



# UNDERSTANDING THE POSSIBILITIES AND LIMITATIONS OF OPEN ACCESS PUBLISHING FOR DECOLONISING KNOWLEDGE-MAKING AND DISSEMINATION

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# UNDERSTANDING THE POSSIBILITIES AND LIMITATIONS OF OPEN ACCESS PUBLISHING FOR DECOLONISING KNOWLEDGE-MAKING AND DISSEMINATION

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## ABSTRACT

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The final contribution of this Journal volume is a written version of the panel discussion that took place at the 'Decolonisation in Praxis' conference held at SOAS on 7 June 2018. The purpose of the panel was to discuss the implications of Open Access publishing for the decolonisation debate within academic institutions. The speakers offered some exploratory thoughts, each from her unique position at SOAS, in order to encourage listeners to consider critically Open Access publishing and how they might navigate the ever-changing landscape of research production and dissemination. Some references have been included in the written version to direct readers to other resources where they can find more information.

## INTRODUCTION

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In recent years Open Access publishing has come to the forefront with an increasing number of universities and research funders requesting their affiliated researchers to ensure that they take appropriate steps to make their research available under Open Access principles. SOAS University has also introduced concrete policies that encourage its research staff to make their work available on SOAS Research Online, the institutional repository. In addition, over the past year the university implemented for the first time the SOAS Open Research Champions scheme, which aims to train a group of both academic and professional services staff at SOAS in three key areas of Open Research: ORCID IDs, Research Data Management and Open Access. These Champions are encouraged to train colleagues in their disciplines or departments on a peer-to-peer level, as well as acting as internal advocates for Open Research. In the first presentation of this panel, Romina Istratii, who is a current PhD candidate and serves as one of the Open Research Champions at SOAS, offers some thoughts about the opportunities and risks involved in Open Access publishing in view of the objective to democratise knowledge-making and to decentre west-centric epistemological systems of thinking. In the second presentation, Helen Porter provides a response to Romina's thoughts by drawing from three years' working experience in the SOAS library, supporting researchers with publications and research data. Helen's first-hand experience with the introduction of national Open Access policies, the responses of publishers and the practical implications for researchers grant her an informed position from which to discuss these matters. The aim of the panel is to motivate critical dialogue in view of post-colonial needs to diversify the knowledge-making process and of concerns that arise with the steady proliferation of this new technology within academia.

## ROMINA ISTRATII: "OPEN ACCESS PUBLISHING: A STEP TOWARD THE DECOLONISATION OF KNOWLEDGE-MAKING?"

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I would like to start by recognising that the praxis (action, enacting) of decolonisation is contingent to no particular technology, method or science, and that to decentre knowledge-making and to diversify the global epistemological repertoire the essential element is first and foremost researcher reflexivity and humility. Nonetheless, I think that it is important to consider carefully the implications of Open Access, especially as pertinent to the objective of epistemological decolonisation. I see this discussion with Helen as an opportunity to contemplate together the strengths and limitations of this new technology for publishing and disseminating knowledge with the hope that this will benefit the audience and will spark a dialogue afterwards.

Open Access publishing is a rapidly expanding publication mode whereby resources are published online without restrictions so that they can be made accessible universally and permanently without any cost. Under these principles, widely used platforms for research-sharing such as Academia.edu or ResearchGate do not constitute Open Access publishing

since they are commercial endeavours requiring at least an account to be accessed.<sup>1</sup> Open Access can be conceptualised with variations according to discipline and to the stage of the research production. For instance, in the positive sciences Open Access is usually taken to mean sharing primary data, software or technological infrastructure with other researchers. Within the humanities, the concept of Open Notebooks might be more pertinent, such as in the form of an ethnographer sharing a fieldwork diary.

The positive impact of Open Access can be profound and merits to be considered by researchers across the world. Open Access publishing, under ideal conditions, means that research output is made universally and permanently available so that any reader with internet connection can access this resource without incurring a cost. This must have tremendous implications in view of the fact that journals have conventionally required subscriptions or other 'toll-fees' to be fully accessed. As a result, the majority of people not affiliated with a library/university paying subscription to these journals, or individuals unable to cover the fee independently to access the print or online journals have been excluded from all or some of their specialised knowledge. Coming from a low-income family, I am acutely aware of the fact that even the minimum fee for subscription can be prohibitive to families who struggle to make a living and to educate their children with basic salaries. Such socio-economic inequalities mean that some students cannot access information that is essential both for furthering their research interests and for staying up-to-date with advancements in the fields that interest them. Not having this information at the earlier stages of formulating research interests, some may choose not to pursue academic careers. But, even if they do, they may not be as equipped as their more privileged peers to engage rigorously with and to influence knowledge paradigms. As a result, insights reflecting the unique socio-cultural conditions and understandings of more disadvantaged segments will more rarely be accounted for in mainstream knowledge production, and theory and science will remain disproportionately attuned to the worldviews and conditions of the relatively privileged.

