OLH

A better path to open access for the humanities

China Miéville
critical essays

Maggie G
critical es

FOREWORD BY MAG
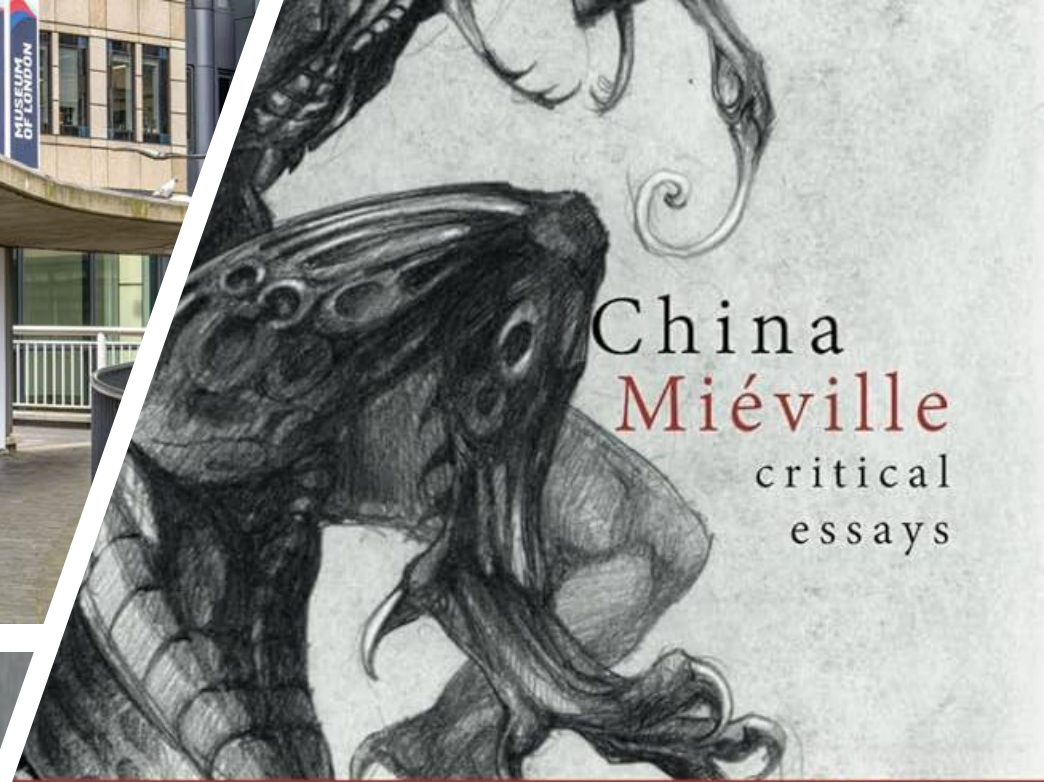
OPEN ACCESS

FLOW.JOURNAL

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Are Video Game Narratives Postmodern?

Posted by Alistair Brown (Durham) on May 13, 2013

An editorial in the twentieth anniversary issue of the journal Postmodern Culture in 2010 added another voice to mark the gradual retreat of the postmodern...

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Posted by Martin Paul Eve (Lincoln) on

We are the Open Library of Humanities.

- Originally launched in 2013 as an international project movement of scholars, librarians, programmers, and publishers. We wanted to rebuild an unfair system in which corporate publishers make huge profits from publicly funded research by selling it back to universities in subscription packages.

- By 2015, the Open Library of Humanities had become a scholar-led publisher offering a not-for-profit route to open access.

For free.
For everyone.
Forever.

We believe that scholarship should be **academic-led and community-owned** – our goal is to liberate university research from commercial control. We've spent 10 years building a **sustainable business model** for funding diamond open access publishing, proving that it can be affordable and scalable.

33+ diamond OA journals.

We launched as a publisher in 2015 with just 7 journals. HSS editors apply to join our programme and flip their journals OA from subscription models (particularly Wiley, Elsevier, Springer and Taylor & Francis).

We developed our own software.

We developed our own in-house publishing platform to ensure our technology is open source & protected against commercial acquisition. Janeway is copyleft licensed under the Affero General Public License (AGPLv1).

Funded by 350+ libraries.

Our library members support our publishing activities and inform the growth of the OLH via a community governance structure.

Our platform is growing quickly.

5.3 million OLH journal articles & website views in 2024. c. 400 journals using Janeway (that we know about!)

