

Read in two page view display

The point of publishing

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90 points of publishing

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1

the

point

1.1

Upload, post, send, share: meaning publish, quite clearly. A point – the point - something private becomes something public, intentionally. The idea and another idea that someone might want to read it.

The final version or a variety of versions, changing, fluid: what's 'published' may be 'work in progress'. No matter: it seems new, original enough, at least in some details of arrangement.

Put it out there; wait to see what happens, or go direct to the next point of publishing.

1.2

Publishing is undertaken at point of departure and at a point of reception and in between: embarkation, transit, arrival.

Journeys – adventures sometimes and for some – involving buckling down to hardy tasks, making do, trafficking, trading, conveying valuable and mundane cargoes, consigned, delivered safe or slippery, extending manifold distance and memory.

Some left behind, bewildered, bereft, foundering, abandoned, forgotten - or etched, archived, hallowed for the ages.

1.3

A point of no return and with no avoiding changes on the way: recalibration, maturing, gaining intensity, speculative gain and, most often, at least a little loss; avoiding staleness, exhaustion, putrefaction, entropy.

Everything in order - shipshape after a fashion, squared away. Worth the while to spend the days and weeks on practicing, perfecting drills to save the living, build a reputation, flags flying.

All hands on deck, gathered at signed assembly points. Plans, schedules and budgets, orderly procedures require just the right seasoning of panache, bravado, cunning, devil-may-care.

1.4

Some keep a look-out for the emerging 'published', scanning the expanses for tell-tale points on the horizon; tiny to the untrained naked eye, in more detail through a powerful lens.

On a regular trading route or a voyage in uncharted waters, there's a chance to close on whales and leaping porpoises, to sense the submarine shoals of tuna or herring, the vast and deadly icebergs.

Sometimes there's no point of reference, sometimes fish and clouds and waves and seabirds look more or less the same. They may reward another look.

1.5

When news of a sighting reaches other watchers and waiters, there may be a glimmer in the bored eyes, a stirring, murmur, buzz that causes chatter, movement, responding to the attention-grabbing edition.

One, the next one and another team up to trumpet what's been spotted as they change course toward the distant enticements of narrative and discourse.

Signals and semaphore, dit-dit-dash and flashing beams, sat-nav and sonar, public and private media, chat and chivvyng: an interlacing of interest and intensity knits around needle points, patterning.

1.6

Finding what's there to discover, rediscover, invest and reinvest with meaning, using charts and maps, wayside signs, nameplates, travellers' tales and mealtime gossip; wisdom of old voyagers and the boasting of youthful buccaneers. Those not wanting to be found might hide away, or walk openly under a schlemiel's pointed magic hat, while others, shyly eager for intercourse and audience, may languish, unable to project across the crowded continents and cresting oceans.

Without the scuttlebutt of busybodies, the denizens of the entrepôt will be unaware. With always another scandal to intrigue, the memories of a bookish byway can be flattened, outglared by other mundane flashes-in-the-pan.

1.7

Let's have more braggadocio, more bull, more flair and fandango. What's not worth doing is worth doing badly, or better left to someone else to do. Ignorance can be bliss.

Publish what works, and then don't care. Keep moving to another project, reject too much precision in the planning: it leads to error or inertia. Look for vibrant disappointment, breaking dismay open with new possibility.

The smallness and agility of publishing is an advantage, skipping through ideas and artifice to jolt and tickle, fire and discombobulate the arty and arrogant self-importance of those who feed on the mass and massive media.

1.8

Other arts are so much examined; the plastic and performing are ruminated on and gushed about, makers and performers are stars.

The wordy work that goes into published work and the work about this work is more likely to be valued as effect on consciousness or commerce, morality or manners.

Detailed examinations rely on undercover agencies, pinning the known and possible on the bulletin board, interposing squints, lenses and prisms in the line of sight, moving the focal point, releasing kinetic features of a quasi-static medium.

1.9

Exegesis, structured discourse, is not the most helpful or enjoyable order of the day. There is just too much that's serious to absorb in available brain cells.

Fragments, impurities, comforts and small shocks can provide a more satisfying dotted outline that can fill with colour, controversy and contempt.

Small isn't always beautiful, but a pea brain, pea shooter, pea green sea can aspire to fire the imagination better than a billion dollar budget and a designer tattoo.

Publishing needs to be peculiar, needs to be at best semi-structured, needs to forget about proving itself. Stop worrying if there is a point at all.

2

points
of view

2.1

Publish the thing; strive to be something other than uniform; writers and readers looking for more than unique selling points and the target markets, aiming points, near or far, out in the open or concealed in undergrowth with sniping rifle or shotgun. Making points gives value to having a point of view. Drawing attention to the unpopular, inconvenient, embarrassing, heretical; exposing even if no-one wants to look just now.

Fact and opinion spin into one another: the register of each elaborates the imposition of the combination. Checking facts in an old way, not looking at the for-the-moment latest post or wiki, requires judgment and close attention not constantly to reinforce self-reference.

2.2

Avoid diatribes, present arguments and opinions. It's different from, with many a nuance, the cheesy scoring of debating points. Pushing home a cooked-up point, ignoring evidence, perverting known and unknown knowns, will only briefly blindside medium, message, messenger and messagee.

Voice, developed consciously or not, eases both friendly recognition and the critique of branded personality. Words and images, still and moving, archived and interactive, offering and requiring interpretation, are a basis, not a substitute, for knowledge, understanding, truth, and wisdom.

2.3

Publishing's a yes-or-no decision, binary determination of value and if the tale is told: needing rationales, synopses, presentations, story boards, support material and multi-media interpretation. An explosion of curation talk: determinedly showing the value of the interventions.