Moving toward a paradigm where all research is published Open Access could start to alleviate inequalities in knowledge access and further knowledge production emanating from different economic and social classes. While it may sound overused, I truly believe that knowledge is powerful and grants the individual confidence and the conviction that they can make an impact on the world. This emanates from my own experience as someone who dedicated their early life to excel as an immigrant student in their host country, in order to be granted the privilege and opportunities of a US education and what I imagined would be unlimited access to information, knowledge and possibilities. I also recollect the example of Tapoka Mkandawire, an Open Research advocate from the University of Cambridge who came at one of our trainings and referred to her personal story. Tapoka explained that the Open Access resources she was able to access at the Hanari libraries in Malawi (south east Africa) when she was a student allowed her to cultivate her curiosity for science. This is also

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<sup>1</sup> The debate about commercial platforms for research-sharing has been long and is on-going. It should be recognised that while commercial endeavours raise ethical and practical questions, platforms such as Academia.edu can provide access to non-expert or less privileged global communities that would not otherwise be able to access more specialised databases used by informed researchers and academic communities. Even though they are not Open Access, they have to some degree made higher-quality research accessible for public consumption.

a practical example of how Open Access library schemes can make research more globally available, enlarging the possibilities for learning and career advancement.

So, there are benefits in terms of Open Access publishing, but it should have become obvious that these benefits are conditioned on parameters such as access to a computer or a phone that supports accessing the net, and connectivity, both of which may be unattainable for the less economically affluent populations. It is also predicated on the ability of societies to provide these services, many of which might lack the infrastructure or the commitment to do so in view of other priorities or interests. Similarly, the benefits of Open Access are conditioned by socio-cultural and political realities that determine girls and boys' ability to pursue an education in the first place or nurture their curiosity for information. It is then important to recognise that Open Access publishing *per se* cannot reverse deeper socio-economic disparities between people and nations that have historically contributed to constrain the advancement of the underprivileged in academia, favouring the perspective of the relatively privileged in the domain of scholarship production.

Furthermore, the benefits of Open Access publishing are counterpoised by what have become increasingly visible disadvantages emanating from the profit-making opportunities that this technology offers. Most journals that publish Open Access will not do so *gratis* and will try to recover the administrative and publication cost through different business models. The most preferred among publishers seems to be the Gold Open Access option which means that the article is immediately published, usually under a Creative Commons License that enables wide dissemination. However, the costs for this need to be covered by the author/researcher (not the publisher), or where it is applicable, by their funding body, academic institution or research society. One will find that publishing under a Gold Open Access publication license at a high-quality academic journal might require paying a fee of £1800. Such charges appear to be not only economically unjustifiable for covering the publication and administrative costs involved, but they are also ethically problematic and often practically prohibitive for many authors.

My own experience as a PhD student might be instructive here. Due to various circumstances, my research has only partially been supported by external funders and I have had to work part-time to meet its implementation cost. The research is a study of conjugal violence in Northern Ethiopia and aims to contribute to a better understanding of its complex realities. My hope is to make this study available as soon as possible to be used as a resource by local practitioners and institutions. In view of the fact that I do not have funding support which would cover Open Access publication fees, I am currently called to consider how I can make my work immediately and universally available, while also publishing in the most specialised and high-impact journals to engage with, and feed back to, current understandings in my fields. Publishing Open Access could meet both needs, but the cost that some of these specialised journals require are prohibitive for someone of my material circumstances. And while fee waivers are sometimes granted, it is not always easy to prove one's eligibility for these in view of internal bureaucratic procedures. One's position must be considered particularly precarious when one contributes a critique of established knowledge paradigms, which not all Editorial Boards in Open Access journals might be willing to engage with in view of their various ideological directions.