35+ university press and publishing partners, including California Digital Library, UCL Press, University of Michigan Press, Iowa State Digital Press, Society for Clinical Data Management, University of Arizona Libraries.

How it works.

01

Many universities and libraries contribute small, affordable sums.

Keeping our basic membership rates low helps libraries keep their costs under control. For libraries operating with larger budgets for open-access publishing, we can offer higher-tier membership rates.

02

These funds cover OLH publishing expenses and journal funding.

By diverting small sums from their commercial open-access budgets, OLH partner libraries provide the financial support we need to expand our portfolio of journals and build open-source publishing technologies that benefit the entire academic community.
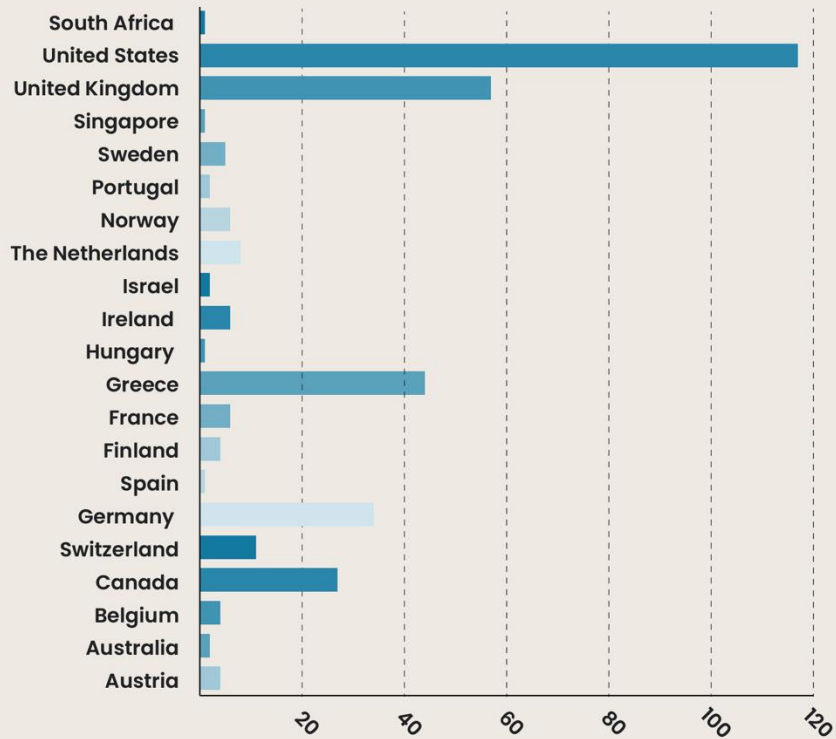
03

OLH journals publish research that is archived, secure, and free to access.

Articles are assigned DOIs, journals are widely indexed, metadata is harvestable, and sector-leading archival practices ensure the long-term availability of all published research.
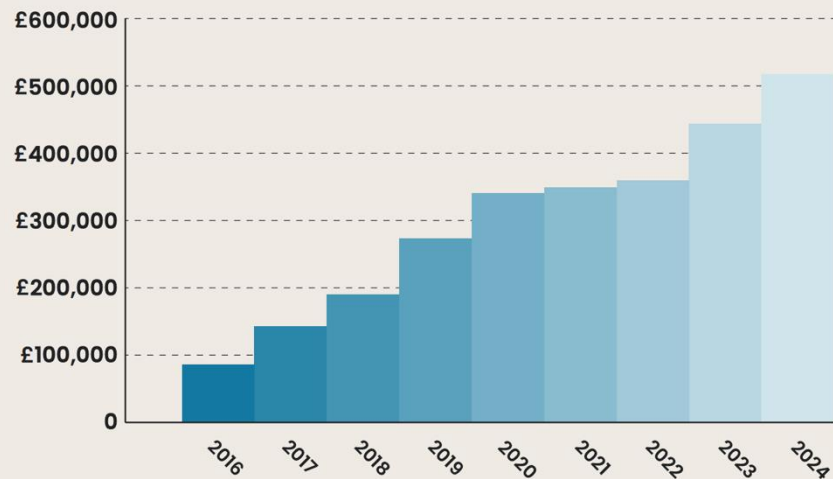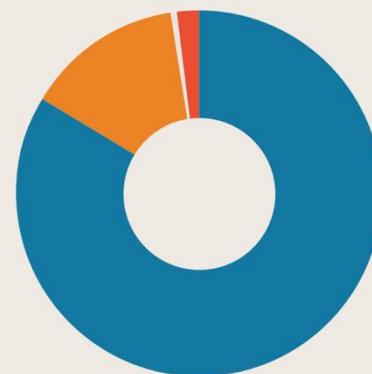
No. of library members by country.