Points of view, shaped and burnished before punters' comments are allowed, with designers and printers who intervene to shape the process. Standing between writer and reader, agents, consultants, editors and curatorial voices articulate deep open publishing messages.

Yes is yes, no is no, or start again, revise, reconsider, resubmit.

2.4

Expressions, turns of phrase, figures of speech put us a little nearer the under-the-skin of others, but we mostly see the point of view from the outside. There is no knowing what others think or feel. Published discourse, unlike identity-centred mediated blah-blah, makes a show of putting forward other cases.

Writing and reading as public enterprise leads to an idea of socializing the publishing process, mixing our and other people's views in Babel or Bedlam. Flat smooth facets reflect kaleidoscopic confusion in which all the variations are prettily distorted versions of the same old, same old.

2.5

On the borders, chauvinism is often at its most potent, with distinctions of them and us, them and them, and us and not-quite-us. Frontiers are always permeable, in spite of the fortifications facing out to the supposed danger, books forming inappropriate barricades.

Fierce enforcement from behind the lines hopes to lessen lawlessness, but the places near the edge nonetheless attract renegades and mavericks. There are frequent border skirmishes with marauders, reavers and moss-troopers.

This is a place where custom and constraint cannot prevent a motley mix of selves.

2.6

Direction of travel, momentum, is divined for each individual message. Where it's come from not more important than where it's going. In straight or curving lines, the energy in it determines the movement, and the environmental resistance. The lubrication that speeds it on or the friction that keeps it back is as important as the starting velocity. Publishing is never instant, but often timely.

Preparations for the launch are managed in big and tiny detail, and the crew is trained for survival and success. At a certain time the point is to get there, wherever, at whatever cost, and can become the satisfaction of mere solipsistic ambitions.

10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1 – we have lift-off.

2.7

Multiple narratives don't always help. The people in the multi-storey, multi-story dwellings don't know each other any better than spread-out rusticals. Their stories do not intermingle as they might, but stack up, tottering, only to be brought together in few intimate moments or by ideology and hopefulness.

Finding ways to broadcast other points of view is more difficult than putting them on cloud, stick, disc or shelf. Naming a lost or drought-doomed child may tell a story, but identifying the dead doesn't tell anyone anything anywhere.

Published voices, like trees in forests, fall silent if no one hears their sound.

2.8

Publishers, priests and politicians come together when it suits them, sometimes often, in meetings that are rarely, in the long term, legitimate or fruitful. Their interests are too at odds, too difficult to reconcile one to the other, too irrelevant to the others' views of time, space, aims and desires.

Policies, programmes, projects, and ambitions all turn into neat ideas in the publisher's fevered imagination. When looking doable, desirable, even great, the discussion with colleagues and collaborators can rise to an unreal state of great excitement and enthusiasm.

Looking like it's not a serious business. Daft really.

2.9

Being a truth-teller or a truth-bender is not always an open choice. The origins of an idea or narrative can act like a magnetic field, making new shapes and patterns, infinitely varied or repetitively patterned. Each gathered set of data, each chosen quoddity, each twist or spin provides individuality to the piece; makes it hard to judge evidence or suggest any comparison except of the more commonly contrasting features.

Ducking stools, ordeal by water and by fire make the wordsmiths into witches, publishers into pharmakoi.

Words are false, fickle and flirty, and that's a fact.

3

intent

content

3.1

We have, adopt, feign a point of view. There is a direction over the threshold, through the limen, out into the wide published world. Publication doesn't wait but bursts and overflows the edges of the private and the public.

And what an edge it is that disappears when overwhelmed, an edge that ceases to divide, an edge made unimportant through its lack of holding power. An overflowing, a tipping point, an overbalancing, a bursting that makes mockery of borders and membranes, causes elements to mix and mud to gel into new contours. A fishing boat flung high above the town. A new river source.

3.2

Calamitous cliché of creativity, flowing out from inner space, surprised in new publishing forms, doesn't tell who's creating what and why. Too much context can be just too much, and can even start to look thin.

Publishing strives to be less, to get to a nub, kernel, noyau. It's happy to be smaller when needed, or larger when handling expressions of numerous levels of complexity. What we do not put on paper or on screen, with no help or support offered to the imbiber with the textual device, can be the very thing that shapes the constructs and the means we must employ to decipher them.

3.3

Avant-garde now must mean digital, often transient or temporary, time or non-time and site or non-site specific, leaving little opportunity for experiments to do the double task of processing both words and ideas. Clicking and swiping canonical poetry, hyperlinkages offer seemingly unlimited interpretation, soon sterilize every dissection tool in the readers' laboratory.

Waiting for each new tech-encumbered text, the scholars adjust poetry and language, wire-frame ideas and options, how clever and, in our meaning, how unpublished. Everything mediated, moderated, mediatized, determines a new view of time and space, full of automation and all the spectrum of modernist presentation. Total editing kills texts.

3.4

Looking clever isn't being clever; reading isn't just absorbing, but being absorbed and coming out the other side; publishing must make a judgment about what is good but leave the reader to find a proof.

Publishing, like steak, done to a point, just enough, but not overcooked: the alternatives are bloody or burnt. And for those who want another diet, everything is possible, nutritious or not, varied or not, local or not, organic or not, GM or not, fattening, thinning, low salt, hi-fibre, sugar or gluten free. Publishing can cook to order, but not always to everyone's liking.

For readers, like diners, have different tastes at different times, at everyday or special occasions, in a hurry or taking time.

3.5

It doesn't work best for those in a hurry, focusing on printy publishing. Try computer games if you mean to make complexity from simple rules.

Publishing is in its element when turning bigger ranges of human, natural and spiritual experience into an understandable simplicity. While digital tries to get away from the clunky look by looking oh so sophisticated, publishing uses simpler design and presentation to make the complex easier to handle.