Open Access publishing displays another problematic aspect which needs acknowledgement. Various authors have problematised the rapid multiplication of

'predatory' Open Access journals and publishers with highly questionable marketing and peer-review practices, motivated essentially by the desire for monetary gain.<sup>2</sup> While these journals provide a quick way to disseminate research, they can result in lower-quality publications due to a weak or non-existent review process. Such journals essentially leverage on early career researchers' need to improve their publication record or the sense of urgency and helplessness for those who have no other conduit to publish. It is often stated that researchers from non-western countries who are not familiar with the publishing world in the West might be more susceptible to these journals' predatory tactics. This needs to be appraised concomitantly with the fact that non-English speakers may feel overwhelmed by the publication standards (and ideological positions) of established high-impact journals, which could be another factor making journals without these characteristics more appealing.

Published articles in these low-impact journals are not likely to influence paradigms in their respective fields because of the lack of robustness in their publications, but they can influence more underprivileged researchers who cannot access the expensive quality journals, or less specialised readers in the public who do not have the knowledge to differentiate between high- and low-quality journals in fields they have little familiarity with. The risk here is that this creates a sort of marginalised or lower-quality knowledge domain that is more easily accessible to the less privileged or less specialised audiences. This not only propagates socio-economic and epistemological inequalities, but also fosters a less rigorous understanding of the world among some segments of the global population with implications for their material lives and standards of living.

Another risk that I discern and needs to be mentioned concerns funders' Open Access policies. Increasingly, funding bodies require their grantees to ensure that their research is published under Open Access principles. As important as this request might be, it is not without risks. When funders select to fund research that meets some ideological objective (implicit or explicit), the stipulation for Open Access publishing can turn into a tool for more effective propaganda and the dissemination of ideological research. Both this and the previous limitation highlight essentially that the possibilities of this technology are conditioned on human nature itself and on the interests and drivers behind its usage: as long as there are people who are motivated strictly by self-interest and profit-making, Open Access cannot meet the visionary ideal of serving society uniformly.

Having considered the more practical benefits and shortfalls of Open Access, it is important to consider the prospects of Open Access to promote a decentring and diversification of knowledge. It can be agreed that the first step for historically marginalised audiences (usually non-western, but also 'silenced' segments within the West) to speak back to the prevalent epistemological framework is first to gain more access to influential western

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<sup>2</sup>J. Sanchez, "Predatory Publishers Are Corrupting Open Access," *Nature* 489, no. 179, September 12, 2012, <https://www.nature.com/news/predatory-publishers-are-corrupting-open-access-1.11385>; Robert Watson, "Hijackers on the Open Access Highway", *Nursing Open* 2, no.3 (November 2015): 95–96, doi: 10.1002/nop2.36; Gina Kolata, "Scientific Articles Accepted (Personal Checks, Too)", *The New York Times*, April 7, 2013, <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/2013/04/08/health/for-scientists-an-exploding-world-of-pseudo-academia.html> ; Yondell Masten and Alyce Ashcraft, "The Dark Side of Dissemination: Traditional and Open Access Versus Predatory Journals", *Nursing Education Perspectives* 37, no. 5 (September/October 2016): 275-277, doi: 10.1097/01.NEP.0000000000000064; Thomas K. Grose, "The Dark Side of 'Open Access'", *PRISM*, February 2017, <http://www.asee-prism.org/the-dark-side-of-open-access/>.

publications. This provides such groups with the necessary exposure to the progression of western knowledge paradigms vis-à-vis historical political realities (not least being colonial histories). The increased awareness regarding historical biases or colonial underpinnings in knowledge production can produce more informed and critical responses from the so-called periphery, thus diversifying perspectives.

The challenge here is that those who speak from other knowledge centres will most likely speak in different media of communication. It must then be an important limitation that most Open Access journals have generally been English publications, with many offering abstracts in other languages but only a few accepting papers for review in a language that is not Western European. This means that those who have not been immersed in and mastered these languages can neither fully comprehend the tacit connotations in English publications, nor be sufficiently equipped to have their publications accepted by rigorous journals. A post-colonial Open Access publishing landscape would need to be more accommodating to linguistic plurality. Ideally, authors would be able to opt to submit their manuscript in their native language, languages which they would be able to twist and manoeuvre in the way English native speakers have done historically with English.<sup>3</sup>

