

Editorial Policy of *PMLA*

WE VENTURE to reaffirm the policy which has guided the selection of articles during the past decade, namely, that *PMLA* should reflect the most distinguished American scholarship in the modern languages and literatures. It is not a place for beginners to try their wings, unless those wings are used for sure and significant flight; and it is not a place for established scholars to publish their incidental writings, unless those writings compare in excellence and value with those of younger men. As the official Publications of the Modern Language Association of America *PMLA* should publish to the learned world the most important work of members of the Association.

We affirm, moreover, that the distribution of papers in *PMLA* should reflect work of distinction actually being done from year to year, regardless of periods or languages. Thus when literary or philological research in a certain field is at a low ebb and research in another is flourishing, we should print articles from the latter. We should not strain for wide coverage in period or language at the cost of publishing articles of indifferent research or undistinguished writing. Members who feel their interests neglected by this policy can always alter the situation by writing, and by encouraging others to write, articles good enough to be published. *PMLA* should reveal the best American scholarship as it is—not as it was, not as it theoretically should be. Equal representation of fields puts a tax on excellence.

We affirm that *PMLA* exists to encourage the advancement of literary and linguistic learning on the widest possible front. It welcomes new approaches to literary or linguistic study which are based upon sound scholarship, and it disavows any exclusive preference for conventional methods or for traditional papers on traditional subjects. Explicitly it invites important articles dealing with critical theory, the history of ideas, analytical bibliography, and American (or other) civilization, *provided* only that these articles have literary relevance.

While *PMLA* wishes to introduce to the Association new scholars and new lines of inquiry, it is reluctant to publish minor articles or highly technical studies addressed to specialists in various but limited fields. These are often more suitable for specialist journals. The editors also

seek to discourage either brief notes (the staple of several other periodicals) or unduly long papers. *PMLA* does *not* review books. The audience for *PMLA* articles is the total membership. Writers are requested to keep the broad interests of the membership in mind when addressing their papers to them.

Although *PMLA* is not a journal of *belles lettres*, and publishes nothing addressed to a wider audience than the Association represents, it insists that articles on whatever subject should be written in a clear and readable style. This criterion should not be construed as an encouragement of florid or expansive writing. Space is at a premium. Economy of words and tightness and clarity of organization are prominent among the standards by which articles will be judged for acceptance. Documentation should be held to a necessary minimum.

Every member of the Association has the privilege, denied to nonmembers, of submitting papers for publication in *PMLA*. Every paper submitted will be read by at least one consultant with special competence in the field of study. Papers in any way recommended will also be read by at least one member of the Editorial Committee. Rejected papers will be returned, if possible, within about two months. Acceptance of papers may be conditional upon their revision in the light of specific criticisms. Attempt is made to publish papers within nine months of acceptance. Members are asked to consider that the services of consultant readers are made possible by the unpaid labors of many distinguished men and women who generously contribute their scant leisure to the advancement of scholarship in humane letters in America.

Manuscripts must be prepared in conformity with the *MLA Style Sheet* published in the April 1951 *PMLA*, which is on sale as a pamphlet in the MLA offices. Authors are advised to read also the advice of R. B. McKerrow and H. M. Silver on the publication of research, published in the 1950 volume.

Manuscripts should be addressed to the Editor of *PMLA*, 6 Washington Square North, New York 3, N.Y. Stamps need not be enclosed. Carbon copies are not needed, but should be made and retained by authors, since manuscripts sometimes get lost.

THE EDITOR
(for the Editorial Committee)

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Even more important than this is the absence of any adult analysis of style, and any serious study of the nature of the process of composition. It seems to me that until there is some real knowledge of what composition excellence is, and how to achieve it, our controversies over what kind of grammar are largely sound and fury."

ENGLISH EMPLOYMENT OVERSEAS. Robert College, in Istanbul, Turkey, presents a challenge in education where East meets West. An opportunity to contribute significantly to the development of a young nation is available to teachers of English, including Grammar, Composition, Literature and English as a Foreign Language. Graduate degrees required. Address inquiries to Dr. Howard P. Hall, Vice President, Robert College, Bebek Post Box 8, Istanbul, Turkey; with copy to the Near East College Association, 548 Fifth Avenue, New York 36, New York.

THE IOWA ENGLISH YEARBOOK. The *Iowa English Yearbook* welcomes contributions on language, composition, and literature which would be of interest to high school or college English teachers, or to both. For the Fall 1962 issue, the *Yearbook* is particularly interested in articles relating to the general theme of literature and mass education but centering on specific works, genres, or types of course. The deadline for this issue is 1 June. A minimal use of footnotes is requested. Subscription rates are \$1.00 per year, \$4.50 for five years. All correspondence should be addressed to: Editor, *Iowa English Yearbook*, Department of English, Iowa State Univ., Ames.

INDIANA AGAIN and across the state. The report on "A College Seminar to Develop and Evaluate an Improved High School English Program," conducted at Ball State Teachers College, Muncie, Indiana, 1961, has appeared and is worth looking at. The Seminar, backed by a \$24,000 grant from the Libby Endowment, developed from the initiative of a small group of English teachers from Anderson, Ball State, Taylor and Earlham Colleges who, in 1958, invited high school teachers to consider with them how cooperation could improve secondary school instruction in English. The goals estab-

lished for an improved program emphasized composition and literature, but seem to us to have undervalued somewhat the importance of a knowledge of the history and structure of the language, and of the *integration of these three*. Restiveness with the modern overemphasis on handbook and workbook exercises was healthily apparent. The need for new teaching materials and new testing devices was seen.

Experimental classes were developed, and a battery of twenty-six questionnaires, the extent of which we have seldom seen, analysed in utmost detail the student scores, correlation, differences, reading habits, library habits, community interests, drop-outs, teacher profiles, loads, attitudes, home conditions, home encouragement of reading, and student occupational aspirations. Here is happy reading for the statistician, and for the educator. Here also is an analysis that should be looked at with some care by English teachers who wish to face the facts of student life.

We have reported on laudable efforts such as this at various places throughout the country. Probably a hundred more are in progress. At the risk of considerable repetition we ask, where is the coordinating factor? Where is the national program, other than that of the Commission on English with its bright hopes? Where were the statements by English professors to their own Congressmen when the revisions of the NDEA were being debated in Washington last spring? We appeared before a House sub-committee, as did Harold Allen (NCTE president), we prepared statements for many congressmen, but English on the domestic scene received short shrift by committee members. We firmly believe that if the 1962 summer institutes of the College Entrance Examination board can be followed in 1963 by NDEA English institutes significant advance will be made in the improved teaching of English. But this will take legislation, and it will require education at the grass roots of congressmen responsible for the legislation. The time to get in touch with your congressman is now. The theme of your conversation might well be the need for teacher preparation in order to insure the sequential development of English in all segments of our school system, and the definition of English as English—combining as it does in integrated fashion literature, composition and language. GWS