in the true sense, learned in-depth treatises on focused subjects.

It would seem, however, that to a significant extent, and for reasons Lewis outlines, they no longer are. Waters laments the "monographic tyranny" of our profession, but the book fetish (his understanding of that tyranny) is only part of the problem. In fact, we now also have antimonographic tyranny, pressure on graduate students to produce a dissertation that can be accepted as a book but that, because of the nature of the current academic book market, does not require knowledge of an author's corpus as a whole or the critical work on it.

I do not mean to suggest that there is no place for studies that examine one idea across different authors. Erich Auerbach's *Mimesis*, more than five decades after its first publication, still stands as brilliant proof of the contrary. But Auerbach was fifty years old when he undertook that summa and was able to write from the Olympian perspective of vast knowledge acquired through decades of wide-ranging and in-depth reading informed by the rigors of large-scale inquiry and sustained argument. If dissertation directors do not instill that rigor in graduate students during the exercise called a dissertation, when and where will our colleagues-to-be learn it? If they are able to publish in respected journals and with distinguished university presses without it, why will they bother? Will the chapter or article on work X by author Y that entails reading only X and two or three works on Y, of which I have seen too many examples, someday become the norm in our profession?

I concur with Lewis's call for us to retain our valuation of "a substantial, exacting project of research and writing" (1222), but the results should not have to be published by a university press in book form to earn their author a job. Since monographic dissertations are no longer likely to get published, at least by university presses, departments should reconsider the pressure they put on candidates for assistant professorships to have a book (or two) rather than articles, so that word can get back to graduate students and their dissertation directors that a dissertation does not have to have university press potential as long as it has journal potential. Here Waters is correct to condemn monographic tyranny.

University presses might also want to reconsider their refereeing process. While Waters is right that departments should not relegate the judgment of a tenure candidate's work to these presses (316), the profession would benefit if there were more quality control of those broad field books presses are so intent on publishing. If a manuscript deals with the works of several authors, could these presses not arrange that there be readers who can pass valid judgment on the analysis of each work or author treated? This does not have to add to the already lengthy referee process; there is no reason why those judgments cannot be sought simultaneously. If university presses are privileging broad fields, could they not maintain the same quality control exercised when single-subject books are sent off to one or two specialists in that field who know the relevant primary and secondary works?

Like Carlos J. Alonso (Editor's Column [118 (2003): 217–23]), I, too, would love to save the scholarly monograph (as distinct from the not-too-scholarly broad field book), but until university presses change their idea of what will sell, I see this as a real challenge. Meanwhile, I feel a greater urgency to preserve the "essential values of scholarly inquiry we purport to uphold," which today's academic book publishing sometimes works to undercut.

Richard M. Berrong
Kent State University, Kent

Reply:

That word *broad* crashes five times through Richard M. Berrong's letter, like trees falling in a forest, potentially unheard. Well, I hear you, brother, or I think I do, and I like what you said. OK, I accept the fact that I'm too utopian. But I don't think all that happens in the academic world—including dissertations and first books—should be market-driven, as if dissertation directors were only a focus group telling advisees what outfit to wear for the interview at the MLA convention or for research in the library. If this is the case, then indeed Henry Ford has won and Charlie Chaplin has lost. Oh, modern times! Oh, mores!

I represent the market, so I shouldn't be telling you to ignore it, right? But I am getting depressed dealing with young scholars in shock because they "did everything" their dissertation directors instructed to craft a product that would sell, only to be told by me it's uninteresting. The situation of young

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scholars in literature is a bit like the one of sonneteers in the Renaissance, when everybody had figured out how to write fourteen-liners, but too few of them had any lift. So I recall Sidney's line, "'Fool,' said my Muse to me, 'look into thy heart and write'" (*Astrophil and Stella* [Garden City: Anchor, 1967] line 14). And, more recently, Jonathan Franzen tells us he found the oomph he needed to write *The Corrections* after he got "an epiphany of an authenticity [which] made me hunger for the unforced emotion of a literature that isn't trying to sell me anything" (*How to Be Alone: Essays* [New York: Farrar, 2002] 83). I think we all hunger for an amalgam of criticism, theory, and scholarship that isn't just another sales pitch.

To get lift and heft, you gotta dig deep into your own soul to figure out if what you are studying stirs you enough that you'll write probing criticism and theory and that you'll really search the archive for paydirt. Goodness knows there are new scholarly Atlantises arising every day as previously disdained artworks become discussable. I like what Berrong says in sadness about the unfortunate trend of training young scholars away from in-depth research. I agree with him that what we need now is a lot more of that old Teutonic *wissenschaftlich* depth of inquiry.

He quotes Philip Lewis's complaint that it seems university presses mostly want books on "broad topics." That sounds to me as if the problem is the presses who want books that are wide-ranging but shallow. That's what *broad* means, right? I have gotten the feeling that many dissertation directors, in the effort to psych out the presses to figure out how to sell the first big product, are giving graduate students bad advice. And I'm saddened when I see young folks walk away from my quick rejection mystified, as if they hadn't seen it coming. They'd done all their little marketing committee recommended, and yet they have to return home from the market still clutching the product, now worse for wear.

I feel miserable for emerging scholars who have not been well mentored to read widely and think deeply, because I know they are getting mixed signals about what will work on market day. How can more be expected from the young when so much cynicism comes from some at the top of the heap telling them to just crank it out so we can all "retain our jobs and keep making the conference rounds" (Frederick Crews, *Postmodern Pooh* [New York: North Point, 2001] 168)? That is Fred Crews's impersonation of Stanley Fish speaking, and not the man himself, but this Crews missile has struck a real target, the whole hyperprofessionalized hustle that declares the market the ultimate horizon of all our doings. The whole antitheory crusade—which goes on unimpeded, as if total victory were not enough for the warriors—was an attack on the idea that thinking deeply is part of our job description.

Market-oriented cynicism is causing the production of a lot of dross, and I see too much of it coming in over the transom. No university press board is eager to waste its limited resources publishing routine stuff. Blaming the presses as the chief representatives of the new market orientation in the academy won't work. The truth is more complicated and more sinister. Productivity for productivity's sake is not a whim of the university presses; it's the law of the land. To change it is going to take a concerted effort and not just a few lamentations from people like me. Anyone writing the history of the last thirty years of MLA members' waning expectations and ambitions in scholarship will have to devote some careful analysis to the malign synergy that developed between some presses and some leaders of the profession, which has done a lot to institutionalize the hustle.

But this I say to anyone still lucky enough to be in grad school: the time of grad school is time that will never come again. It needs to be used getting your hands dirty and getting lost in the archive building up a treasure to be mined for years to come. It is not a time to rush to craft a product for quick sale. All those products come off the assembly line looking like used cars.

The elders seem to discourage free-range scholarship. Berrong seems impatient for the presses to change their minds about what will sell. As I discuss in greater detail in *Enemies of Promise* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm, forthcoming), I think rather it is scholars' false ideas about what the presses want that is causing the young to write shallow books. It is everybody's caving in to the market that's the problem. We have to root this cynicism out wherever we find it.

Lindsay Waters
Harvard University Press

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