

OS Copyediting and Editing Policy / Approach

Part of understanding the ethos of the Operating System is to understand our position on copyediting and/or editorial involvement in a project in general.

Maybe this comes from me (hello, LDJ/Elæ here) coming from the visual arts, but I approach the role of the editor / publisher more like the role of the *curator* than what we see often in the literary world, where the editor themselves or press itself has a *voice* and actively shapes a project into its final form.

Sort of like a curator does with an artist's work in a gallery setting, we help our collaborators think about their work in its new role as a public (and archive) facing medium, thinking about the industry, the design-context, the narrative history, etc that their work, now complete, is moving into.

At the OS, we see our primary job as that of facilitating a project's transition into *book-object-document-future-archive* form, and working with the creator(s) to open up a conversation about how the content lives on the page and in the world, both for the author and then for the work's potential audiences. The process of working with the creator(s) on questions of typography, cover / interior design, framing information, materials, and various guidance on value-adding, professional and creative process strategies, marketing, etc are all going to be aspects of the project that we are bringing to the table for our creative community.

We seek to add tools to your process that you are unlikely to already have at your disposal, and ultimately we'd like you to be prepared at the end of our process to feel empowered to bring those tools to bear on future projects on your own—giving you the option of designing your own books, self publishing, working on collective or other book projects, or at least having more context / comprehension in future conversations about these aspects of production.

In fact, with those authors that are savvy with InDesign, we are more than happy to allow the project creator to truly be the 'artist' in the situation, laying out the work themselves provided they refer to and use certain basic elements from OS templates / style sheets.

What we're not doing (and in fact what I find pretty problematic) is doing the equivalent of telling a painter that their work needs to be changed before the show.

We consider you the expert on your own work. When you send your work in, *and we accept it*, we consider it to be something you've given great thought to, edited extensively, and determined to be ready for publication just like an artist would submit for consideration in an exhibition. When we accept a manuscript, it means that work is something we agreed was ready, beyond mostly minor errors and changes you let us know you planned to make.

What this means is, we don't accept work we think needs a lot of workshopping or editing. For

us, if a project submission shows promise but we don't think it's ready, we'll send a message with recommendations for re-working or adding to / making substantive changes to the project as we received it, letting a creator know we'd be interested in seeing an updated version. But once a project is already accepted, the project creator will mostly be getting cosmetic changes and copyedits from us, and that will happen towards the end of the process, when the book has been laid into InDesign and we are looking at digital galleys.

What this means is that the process of copyediting and agreeing on design details happens simultaneously, with creators doing a double pass of looking over the work in its final form before it goes to print—but that this happens towards the end of the production cycle, after cover, admin, other assets, etc. are all taken care of and ready to go.

Moving ahead, we're going to edit the publishing agreement so that it lays out these intentions and strategy with editorial, and also will make this policy clearly visible in our public-facing documents. If, despite knowing this, a creator with an accepted project is still looking for something more involved, we could potentially try to set that person up with one of our volunteers or community members interested in providing more in depth editorial feedback, depending on availability. Of course we know that not everyone has had the opportunity for extensive workshopping (having not been in any professional writing program, I am one of those people!) But again: we'd do so being sure that everyone knows that the work has been accepted *as is*, without substantive changes. We'd be willing to consider a creator's vision about potential changes, with editorial help, but this might alter the release date the acceptance was scheduled for, and/or require other conversations. Similarly, if after the original acceptance the creator makes substantive changes on their own, we'll need to review and agree to these anew—acceptance of a manuscript does not presume acceptance of any future changes on the part of the author.

Because we are *archive-facing*, we may *recommend* edits or additions having to do with providing additional context and/or citation and/or additional process material, in addition to our commitment to having a creator Q&A and other backmatter. Questions about line-breaks, formatting, occasionally order, negative space, etc. are all part of the design / layout process.

If you have additional questions, or were looking for specific feedback about a certain aspect of your project, please let us know.

With our best, and great respect for the work you make, and for the act of making, itself,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lynne DeSilva-Johnson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lynne DeSilva-Johnson / Elæ

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