Moving with cat-like tread rather than in chess moves, publishing makes sterile ordering of bits and bobs come to life by flair and simple style.

3.6

That has a purpose, what else but to spread ideas and amusement or collect in money. There can be dissonance between creators and disseminators, inside workers and adventuring out-goers, making publishing appear as mediator or manipulator.

Publishing without a purpose is transmission, a delivery service that can keep you waiting all day and be happy with the most scrawled signature ever. It will convert a slush pile to slush, a dirty flood of melted precipitation, run-off, leaving muddy deposits, robbing silt and soil, making future forest growth and useful cropping more difficult.

Damage hard to repair in a generation.

3.7

The innards, useful for divination or augury, the guts of the book, vital organs: these are what make dissection worth the bother. Chopping the content up too much, though, can make it difficult to re-version, adapt, repackage, reconstitute and use again without destroying something of the life that's made it.

Sterile supermarket wrappings, like verbatim repetitions in cool and well-lit shelves, are also deadly. It's worth the search for the brief moment between purity and putrefaction, the time when the publishing is more like livingness, vitality in the process of disintegration, a creation that is at once mature, magnificent and mure-hearted.

3.8

Publishing content in a linear way means that pages, chapters, illustrations are numbered for more reasons than navigation, like the multiple white-bound volumes of the genome. Processes of understanding intentions, arguments and narratives require backward reference through orderly space and time.

Some texts provide instructions only for selected routes; hyperlinks fiddled and fixed to determine which ways can be followed and which are discouraged.

Structures and processes, exchanging mass and energy, connect the development of each with the broader narrative of all the other published things.

3.9

If publishing has any overall intention, it must contribute to the way we communicate with each other. It adds argument, information and critique, satisfaction with well-tempered words, guidance in pursuit of pleasure and bearing of pain.

In the publishing insides are found a backdrop, a blanket, a foothold and a distant focus point that help us lock onto our place in the world of fickle facts and tempting fictions.

Here are all the worlds that words can give us, and some more that we may approach with want, wariness or wonder.

4

limen

4.1

Liminal space, place of ritual, place of intensity, psychological threshold, the 'where' of new beginnings.

If on the water still, the liminal's added surfaces and depths are governed by a limenarch, the warden or governor of a port. Gatekeepers, publishers with a permanent yes-no interlude: doubling money and taking it away, a still point of decision.

There's no open door policy on the land. Publishing is mostly controlled there too, like a horse taking the fences at a point-to-point, leaping to a bidding but sometimes bolting or refusing to jump.

4.2

Manuscripts in London may still arrive at the publisher's office 'over the threshold' or 'over the transom' in New York and enter such a liminal space, a slush pile. Over this threshold the private becomes public, evaluated first by one reader, then several, then many. Ordered processes towards publication keep measured time, counting down to final revelations, borders crossed: points of no return.

Reaching and passing the limen, work assumes another state: solid text, open to criticism or praise, it lazes on the dusty library shelf or bounds unbound from hand to hand. Clear here which is chicken and which egg, books living in time, with new physicalities, a transhumance rather than the maelstrom of digital mash-up.

4.3

The limenarch allots the moorings and polices the comings and goings. Then laden, battened down, it's out and away, breasting the waves, course determined by weather and tides, captained and crewed with skill and intent, ignoring the terror that comes when a small thing knows it cannot react decisively against tsunami or becalming.

Swashbuckling, fully rigged or proceeding under their own steam, all are still subject to climate, weather, mechanical delays, economic cycles, political exigencies and pirates.

Broken bottles at the launch of boats and books, and cracked glass when they fail.

4.4

The limen can be a springboard or trampoline that adds momentum to the athletic endeavour. Taking the plunge, leaving one vantage point to gain another, exchanging static clarity for dynamic blur.

At all points of the compass new thresholds, new staging posts, new orientations are needed for perfect navigation. New limits, new edges reached, new boundaries encountered, broached, bridged, breached. Publishing bravado and dead reckoning drive on through the liminal spaces.

An edgy cousin of time-bound writ remains on the periphery, while courage passes through or over the limits, not hovering or strutting stuff; venturing out, veering not backing.

4.5

Up, up and away, then, after feeling gingerly, stepping over, keeping a horizon in view. Heads-up displays needed. The orientation and angle that affect what hits the back of the eye are not bias but reflected humanity, concern and independence; at worst another's echo.

Defensive lines drawn in the sand, spiriting volunteers: you, you and you. Pens look mightier than Bowie knives.

Pushing an envelope. Forcing communication.
Keeping lines open. Synchronizing watches.
Counting what sits on the point of a needle.

4.6

Ink can fade or be made to disappear, adding urgency to reading. Digital text and images can be erased and altered giving lie to memory and reminiscence: counterfactual.

Changing states of readability are built into the technology of publishing. Paper turns brittle, yellow, crumbles, becomes dust. Bindings and glue decompose, are consumed by animal and vegetable parasites.

Orthography and spelling changed by habit or decree is accurate like carbon dating. Words lose meaning, change use, shift to other registers of respectability and acceptance, going over the top, a bit too far, beyond the pale, out of order.

4.7

Judging the boundaries of good taste, propriety, standards in private and public life are intrinsic to the publishing risk. What can and cannot be said is more than an issue of the words that are used and when they are used. Words change as they move from mouth to mouth, page to page, and screen to screen.

Taboos broken by publishing are briefly thought shocking, and then rapidly adopted in humour and familiar settings.

New uses of the once forbidden become commonplace, but some words remain particularly diabolical, revolting or totally forbidden, with new ones banned from time to time. But words are good at jailbreaks and disguise.

4.8

The physicality of published work means it can move past a sell-by, due to expire, out of date and out of time, defunct, archaic, old-fashioned, and historic. But this is acknowledged in the scheme of things, and items not first wanted by many will lie dormant, ready to be rediscovered and revalued when their sell-buy time comes.

