning things around fast, or is it well known that anything sent to her/him drops into a black hole? Editorships change usually every three to four years, so make sure you're up on who's on the job at any one point. And don't assume editors of prestigious journals will necessarily perform their duties well: one of the black holes into which an early article of mine dropped was [name of journal deleted—it's one of the most famous in North American musicology]. It's still there, more than ten years later...
- You don't usually need to contact the editor in advance to see if they are interested in looking at your article—you can just prepare an impeccably presented article (preferably that you've previously run past numerous friends and mentors for comment) and send it in; usually two readers will referee it for the journal, and recommend publication with minor

changes, revise and resubmit, or rejection. The referee process shouldn't take more than 3-4 months.

THE EDITED ESSAY VOLUME

- No, it is not easier to edit an essay volume than to write your own single-authored book. It is far, far harder, because you have to juggle several different contributors, whose work may be of different standards. (For example, you may have to walk a fine line between not offending someone by editing their writing too obviously on the one hand, and making it harder to get the volume accepted if you leave amateurish, untidy English intact on the other). Also, you may be dealing with procrastinators as well as efficient types; senior scholars who don't need your volume for their next pay raise and thus may not see the need to move fast and meet deadlines; junior scholars who desperately need the publication for their tenure cases and thus start tearing their hair out at the delays introduced by the senior scholars and procrastinators, etc. (This is not to imply that all senior scholars behave this way, by any means; but some do.) A good volume editor is a diplomat who is also ruthless enough to omit poor writers and poor timekeepers from the original invite list, however distinguished they may be.
- Otherwise, things proceed much as for single-authored books. A lot of presses aren't too keen on edited volumes, so you will need to make a strong case for why the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, and why it is novel, worthwhile, or whatever.
- If you are invited to contribute an essay to an edited volume, the caveats mentioned above apply to you in a different way: you may be the desperate junior scholar who needs the publication but whose fellow contributors are lazing around not doing much for months on end. So before you agree to take part, find out about the editor's reputation and that of the other contributors s/he is asking to participate.
- In general, an essay in an edited volume ranks a bit lower than a refereed journal article as far as tenure committees are concerned, unless it's a major essay in a very influential collection.

ENCYCLOPEDIA ENTRIES

- Upside is, it's nice to show the world that someone thinks well enough of your work to ask you to contribute to a major reference work that is likely to be around for decades to come.
- Downsides are numerous: you often surrender any right to agree to final editorial changes (which can affect content as well as presentation); publishers are often uninterested in accuracy as an end in itself; encyclopedias frequently take many years to go from conceptualization to print (e.g. Garland took over 15 years from start to finish), so that you may wait six or seven years to see your entry make it into print; and so on. Horror stories related to encyclopedias are legion.

TRANSLATIONS

- Doing these shows your proficiency in the language concerned, and often allows you to help out scholars from other countries.
- But it is very time-consuming, and is fairly low down on the prestige ladder for tenure committees—so do a few important ones if you want, but don't sacrifice refereed journal articles or your book to too much of this.

BOOK, CD, AND VIDEO REVIEWS

- You will be approached by a journal's review editor and asked if you will undertake one of these—you don't volunteer.
- It's nice to show that people think well enough of you to ask you to do this kind of thing, especially for a well-known journal.
- But, especially early in your career, I'd take a careful look at the item in question before saying yes. If you think the book in question is a bust, but it's by a senior scholar in your field who may be writing for your tenure case or refereeing your book ms, you might want to pass on the opportunity.

OTHER MEDIA, ETC.

- We often end up getting involved in CD and DVD production. This is crucial to my work, for instance. But before you make it too great a proportion of your output, check how your employer views AV publications. Some more traditional tenure review committees may not understand how vital these "other media" publications are to a field like ours.
- Online journals are proliferating, but right now, especially at the early stage of your career, you probably want to be sending most of your best work to well-established conventional journals.
- Textbooks are not counted as research output by most universities and colleges: they come under teaching/service and will NOT replace the single-authored book for tenure.

DOUBLE SUBMISSIONS

Never, ever send the same book or article ms (or any other item) to two presses or journals at the same time, unless both sides are aware that you are doing so and have agreed to it. It costs time, effort, and money to referee an item, so usually a press or journal will want to be the only entity doing so at any given point.

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