Report from the Editor of *PMLA* for 2017–18

Submitted by Wai Chee Dimock, Yale University

The primary responsibility of the *PMLA* Editorial Board is to make final decisions on articles submitted to the journal. It also explores ideas for the journal’s special features, reviews proposals for special topics and selects special-topic coordinators, makes recommendations to the Executive Council on policies, and works to maintain the quality and variety of the published material at the highest level.

The 2017–18 *PMLA* issues owe their interest and scholarly rigor to the scrupulous attention of the Editorial Board members and the anonymous peer reviewers—who read submissions and provided detailed suggestions for revision—and to the dedication and talents of the authors.

The October 2017 issue opens with an editor’s column on education populism. Five regular essays follow, on topics ranging from Franco’s hajj to animal reason before the eighteenth century. The contributions to Theories and Methodologies include nine essays on Caroline Levine’s *Forms*, to which Levine responds. The issue closes with entries in the series Little-Known Documents (George Moses Horton’s “Individual Influence”) and Criticism in Translation (Michel Foucault’s “Seven Remarks on the Seventh Angel”).

The January 2018 issue features an editor’s column on climate humanists, followed by six regular essays, on diverse subjects. Introduced by Angelika Bammer, ten pieces on the topic “How We Write Now: The Humanities, the Academy, and the Twenty-First Century World” are included in Theories and Methodologies. Two entries in the series Little-Known Documents close the issue: two early American reviews of Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and Sylvia Townsend Warner’s letters to Genevieve Taggard.

The editor’s column for the March 2018 issue focuses on historicism, presentism, and futurism. The issue continues with six regular essays, on writers from Chaucer to T. S. Eliot to Ionesco. Theories and Methodologies comprises nine commentaries on Viet Thanh Nguyen’s *The Sympathizer, The Refugees,* and *Nothing Ever Dies,* followed by a response from Nguyen. Ibrahim Younisi’s “Two Themes in *Bleak House*” appear under Criticism in Translation.

The May issue begins with an editor’s column on humanists as builders, using Haverford College’s new Visual Culture, Arts, and Media (VCAM) facility as a case study, followed by Diana Taylor’s 2018 Presidential Address and six wide-ranging regular essays. The issue continues with Wolfgang Emmerich’s “What Is and to What End Does One Study the History of East German Literature?,” an entry in Criticism in Translation, and Anna Mendelssohn’s *What a Performance,* an entry in Little-Known Documents. Closing the issue are contributions to
Theories and Methodologies: five essays on the topic “Reading over Time,” introduced by Faye Halpern and Peter J. Rabinowitz, and six commentaries on Cathy N. Davidson’s *The New Education*, to which Davidson responds.

The next special topic—Cultures of Reading, coordinated by Evelyne Ender and Deidre Shauna Lynch—will appear in two issues, October 2018 and January 2019. A session tied to that topic, “Reading against Noise,” was held at the 2017 convention. Another special-topic issue is in development: Varieties of Digital Humanities, coordinated by Alison Booth and Miriam Posner; a session tied to the topic was held at the 2018 convention, and the issue will appear in January 2020.

The number of submissions to *PMLA* in the calendar year 2017 (254) was 13.3% lower than in 2016 (293), in part because the special topic Varieties of Digital Humanities attracted less than a quarter of the submissions that Cultures of Reading did in 2016. As of 31 August 2018, we have received 170 submissions, 2 more than we received in the same period in 2017. During the Editorial Board’s 2017–18 term, the board considered 80 essays recommended by consultant readers. The board accepted 16 (4 of them conditionally), rejected 53, and invited 11 authors to revise and resubmit (among these, 7 articles were accepted, and 4 were rejected). The overall acceptance rate for submissions is 6.3%, down from 7.2% in 2017.