When everything is always on both sides of the line that says it's published, the threshold of rediscovery may have no meaning: impossible to see over the edge that's not an edge; round the corner that's flattened out; into the future that contains all of the past.

Future proof is needed for any future-proofing. No going back, so don't look forward.

4.9

There are points on the edge where breakthroughs happen. Wily old contemptibles identify them by walking the front line, preparing for frontal attacks, knowing how to stop the gaps. In attack, being flexible and mobile counts, and knowing where to find the weakest place, the flimsiest defence, the most dispirited garrison.

Publishing probes the no-man's-land between writer and reader and advances judiciously, supports those who propose believable plans of attack, and is there to cover a retreat or recovery after a rout.

Digging in is digging down, and digging down is for diamonds or death.

5

public

privacy

5.1

Publishing reveals; like writing and reading, reviewing, recommending, sometimes wriggling nervously and uncomfortably between the public and the private spaces of life.

Writings can be nailed to a door, declaimed from a rooftop or window, hidden under blankets, in the sun or in the sultry shadows, predestined, passed about in hot and cold places.

There is internalization and comparison with the world. Secret publication is not a means to publish something to be kept secret, but to publish something in secret so that it will cease to be secret and will gallop out to its readers. Publishing is the means of revelation.

5.2

Publishing puts things into print, puts them out and then can withdraw or issue a new edition, make impressions, allow a title to be out of stock, declare it out of print.

Good management of livestock allows insemination for the good of the flock or herd, and when book dissemination gives a similar selective chance, it can look like cultural eugenics.

Communication that was one-way or two-way now thinks it's all-ways, always, always on and everywhere. Publications are suffused with a constancy, like holy wine, transubstantiating, dissolving the readers' location specific, cloud-fed apparatus.

5.3

Publishing and self-publishing look similar at first glance and it's more difficult than it looks to spot the differences. Self-publishing's motivation is miles apart from the worthiness of amateur book making, and when professionals and amateurs play the game, rarer skills are employed if there's a contest, like a three-ring circus or the five-ring arena.

Shibboleths are hard to get your mouth around and secret handshakes are not the only thing that sets the brothers and sisters of publishing apart.

There is knowledge, depth of experience and old-fashioned nous involved.

5.4

Whether in the dark or light of day, stick-and-stone attacks will hurt, but the cost of careless or malicious words can be a greater farrago of financial cost, febrile litigation and loss of face.

Words available to readers are required for serious defamation, libel. Words on screen make the place of publication and distribution a less geographically restricted limiter of liability than before. In the places where damages to reputation may be least but damages that can be claimed are highest, this can be a useful earner for the globally entitled, the people of whom so much that isn't nice can most easily and correctly be said and written.

Publish and be damned to penury is more like it now.

5.5

The bugaboo of piracy and the doctrine of intellectual property condemn whole professions to the wrack of copyright and control. These constraining instruments with origins in politics and religion do not always transfer well to the legalities of creative commerce.

Brand building, platform strutting, image rights and personal protection muddy the point by seeming to protect the act of creation rather than the creation itself.

Wanting the urge to develop directly from the imagination, there's now just wariness of competition and adaptation, borrowing and the joys of cultural bouillabaisse. Pre-post-modern insights struggle to survive.

5.6

A private and public space where publishing is kept is accessed, rests and lies in waiting. Some locations, billed as legacy, are more to do with the storing than the stored. Libraries are buildings, social centres, sites for book disposal, final solutions to the glut of the unwanted and unread.

The text is dematerialized, clouded, as if up in smoke, curiously attributed a value as electronic archive which it is denied as physical object.

Some new repositories store single copies of it all, some prefer selections. Some encourage messy serendipity; some dictate pathways and allowable interstices; some tempt with abundance but have strict limits according to rank.

5.7

All is built up of secrets, confidentialities, proprietary data, issues of public interest and protection of private lives.

With messages and opinions spreading at the speed of light or viral vectoring velocity, it's truer than ever that what is once published cannot be privatized again, except by a sci-fi-ish judicial denial of access to known facts or any acknowledgement that such facts exist.

Looking for something near to truth, there are gumshoes on the case, mean streets to wander, filing cabinets full of bottles of booze.

5.8

Soshull Meeja is supposed to make the private public, for no well articulated reason. The only totally private things we know are about ourselves, and they are unpublished and unpublishable.

We make a move in real and cyberspaces and are tracked in both; our membership of groups and networks is known to more than other members of the clubs we didn't choose to join.

Content is detached when visible to others, and writers cannot ever reconstruct all previous versions, unlike the state and its servers.

The new mechanicals are smart enough not to tell us everything they do.

5.9

The publisher is stranded like a fakir on a bed of nails, calmly aware, resigned, getting peace out of pondering possibilities of physical and spiritual development. Not pricked or coal-scorched, the holy persons show their stuff in danger zones, keeping cool and unblemished.

All can aspire to this detachment, but beware too much distance and remember how vital it is to undertake the physicality of the work.

Connections within publishing are tangential and tendentious. Everything with words and pictures isn't a book or magazine, or anything like it.

6

edit

redact

6.1

Publishing relies on development of text, selection, amendment, styling, checking, spelling, punctuation, maintaining standards, punctiliousness. Red, blue, yellow and black ink and other coloured pencil suggest control, management of form and content, editing, proofing, approval.

Editing as choice, refining meaning and presentation, brings out register and voice, detail and distinction, varieties of truth and vision. Enhancing but not embellishing originality, marking progress in a narrative or argument, working with rather than against creation.

Say “thank you” to the editor.

6.2

Newly adapted and re-meant like rendition, redaction is no longer an innocent description of wordsmithery and the fashioning of fascicules, but betrays a more directive textual governance.