However, it must be understood that even when non-English speakers master English or other European languages (which they frequently do), this does not suffice to ensure that their pronouncements eschew becoming as elitist as some western pronouncements have been. The difference is that those who speak now reflect the views of a peripheral elite. Moreover, even if their pronouncements are coming from the underprivileged, this is no guarantee that they will be understood by the other side. Understanding does not rely only on speaking the same language, but also on being able and willing to access each other's cosmologies and socio-cultural particularities. While Open Access might create a much-needed platform for more interaction across boundaries, it does not ensure that the dialogue will happen and that the different 'voices' will be made intelligible to each other. This lack of understanding may be unintended and result from differentials in cultural upbringing that make it difficult for people to access other worldviews, or may be deliberately motivated by deeply entrenched colonial attitudes that refuse to consider other perspectives on the world.

My sense is that the precondition for Open Access to serve toward a decolonisation of epistemologies is primarily attitudinal and depends less on the technology itself. Open Access publishing cannot be a remedy *per se* to lack of personal reflexivity and presumptuous attitudes hindering cross-cultural understanding. While researchers are encouraged to work toward publishing their research Open Access, it would appear to be equally or more urgent to focus on cultivating self-awareness and reflexivity about one's own epistemological situatedness as a means to enable a more tolerant and critical engagement with diverse knowledge systems in the world.

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<sup>3</sup> It is not proposed here that non-natives cannot master or speak English as well as the native speakers. I have no doubt that they can and they do, often with higher eloquence. The point that is made here is rather that for fairness, nobody should need to be asked to master a foreign language in order to be able to contribute to the global bank of knowledge. A common medium may be a pragmatic compromise, but one must question why this common medium still needs to follow the strictures of the historically potent western knowledge centre.

## HELEN PORTER: “OPEN ACCESS: PRACTICAL BARRIERS TO, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR, THE DECOLONIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE”

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Firstly, I would like to say thank you to Katharina and Romina for inviting me to be involved today. For much of my working time at SOAS I am incredibly busy dealing with the logistics and practical implementation of Open Access, some of which I will come onto in a moment. But one thing I feel very strongly about is that Open Research developments have a place in the academic debates and activism that take place at SOAS both amongst the student and academic community so I am delighted that this topic has been included today.

I have picked out a few points that Romina highlighted in the debates and developments around Open Access that I would like to speak about regarding the following areas: technology; research funder policies and initiatives; the publishing model and commercialisation of research; and finally research perceptions and practice. I will briefly highlight a selection of limitations that I have observed and which I think are relevant in the debates about decolonisation of knowledge-making. I will then round up with some opportunities that I think researchers can take to address some of these limitations.

As Romina mentioned, Open Access is a product of the technological developments that have made it possible for alternative routes for dissemination of knowledge e.g. through institutional databases, such as SOAS Research Online which make a variety of digital versions of articles available as PDFs, or through the new publishing models which have emerged online such as full Open Access journals.<sup>4</sup> However if we look further back in the cycle of knowledge production, colleagues in the fields of sciences are acutely aware that for researchers in some countries the quality of technology and equipment is a limiting factor for them in producing research. Studies have shown that a disproportionately high number of researchers in the Global South publish in predatory journals and I think it is possible that the routes of this begin early on in the research life-cycle.<sup>5</sup> So, as Romina mentioned, the predatory journal industry which is thriving in the digital era is a problem relevant to the production, dissemination of and access to knowledge.

I recently returned from a workshop in Myanmar which was run at a local research centre partnered with SOAS. The research centre has a wealth of papers, photographs and data which are held only on paper with limited resources and technological equipment for digitisation. This knowledge is largely undiscovered and undiscoverable. Likewise, last year I was on a panel at the SOAS Africa Conference on knowledge production and a co-speaker highlighted local publishing industries whose circulation is regional and in print and offered a wealth of new research and academic debates; this again is hidden from the internet.<sup>6</sup> I think we need to remember that when we are talking about Open Access we are often

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<sup>4</sup> For a summary of the development of Open Access see ‘A Brief History of Open Access’ Open Access 101: Unlocking Knowledge: <http://blogs.harvard.edu/openaccess101/what-is-open-access/what-is-open-access/>

<sup>5</sup> For a fuller discussion see: McKenna, Sioux ‘Why developing countries are particularly vulnerable to predatory journals’ The Conversation, Nov 7, 2017. Available from: <http://theconversation.com/why-developing-countries-are-particularly-vulnerable-to-predatory-journals-86704>

<sup>6</sup> To view the full panel discussion on ‘Knowledge production, media and access in African studies’ at the SOAS Africa Conference 2017 See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwzxn8OJ6E>



talking about providing access to research generated in the Global North by western scholars.

