

this newfangled process would have all the supplicants at the feet of a single faculty recruitment committee, anxiously waiting for its word and its word only. How refreshing! Why worry about these battered young scholars who wait against hope and continuously worsening odds? Once rejected (and painlessly forgotten), these Quixotes in scholar's garb need only to steer their mounts to the next forlorn queue, there to wait through a similarly exclusive application process, often for the scenario merely to repeat itself—ad nauseam. This mishandling and abuse of the disenfranchised (read: unemployed or untenured) would continue to roll merrily along, ironically reinforced by each new layer of scholars added to the tenured multitudes, their own recent pasts as untenured assistants now conveniently forgotten, their leaps into security and out of these debilitating queues now permanent.

Were we to follow this process to its natural conclusion, then, we would see the imperceptibly diminishing pool of potential assistant professors skulking in rejection from university A, where every newly minted PhD initially would like to take a first crack at employment, to university B, a fine school with excellent jobs in certain arcane fields (i.e., not the applicant's), to university C, and so on. Then, too, adding interesting complications to this morass, some of the smarter or more courageous, if not hungrier, protoprofessors would begin to back away from this endless procession through the academic hierarchy and brazenly seek to place their single-shot applications with smaller, lesser-known departments eager to get their hands on some "higher quality" PhDs instead of the usual fare of university A, B, and C leftovers. Where would this process lead? To academic excellence and the free exchange of ideas? To departments filled with scholars well suited to their student populations? Or to entropy and a free-for-all scramble, depending for its results almost as much on the desperation of its contestants as on the quality of the positions they seek or the appropriateness of the placements? Surely this method of selecting faculties would appear clumsy and absurd to any reasonable scholar and teacher. Why, then, must our professional journals adopt manuscript submission policies that replicate this elitist, leisurely process?

Stanton's argument discussing *PMLA*'s recent editorial shift mostly expresses the Editorial Board's self-conceit ("no journal's reviewing process is more demanding than *PMLA*'s" [10]) and contradictory and inexplicable desire to act like lemmings following a poll of major publication editors ("of the ten editors who responded to our survey, nine do not consider simultaneous submissions . . ." [9]) and does not address the obvious benefits

of multiple submission. In addition to allowing market forces to determine where articles would be placed, multiple submissions let authors get a variety of opinions on their work from sources outside their departments or graduate programs. Moreover, one of Stanton's major arguments against multiple submissions, the toll they potentially take on referees, is not a credible reason for limiting submissions. Being on a journal's publication jury should be portrayed not as a beneficent service to the field selflessly shouldered to add richness to the discourse in literary studies but as a scholarly credential often and appropriately used to advance the referees' professional interests. If juries are swamped, they should be expanded or given help.

While, finally, the readers of any journal should be kept in the highest regard, we must address the issue of multiple submissions realistically and with integrity. Limiting manuscript submissions to one journal at a time will cripple young scholars' attempts to create impressive dossiers before tenure reviews or job applications, and it will do so not to retain the purity of ideas or the integrity of the journals but to save the time of a hierarchy that has conveniently and tragically forgotten the struggles younger scholars undertake in the trenches every day. To take away the option of submitting duplicates of a manuscript simultaneously and thus expediting acceptance or rejection (and subsequent revision) would be to add yet another nail in the already tightly sealed coffins of junior scholars working in literature today.

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What Is Literature?

To the Editor:

In reading the Editor's Column "What Is Literature?—1994" (109 [1994]: 359–65), I was shocked (shocked!) to learn that there are still unreconstructed members of the MLA who, refusing to follow their vanguard, prefer essays having to do with "language and literature" rather than with "culture." Surely it is high time, as Domna Stanton so persuasively writes, to "signal receptiveness to work in cultural studies, starting with this Editor's Column."

In response to this grave crisis—or "[i]n the face of this lack," as Stanton expressively puts it—"[s]ome members" of the Advisory Committee and Editorial Board have "expressed the view that consultant readers

who are not receptive to cultural approaches should . . . recuse themselves from evaluating manuscripts using those approaches” (362). Such half measures are insufficient! Enough of polite debate and scholarly angst! Surely anyone “not receptive to cultural approaches”—or to whatever approaches are in vogue *next* month—should be exiled from the organization, dismissed from his or her job, and shot. That would instantly recuperate the *signifying system* by conjoining elements of historical, sociological, and anthropological insight in an

expansive project of normative inclusiveness that would signal a danger only for the problematic exponents of a discredited, hegemonic, and (pseudo)academic remnant.

After a few paradigmatic liquidations, a new *PMLA* befitting its redesigned cover will emerge: enlightened, postmodern, all-embracing, multicultural, and *pure*.

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