Rendering the text through changes, black-out obvious or black-out hidden, makes mock of the publication's personality, style, celebrity, a stark reduction to half or quarter meaning, gaping with a gappy smile or grimace.

With these visibly missing meanings, the result is both less than and more than the authored text. Redaction black-outs have become a narrative tool, a bar-code for censors.

Read! Action!

6.3

Images manipulated by extended pointillism: dots, pixels, screened, digitized, still and moving, silent and voiced, extend creative text and illustration from printed page to almost everywhere.

Text and vision, held together in the publishing, exploded in the hyperspaces, tentacled not textured, no longer captured by a caption, not single or small, no longer in time, not a portion or percentage, but encompassing not selecting a wholer than whole rational unrationedness.

Images are projected as contradictions of poverty on the wealthy edifices of the world city, while portraits and cameo shots for the family album are pre-censored by image deniers.

6.4

Feeding on user-generated surveillance, antisocial media shouts the previously whispered. Stalking, snooping, eyes-in-the-sky, optical fibres through the keyholes of skin, identity captured before any act, yet further and further away from knowledge that might come from such intimacy. Sometimes wiki-ish secrets shine a light on expo-intel, but mostly there's just reinforcement of the holy mysteries of what the dronish data gatherers think is knowledge.

Without a publishing perspective to propose a style of presentation, there's nothing to indicate a possible consensus or dissent, no pricks to kick against, no selection or omission. On-screen editing, recognizing face and registration information puts us and all our features in order, like dominoes waiting to fall.

6.5

Editing takes place at the margins, where change occurs, but redaction hits at the core where no change is normally allowed. Literatim, brick by brick, adjusting the structure within the footprint determined by law and design; overstepping the ability of the materials to hold up under the strain.

An editorial architecture can open up a space for life, or create sterility like that of international airports, bridges, or opera houses: apotheosized constructs of cultural capitalism. Like a building put down on an over-planned and systematic global template, a redacted text struggles for its life beyond its immediate purpose, while classy editing produces living breathing publishing vistas.

6.6

Adding notes in the margins, in pencil, on the screen, someone watches and reads the mixing of a reader's thought with that of the writer. Sometimes, decades or centuries later, these intrigue, enlighten, amuse or mystify when found in backstreet shop, deepness of a library store, or ignored attic book shelves.

Attempts to recreate lists and pre-create annotations provide ready and mass-produced discovery to replace the receding memory tapestry. Those who can decide, take it upon themselves to interpret, determine and present collections.

Publishers and librarians have become publishing and library directors, or worse, have titles like director of these or those services.

6.7

Edit, edition, redact, redaction, adding, holding back, pointing, punctuating, all at another edge of clarity.

No telling anyone how to read a book, they say, but authors, editors and designers are some of those who guide and cajole the eye and mind as it voyages on this or the other bearing. Publishers were never so neutral that they didn't anticipate shades of print experience.

That's before the digital user was imagined, when the honesty of the text engendered a critical apparatus to surround book-reading, bowing to readers' suspicions. A different questioning arises for non-linear and media-mixed creations and it focuses on form, arrangement and navigation rather than destination, intention and effect.

6.8

Publishing is a business of alarms and excursions, and of the immediacy possible between molecules. SMS is ideal for SOS, but for details of the emergency, applying remedies and holding to account, a more sustained medium is needed.

Thinking it through is at the core of the editorial task, mediating the immediate, ensuring some longevity for an argument, being wary of new facts, weighing, pondering, deciding, creating lasting communication that will never be the last word.

Consideration, consultation, concordance are better done before going public. There are limits to the order that liberates.

6.9

Centres and peripheries each play their part, drawing together canons, articulating orthodoxies, cementing and challenging temporal and spiritual power, upholstering seats of state and empire, and priming charges in political flashpoints.

History of publishing is one with future of publishing; no certainties, always subject to commentating voices, backstage murmurs and cabals.

Date and place of publication identify when and where thought and communication wriggle and shift in historical lines and circular time.

7

permit

restrict

7.1

Ownership, copyright, intellectual property determines control over the financial benefits derived, supposed to last for decades after death. There are pockets in authors' and publishers' shrouds, inheritances based on previous generations' talents, declarations of stewardship and legacy.

The arrogance of custodians. Any marginal note, disguised reference, use of names, locations, stylistic tics and vocabularies irks them. Protecting against prequels or sequels, the intellectual property regime attempts to govern time itself.

Law bows to moral entitlements, and permission is mostly granted or withheld at the calling of money changers, merchants and praetorians. Permission is power.

7.2

National statutes and international conventions govern what can be done with the results of creation, but, as digital bounds from one jurisdiction to another, there is a greater fragility of possession. Newly designated commons are welcomed as places of sharing and growth, though vulnerable to new robber barons, who use an intriguing range of possibilities to buy, borrow or steal. Property shared does not become shared property.

Income derived is not the same as benefit derived. Publishing purpose and publishing risk cannot be split, in spite of a frequent pusillanimous desire to sidestep daring. Lazy power and profit without responsibility underlie lessons learnt from demagogues.

7.3

Publishing must dare to risk the terrible possibility of misjudging the market, of losing out to a competitor, of investing in the wrong thing, acting too soon, or too late. It must fight the fear of the risk of risking more than money: reputation, integrity, honesty, belief, solidarity, publishing values. If not this risk now, then when, and what risk it is that's worth the risk.

Courage comes too late when there is long pause in which such questions can be asked. And integrity works through fact, fiction, humour, gravitas and clarity. Eventually it may rely on letting go, drowning the book, seeing what happens when the old powers have gone.