Country	No. of members
South Africa	~1
United States	~117
United Kingdom	~57
Singapore	~1
Sweden	~5
Portugal	~2
Norway	~6
The Netherlands	~8
Israel	~3
Ireland	~6
Hungary	~1
Greece	~44
France	~6
Finland	~5
Spain	~1
Germany	~34
Switzerland	~11
Canada	~27
Belgium	~4
Australia	~2
Austria	~5

Average membership cost (£).

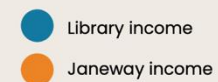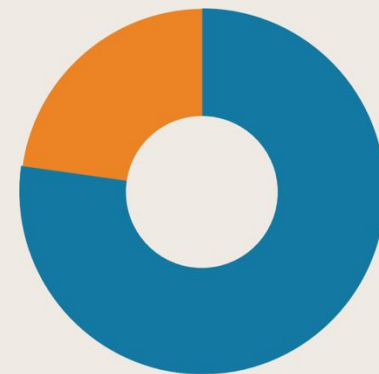| Country	Cost (£)
South Africa	~400
United States	~2200
United Kingdom	~3100
Singapore	~1500
Sweden	~2400
Portugal	~700
Norway	~3600
The Netherlands	~3400
Israel	~2200
Ireland	~3200
Hungary	~500
Greece	~700
France	~1600
Finland	~1900
Spain	~1000
Germany	~2600
Switzerland	~3200
Canada	~2100
Belgium	~2200
Australia	~4200
Austria	~2100

Library income.

OLH expenses in 2023–24.

OLH income streams.

- Staff salaries
- Publishing costs
- Digital office costs
- Marketing & travel

- Library income
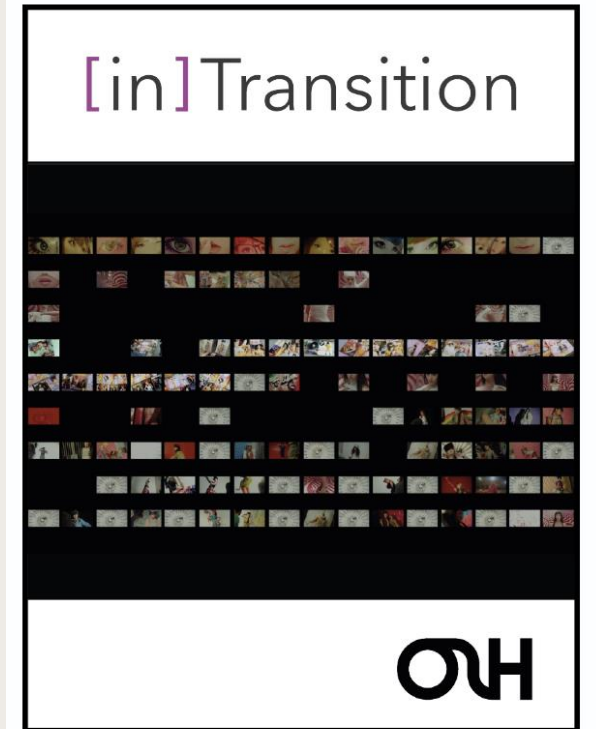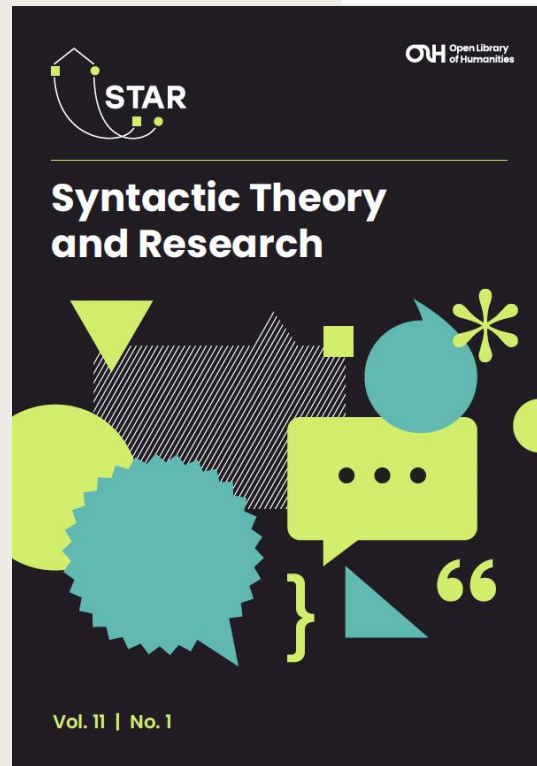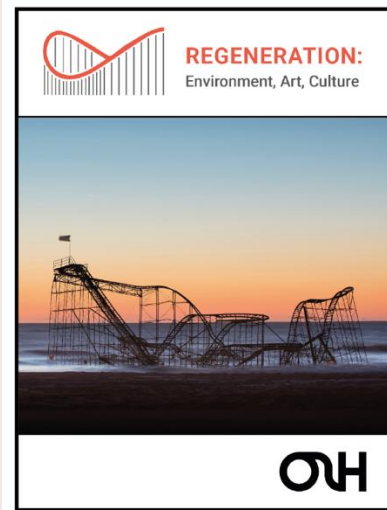- Janeway income