Despite the fact that a huge amount of research has been made Open Access—a key aggregator of Open Access researcher, a database called Core, has over 70 million articles—the search engines of Open Access repositories cannot compare to commercial databases. We speak a lot about researchers not having access to full-texts but without access to commercial databases, which we enjoy at SOAS, researchers may not be able to run full-literature reviews. The licences and access rules put in place by commercial publishers and database providers can mean that research partners and colleagues outside of well-funded institutions cannot benefit from these services. For Open Access texts to be truly accessible we need to look at the technology that supports them and to build better indexing and discovery tools.

This brings me to the second area I would like to pick out in response to Romina’s talk: publishing models and the commercialisation of research. Romina highlighted the issue of Academia.edu, which is a commercial enterprise and is increasingly charging fees for added services such as metrics and mentions<sup>7</sup>. Librarians like myself have slowly watched as the foundations of Open Access provision have been taken over by large commercial publishers. The Social Science Research Network (SSRN) was recently acquired by Elsevier, as has Mendeley and Bepress. The Open Access landscape seems to have become a prime target for commercialisation with uncertainty about what this will mean in the long term.<sup>8</sup> Romina mentioned that Open Access can come at a cost for authors, but there are other costs associated with publishing which may be increasing. Another trend I have noticed is that publishers, to cover production costs, often expect authors to produce their own indexes or do their own copy-editing. This comes at a cost of time and money for authors and could become a barrier for any researcher with limited resources.

I am not a researcher so I am afraid I can’t fully understand the pressure to publish in ‘high-impact’ journals but I can tell you a bit about impact factors and their place in this debate. Metrics (citations and impact factors) are most usually provided by two large companies: Thomson Reuters and Elsevier. For citations to be indexed and impact factors calculated the journals first need to be indexed and tracked by these services. The criteria for a journal to be included in Scopus include: a publicly available description of the peer-review process and publication ethics standards; articles must have references in Roman script and English language abstracts and titles. Inclusion in Scopus has become a mark of quality and esteem and institutions are measured on the number of journal articles

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<sup>7</sup> For more on this topic see ‘Why are we not boycotting academia.edu’ #DISRUPTIVEMEDIA. Centre for Disruptive Media: <http://disruptivemedia.org.uk/why-are-we-not-boycotting-academia-edu/> and ‘What is Academia Premium? Academia Help Centre: <http://support.academia.edu/customer/en/portal/articles/2405880-what-is-academia-premium->

<sup>8</sup> For more information about commercial purchase of Open Access platforms see Schonfeld, Roger C. ‘Elsevier Acquires SSRN’ The Scholarly Kitchen, May 17 2016: <https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2016/05/17/elsevier-acquires-ssrn/> and Shaw, Claire ‘Elsevier buys Mendeley: your reaction’ The Guardian Higher Education Network Blog: <https://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/blog/2013/apr/10/elsevier-buys-mendeley-academic-reaction> and Schonfeld, Roger C. ‘Elsevier Acquires bepress’ The Scholarly Kitchen, Aug 2 2017: <https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2017/08/02/elsevier-acquires-bepress/>

published each year, with that number coming from Scopus.<sup>9</sup> This leaves authors at SOAS and other institutions who have supported small and regional publishers with a difficult choice for publication routes.

I am fully behind funder support of Open Access and will continue to be—the introduction of the Open Access policy for the REF has seen full-texts of journal articles in SOAS Research Online increase from 30% to 90% in a matter of two years. This simply wouldn't have happened, despite my best efforts in promoting Open Access, without the strict rules introduced by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), now Research England. However, there are problems with these policies; many funders favour Gold Open Access for funded research and provide money to help authors do this. This can lead to money going directly from the funder to the large publishers, simply bolstering existing models of commercial publishing. Additionally, smaller, niche and regional journals are also excluded as a route to publication as they have neither a Gold Open Access option nor a policy for Green Open Access that meets the funder's strict policies. The result can be that by default researchers are driven to submit articles to large journals published in the West in English. Likewise, new requirements for data archiving and sharing see researchers depositing data collected across the world in European databases.