7.4

There are few places, few times, when authors have not been discouraged or prevented from writing, publishers threatened with violence and economic ruin, readers monitored and investigated because of books on their bookshelves, library loans, download history or even talking of books.

Everywhere simple rules apply: restrict authors, threaten publishers, punish readers, from Big Mama in China to Patriot Acts in USA.

A list of names attached to the long list of bullet-pointed dead and damaged: S. Z., Y. S., R. A., A. P., L. X., W. N., V. N., and thousands more, semi-anonymized or unknown.

7.5

And the thing that brings on fear, the need to kill and threaten and bring into line, is the stark immutability of published work. Try and burn it if you can in all its copies, but another will likely appear, be further copied, here or there, and spread by channels uncontrolled and uncontrollable.

Until the time when there may be no unsurveilled handing on of books, no hidden copies in the cloud, no trustworthy badge of authenticity, no guarantee of inviolate reproduction, no need perhaps to threaten the author, publisher, reader when the work itself can be so easily perversely sanitized and brought into line.

7.6

Self-censorship comes from knowing the dangers of speaking out. It can be difficult to discern if the point of law is more abstruse, impossible to determine which law or custom has been offended against. Local and larger level consequences are both little known, more worrying.

Do the sensible thing, not looking for trouble.
Making a point, taking a stand, can be deadly, dangerous to health or financial wellbeing. Taking it down, making a 'not for publication' declaration, compliance can soothe the pulse but not the spirit, resulting in pulping and clandestine disposal, burning books.

High passions, high temperatures, 451 degrees, 10 May 1933, black milk memories in smoke.

7.7

Another mantra of protecting innocents resonates around a hollowed-out hall of mirrors with grotesque figures on every side.

Fear and loathing, laughter and ridicule shade interpretation of the images, bleeding at the edges. It is just us. The real thing, the unreflected image, tainted by distortions on every side, which could be rescued by the firm reference point of published thought, is hidden from view through the darkness of the glass.

The image is no longer attached to the angular horrors it created at the first and second unbalanced reflection. Varieties of publication feed off each other to create just such abominations.

7.8

The discourse of Internet that changed from liberty to control produces echoes across other publishing landscapes. Power has not been spoken truth to; ignorance is promoted; critique and transgression are monitored with a benevolent smirk.

As publication in one place becomes publishing in every place, all jurisdictions, militias and vigilantes are empowered to cajole and cudgel, deny and denigrate, cripple and kill voices that are not approved.

Prose and verse, data and opinion, drawing and photograph, caricature and cartoon, can all be used to mobilize national, religious, ethnic and ideological arm-band identity.

7.9

Balanced views, discoverable bias, curated juxtapositions are needed by learners of all ages, a library of contexts against which to see power's actions and intentions. Publishing is more of a mash-up than it pretends, somewhere where 'no comment' is a pointed comment, and all use is fair use.

Releasing published pages from what binds them may send down a shower of disconnected leaves, cause havoc on the roads and rails, or lie productive as mulch under, in and above which fragrant growth can thrive.

If numbered well, the pages reassemble as a whole, or wholly new in a refreshing random pattern.

8

inside

out

8.1

Publishing takes place at a time, in time, a real time as real as real-time.

Texts and images reflecting the passing of time: replicated, revised, renewed, replaced, rejected. The dates, times, zones take time from the minutes, days, weeks, months, years that make up time: calendars, schedules, expectations, records, histories.

Dotting the is and crossing the ts, watching ps and qs, policing the point sizes and making sure of the imposition liberates rather than constrains the purpose of publication, making all time shine with the virtue of the visible now.

8.2

Voices, manuscripts come out of drawers and onto shelves, move through this or that checkpoint, take a journey across a physical or political boundary.

Somersaults in time move dated texts in and out of currency, back from the future and forward from what's long been scripted and set. Timelessness of everything now cheats the death of the book and bookishness, preserving without judgment but not without prejudice.

Daggers, crosses and stars direct the reader to another meaning, to the recently or never dead. The many crossing points in the text, print not linear, betray the hypertext not so free, scheming like the cookie monsters of the now so structured web. Spiders with plans.

8.3

Publishing happens at a place, with real or cyber topography. A locus of origin can be disguised, unacknowledged, where once, like legal registration and deposit, it was required by custom or by law. On the record, reminding of traditions of openness and exploration, the place of publication conjures a community of this daring, done in and for public spaces.

Places we can go to or avoid; native habitat, digging in as occupiers, passing through or flying over. Easy or hard places offer possible pleasures, rewards, dangers and risks.

There's a chance to invest and profit: reputation, influence and a big bank balance. Or a chance to dare and suffer: solidarity, fear, courage and resolution.

8.4

Exchanging languages cannot mean equivalence or pure negotiation, but recognition of the between-two-languages state where new meaning makes tensions irresolvable, creating understanding by paralleling differences rather than providing the less satisfying definite answers.

With no language perfectly mastered, a norm of translangualism shows possibilities and extends the limits of chaos, humility, diffidence. Translation contributes to a more complete interpretation, even in languages half-known.

The reader never gets it all right in mother or other tongue. Different lives and loves suggest different meanings and conclusions.

8.5

Machines translate to give standard published versions, built not on the experience and sensibility of a translator or a reader, but crowd-sourced from all translators and readers in a mish-mash of meaning. Algorithms have finite sources and variations, and alembicated processes solidify results to no purpose.

Publications can pervert the presentation of detail but not the thoughts of people. Stick with humans. They validate the local, where town and county media counterbalance blanket localisation brought about by versioning and aggregation.

Publishing in all conceivable languages and argots increases useful comparisons, engagement not possible from non-human intelligence.

8.6

Proselytising or passion can take any message to the outside. Part of this is done with readings, shows, performances, that are now part of the dipping in, dipping out, reaching near to saturation point.