Journal flips.

RHETM

Review of the History
of Economic Thought
and Methodology

REGENERATION:
Environment, Art, Culture

OLH

Zygon®
Journal of
RELIGION & SCIENCE

OLH

ΦP | Political Philosophy

OLH

STAR

OLH Open Library
of Humanities

Syntactic Theory
and Research

Vol. 11 | No. 1

[in]Transition

OLH
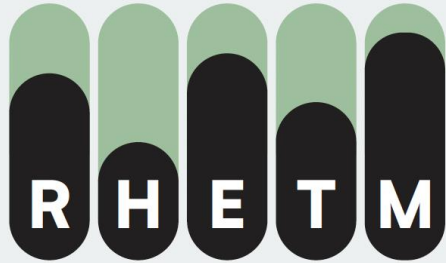
1. Regeneration: Environment, Art, Culture (who left the University of Nebraska Press)

2. Political Philosophy (who left Wiley)

3. Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science (who left Wiley)

4. Review of the History of Economic Thought and Methodology (who left Emerald Publishing)

5. [in]Transition: Journal of Videographic Film & Moving Image Studies (who left Media Commons)

6. Syntactic Theory & Research (who left Wiley)

7. Quaker Studies (who left a Liverpool University Press publishing partnership with OLH to become solely published by OLH)

8. Free & Equal: A Journal of Ethics and Public Affairs (who left Wiley)

9. International Labour Review (who left Wiley)

10. Theory & Social Inquiry (who left Springer Nature)

Community-based governance.

In October 2023 we relaunched the **Library Board**, with 14 elected university and professional librarians.

The Library Board represents the interests of all OLH library members.

Through regular input on our processes and strategy, the Board ensures that the **community governance** of the OLH is embedded in all that we do.

The Library Board also **advises the OLH team** on matters relating to library funding, indexing, discoverability, and bibliodiversity.

OLH

JANEWAY

A world-leading open-source digital publishing platform.

Our dedicated in-house software engineers have built a leading platform for journal hosting, migration, manuscript submission, review, copy-editing, and typesetting. The platform is called Janeway.

How member support drives OLH development.

Standard-level OLH membership sustains our publishing activities and helps build open-source publishing technologies that benefit the entire academic community.

Higher-level OLH membership helps us expand. We use these funds to rescue high-profile titles that are at risk from commercialisation (which threatens their academic integrity) as well as journals that are ceasing publication due to austerity cuts to humanities research funding.

46
The number of countries in which OLH authors live & work.

5.3m
The number of times OLH journal articles were viewed & downloaded.

19%
The increase in engagement with OLH journal articles since the previous year.

193
The number of countries in which OLH journal articles were read.

13,577
The number of articles OLH has published or flipped diamond open access since 2015.

£33.9m
The amount of money OLH is estimated to have saved university libraries on Article Processing Charges (APCs) & Transformative Agreements (TAs) since 2015.

395
The number of journals hosted on OLH's open-source publishing platform, Janeway.

84%
The percentage of running costs spent on staff salaries & pensions.

21
The number of countries where libraries support OLH.

3
The number of countries with OLH offline backup servers.

Challenges to growth

Reaching decision makers.
Many editors aren't decision makers and report to steering committees or society governance structures.