I realise I have painted a rather bleak picture of Open Access so far, but I think it is vital for researchers to be aware of the intricacies and limitations in this area in order to fully engage with the opportunities. It is not my intention to dictate where you publish and you should seek advice from academic colleagues, but I would thoroughly investigate your publishing agreements since publisher policies can be confusing: Will they let you share your article freely online and when? Can you repurpose your research without a future cost? If your publishing agreement lets you share your research Open Access, then do it. Promote Open Access to the students you teach and introduce them to the debates. Technology is doing great things with Open Access and I hope this will continue—a plugin for Chrome lets you move from a paywalled article to an Open Access version, if it exists, at a click of a button.<sup>10</sup> German universities recently stopped their subscription payments for Elsevier entirely and they found that researchers had alternative routes to accessing articles.<sup>11</sup>

If you find yourself at an institution or in a country which is thinking about such changes, as a researcher you can support debate and negotiations. When you are applying for funding or are involved in funded projects, wherever you can, build in costs to support your local research partners with equipment or software that can help them make their research outputs and data more discoverable. Support small or regional journals you know or work with them to meet Scopus requirements. If you collect research data, can you leave it with local researchers and communities, or deposit it in local data archives? Translate abstracts of full articles into regional languages and include them with your Open Access text.

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<sup>9</sup> See Bibliometrics in the REF and University Rankings, Durham University Library: <https://www.dur.ac.uk/library/research/evaluate/rankings/> and Scopus Content Policy and Selection : <https://www.elsevier.com/solutions/scopus/how-scopus-works/content/content-policy-and-selection>

<sup>10</sup> Refers to unpaywall via: <https://unpaywall.org/>

<sup>11</sup> See Schiermeier, Quirin 'Germany vs Elsevier: universities win temporary journal access after refusing to pay fees' Nature News 4 Jan 2018: <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-00093-7>

Finally, as researchers, be open to new models of dissemination, share more of your research and get credit for it. Research funders are currently looking to assess working papers in development, not just published articles, in the funding application process, conscious of the fact that a lot of early career researchers' innovative ideas are being locked up in the peer-review process and undiscovered for as much as two years.<sup>12</sup> The Open Research landscape will continue to develop rapidly and offers a wealth of opportunities for individuals and for decolonisation of knowledge more broadly, but these need to be considered critically, and I hope debates like this one will continue.

## ROMINA ISTRATII: SUMMARY POINTS

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Thank you, Helen, for your deeply informed presentation and for your guidance on to how we might navigate the complex landscape. Your presentation demonstrates how vital it is for all researchers to understand the current changes occurring in the domain of publishing and research dissemination technologies to be able to see the opportunities (and dangers) that lie ahead of us. As researchers we have to build a skill-set not only to be able to conduct rigorous research, but also to navigate an increasingly predatory, competitive and prohibitive environment to disseminate our research in terms that can still agree somehow with our decolonial priorities.

I will reiterate the importance of looking for alternative paths that centre on leveraging the local resources available in communities of research, which can result not only in disseminating the research promptly, but also in strengthening smaller publishers struggling to acquire a legitimate presence in the world of publishing. I happened to publish twice in an Open Access (cost-free) academic journal started by the initiative of a single department at a local university in India, for which I now serve also as a Reviewer. What attracted me to it (since I have an in-existent relationship with the country) was its commitment to support early career researchers and to create a respectful ambiance for sharing different opinions. Certainly, publishing in a peripheral or emerging journal has its limitations; however, it also has the advantage that the work becomes immediately published *gratis* and that in publishing with them you are indirectly strengthening other centres of knowledge-production.<sup>13</sup>

In conclusion, I think we can retain your point that Open Access publication is as powerful as any technology when it is used critically and creatively. It also must not be limited to an effort to make western academics' research universally available to the world, but also non-western research to western academics and the wider public. Only such a reciprocal application of the technology can start to diversify the knowledge landscape and perhaps start to reverse deeply entrenched epistemological hierarchies.

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<sup>12</sup> See: 'Preprints' Medical Research Council: <https://mrc.ukri.org/research/policies-and-guidance-for-researchers/preprints/>

<sup>13</sup> Although, it should be clear that the location of the initiative is of lesser important than how committed the journal is to support and to disseminate non-mainstream views and approaches that counter and diversify established paradigms.