Experts and those they serve tend towards deconstructed digital relicts: written down and may be used against you. What most think deleted, disappeared and gone like the youth or dotage that spawned it, lies haunting, spectral.

Digital legacies, granted or assumed, do not reflect lives and written records through the eyes of family, friends, acquaintances, enemies, individuals. They are determined by non-knowers, non-carers, non-discriminators.

8.7

There are things that rest inside the publication and those that lie beyond. Spread over countries and continents as well as in the ligatures and synapses, there's a multitude of structures and designs, features and benefits, add-ons and take-aways. Relevance can be reviled, revered, rescued.

Even if the intention is to copy or repeat paradigms of publishing, a thorough inspection sometimes requires scratching the surface to determine qualities or stepping back a little to gauge the size and quantity.

Mundane metadata is the core of this, but the flesh of the entire organism has much more to offer.

8.8

Grid lines, points of intersection and reference, starting points: topography, cartography, map and aerial vision provide palimpsests of meaning, images, locations, human effects, that tell a story in space and time, showing changes of nature, use and ownership, overwritten by digital records.

One text is a counterpoint to the other, published as proximal stimuli dictate, creating warp and weft of culture clothing. Each addition purposefully placed in the context of a publishing tradition is now smeared with markings from the thrown-together, the incomplete.

Publishing is not everything they say it is.

8.9

What happens at point of sale complicates how we peruse and acquire, requiring manoeuvres through real and unreal offerings, negotiating differences, price points, currencies, tax rates, decimal points of discounts, testing the degrees of difference that allow restrictions on transmission of meaning.

Browse there, buy here, store in another place, keep, dispose, admit or deny, ship from islands and enclaves, obscure or advantageous tax points. All eyed up by governments and regulators, busy business skips between the satisfaction of customer appetites and commercial goals.

Ends of the telescope are interchangeable when writing histories. Blind eyes are used when appropriate.

9

access

archive

9.1

Something someone somewhere doesn't want you to know might be found by knowing when to point and click, with a trigger or a mouse, how to make a change, react to the word culture.

Looking back, things become more obvious, so long as we have stored the memories somehow; in the mind, memoranda, handwritten between the covers of a journal, pecked out on a small keyboard or printed in a public volume.

Firing point blank. Certain to hit the target. Didn't have a chance. Or more often, much more often, a cat and mouse game, stalking, waiting around, hoping tonight will be the night.

9.2

The line that is the shortest distance between two points, the connection made between them, connects these libraries, archives, bibliographies, hyperlinks with inherited and manufactured markings. More points, more lines and linkages, the interlacing of possibly unrelated nodes becomes more byzantine and less instructive. Just possibly it's a pointless exercise.

Posterity likes the keeping and interpretation of books of record, methodically piling new words onto and into the bibliographic store. Fiction connects the points of reference, and heritage is connected with another time and place, used for this time and place, underpinning a time and place that does not and never will exist.

9.3

Handy for some to have another mighty resource to hand.

Their evidence-based arguments feed on validated, refereed and regulated data, while others who have a closer feel for difference and nuanced arguments experience over-publication and over-retention as something that refluxes, spills, gushes out of the printed, beyond the printed, drowning the printed, transforming what's thought of into a polluting fluidity: flowing, foolish, flaccid, fallacious, felonious.

Monkish devotion to decoration and reproduction is displaced by monkeyish typing, terabyte upon terabyte creating a tsunami of foaming danger.

Too much access to excess.

9.4

The archive has absorbed the flood to near the point of precipitation. One touch, one extra drop and there is a loss of any form, just an oceanic magic mixture of interrelated sponge and sucked-up stuff.

The archive is everywhere, and everywhere is archival, like the distantly blue bits of the globe, connected, flowing between, freezing, circulating, warming, evaporating, stagnating, deepening, shallowing: filthier and filthier as outflows, flotsam, jetsam, discarded and dismembered life clog its shallows and its depths.

Discovering something or other within the crowded cloudy cloaca is inevitable: but there is just so much so close together.

9.5

Flimsy but intriguing relationships are exaggerated and limited by nearness, look-alikes, magnetic pulls. The creative imagination, skills and sensibility of the navigator are tested to destruction.

Getting lost happens so often that it is no longer remarked upon. With no map-reading skills or language to ask questions in, travelers rely wholly on guesswork or technology, and they begin to distrust both. Instinct that was honed in wordy studies is no longer common or expected.

We do not trust politicians, journalists or banks because we do not trust what we read and only half remember.

We do not trust ourselves.

9.6

In physical space monumental piles of paper and data archives, financed by expansionary commerce and philanthropic urges, store and provide access to evidence for self-betterment and canonical trending. In city centres grand façades guard the contents of imposing interiors made of hard woods, brass and sculptured stone.

Forgotten and dismissed by publishers and politicians in the first euphoria of the digital economy, many libraries are on last legs: forced to destock (throw away books), rationalize staff (fire qualified librarians), adapt to new technology (swap useful paper for obsolescent technologies), and democratize (banish silence and difficult texts).

Some walking wounded carry on.

9.7

Data hides in humming bunkers in the distant wastes: the cloud where there is often not a cloud in sight, except the memory of the mushrooming missiles the silos once sheathed. Air conditioned, energy-hungry, empty of every non-secure human, this badged, protected, fearful information space isn't shared without payment or permission. It huddles in the desert protecting its privates, boasting of its prowess.

The boys and girls with perfect teeth and self-selected bodies build these concrete halls to keep the stuff that matches the minds that first fiddled with a keyboard, mouse or circuit board.

They do not glance at what is in their own heads, only at what is in private hands. The future tells them this is the future and they never look back.

9.8

Publishing, bound by time and place, has internal and external points of congruence and communication. It pivots in a physically grounded social network, not one based on digital communication, webinars, suspect personal profiles and branded personalities.