Journal ownership.
Many journals don't own their IP. Flipping involves setting up a new title, establishing authenticity, persuading editors to quit the zombie journal.

Migrating back content.
Journal archives are often only available in proprietary formats, which require coding work to access.

Managing academic expectations.

Years of commercial provision means editors expect some customer services that not-for-profits cannot provide.

Redistribution.

We know that OA library budgets are under pressure. We don't want to beg for money that doesn't exist. We want to **work together with librarians** to talk about redistributing funds for commercial journal packages.

- How can librarians and university-based publishers work together to **divest from Transformative Agreements** (TAs)?

- How can OLH support librarians through **academic outreach**?

- What role can **university leaders** play in this transition?

- What role can **open access funders** play?

Diamond OA in the UK
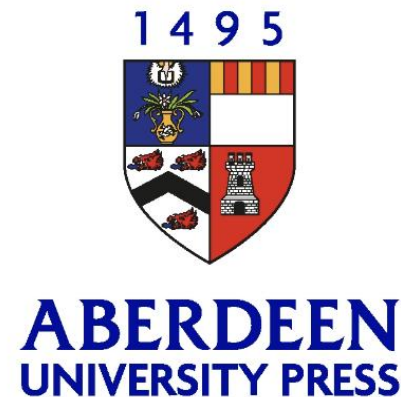
VALUES

This proposal has been designed by librarians, scholars, and university-based publishers.

01 Cost effective.
Not-for-profit model of cost recovery - no shareholders, no surplus, transparent pricing.

02 Scalable.
12+ publishers at launch, open applications for more publishers to join. Capacity & expertise in flipping journals.

03 Sustainable.
Publishers share resources, make efficiency savings & preserve bibliodiversity.

04 Mission aligned.
Libraries divest from commercial TAs & invest in academic-led organisations & infrastructure. Spending doesn't exit HE sector.
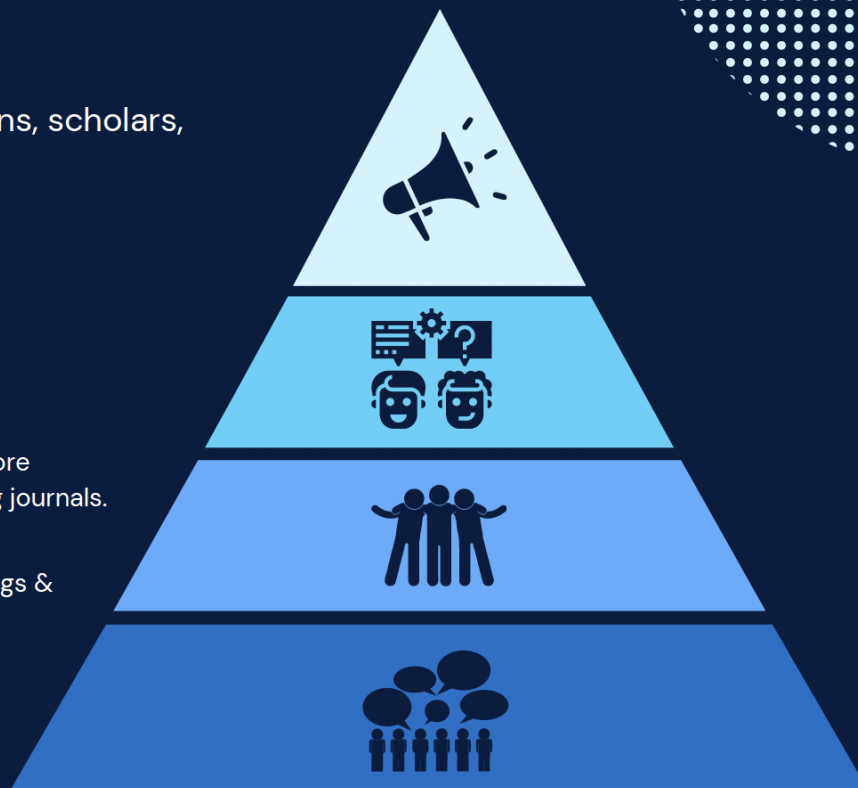
"The OLH offers financial transparency and is a very cost-effective way to support open access for tax-funded public institutions, who always need to have responsible spending at heart."

Katarina Wiberg
Open Access Officer, Kungliga biblioteket / National Library of Sweden