There are many meeting points: book fairs, literary events, seminars, workshops. Publishing impels people to come together for negotiation, discussion, public reading, private browsing, display of publications and people. Cities are where they do it.

The digital has an idea of its own ethereality but it is non-metaphysical too: of its time, located, influencing and urging in one direction or another.

9.9

A multitude of book-people in an uninterrupted discussion of the past, present and future of publishing, with easy-to-follow online headlines, participants reaching out beyond the meeting halls, tapping on tiny keyboards.

One topic is hidden under each agenda: worry and confusion, lack of conviction and sense of purpose. Everyone struts together to articulate a reason for continuing in the profession, and face-to-face meeting seems to make this bearable. There's much mention of drink; nostalgia for the publishing lunch, the launch party, the award ceremony.

Perspectives of publishing stretch to an out-of-reach vanishing point, and there's a wistful wondering with each limit overcome and corner peered round.

10

totality

integrity

10.1

The idea that it is a means to an end can be lost when there's a possibility of publishing it all. This infinite instrumentality can be an excuse for avoiding the duty to make choices, use judgment, and stand firm, but it doesn't exonerate the profession from the effects of choice, or take away from the powerful agency of publishing.

Total publishing is not an option. The effect of infinite archiving, amassing, hoarding and cornucopia spilling is indiscriminating and becomes overwhelming, as each edition brings a new thing into existence.

Publishing makes copies available, but it cannot copy everything.

10.2

How much stuff publishing uses every day: trees, pulp, paper, power to process and to print, the natural materials and synthetic chemicals used. The effect on people, peoples and the planet continues when minerals are extracted for technology components, and energy splurged on machines and their maintenance.

Not enough moves are made to control the waste from publishing, its products and its media platforms; not enough control of overproduction; too many bits of kit and unread pages litter dumping grounds around the world.

Suspicious of sustainability rhetoric, conscience battles with commerce with lesser urgency as each year's climate springs new surprises.

10.3

Points mean prizes. They are a way of totting up advantage, measuring approval or support, and distinguishing between things of superficially similar value or utility. But wizarding up a golden prize is not the only purpose.

The value carried in the process of exchange is not the value to the reader, or the value to the author, or to all those who can benefit from a system based on fair dealing.

The affirmation of value also includes publishing's control of explosive power, the direction of a detonation, hitting a point of weakness, making a breakthrough. And what it does in victory or defeat.

When fair dealing stops, value is turned to salt.

10.4

People are the publishing profession, its integrity, esprit de corps, corporate values, guilds, unions, industry organizations. With history semi-buried and devalued, it rushes with the technology, wants to stay upright at all times. This feat is not achieved and progress stalls because of abused substances, weariness or a violent push in the back, side or front.

Politics, economics and managerialism curdle the ethical mix. The pressure of power, emboldened by validated distrust of words, rents the golden threaded raiment.

Toadyism doesn't lend itself to the promotion of integrity and human worth. People must be grafted into the heart of publishing and toads kept out of the driving seat and the middle of the road.

10.5

Ethics in academic publishing are clearly seen in terms of plagiarism, attribution, and things that otherwise might be just good manners, self-respect, honesty, right. This is only the start with ethics, a recognizable humanity that is never rightly an imposition, enforced or convention signed up to. Plain honesty needs a place in publishing.

All publishing must show more than a pretty moral stance or manufactured goal. Internalised and unquestioned values are to be expected.

The things that need regulation are already out of control, and require the indignant and determined conviction of everyone around, not just the long stop of regulation.

10.6

Publishing is creativity, originality, industry, conviction: a conviction that is properly whole, complete, pure, entire and chaste, not a pressured compulsion of prostituted necessity. The goal of publishing to be sound, moral, and virtuous is worthy. Deconstruct the concatenation of the acceptable.

Make anything, read anything. Make it and read it anywhere, fearlessly, with no judgments of publishers for what they publish or of readers for what they read; no spying on cover or content.

Trust writers; value their oddities; defend fecklessness and disdain for fearful thoughts. Take all that can be given by the published, not worrying too much.

10.7

Buying local, reading global, taking opportunities to taste and savour, makes reading central to a grounded cosmopolitanism. All regions attract visitors, friends and foes, predatory species and dangerous drones. Island culture is culture in danger.

If it's from there, it doesn't mean having to go there. When publishing becomes an instrument of global power and cultural persuasion, give the scales a nudge back to balance, encourage the flagging, make judgments warily. Too much dashing is dangerous.

Tracking origins and tracking originality isn't always necessary or possible, and high-end value tends to become less personal, hidden behind corporate instruments and anonymity, like the distant bidders at global art auctions.

10.8

A cyberpunk future of the book is controlled, less lawless than a mainstream view of counter-comfort suggests. Not moving fast enough to keep ahead of the trackers with un-put-offable scent, genomes, DNA and behavioural profiles, it's easy to discover a way to stress your better side.

But the dark side must be nurtured. Secreting the tools and outputs of publishing, journals under pillows, printing press and paper concealed in barns and sewers, pockets full of ideas, memory sticks in secret places, passed from hand to hand and self-destructing if you choose not to accept the mission.

Dangerous times for publishing, establishing self-respect and purpose, making opposition worth it, one step at a time, gingerly, with a confident smile.

10.9

Publishing looks after its tools, the words and structures that make up every published thing. Languages are respected, both the academized and street-credited. Disdained locutions are given a solidity to test their purpose and utility, the time-tested texts kept exercised and polished-up to act as textural support for what's to come.

Words and the ways they are used are the core of publishing, and the rest stems from there. Worth pursuing the idea, to try to ordinate what publishing is for, using words because they are good words.

Another word: punctatim.

The point of publishing has one final point.