

## Publishing your work in *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*

### I. 5 essentials for refining content

1. Ask, and answer, the right questions:
  - (a) What is NEW about this approach/theory/research/analysis? And what impact will this new material have on the field?
  - (b) How does this essay present your material so that your original contribution to the scholarly conversation on this topic is foregrounded? Have you made your overall purpose clear?
  - (c) Why will this essay excite the readership of *ECF*? And what are the wider implications of my discoveries/theories for our understanding of this particular topic?
2. Engage thoroughly with the criticism of the scholars who have studied this topic before you, which will facilitate a deepening of your argument and an exploration of its wider implications.
3. Concentrate on producing an organized and integrated argument that runs throughout the entire MS. A clear focus and careful substantiation are crucial. Test the clarity by asking a scholar outside the specific field to read the MS and describe to you what the essay is about.
4. Define your terms carefully and succinctly, and use those terms in that particular way throughout the essay.
5. Contextualize, contextualize, contextualize.

### II. 5 aids for preparing a faultless manuscript (MS)

1. Read the journal to which you plan to submit your MS. Scan at least five articles from recent issues of that journal in order to determine if your submission reaches the level of reasoning and the quality of contribution to the scholarly dialogue of those recently published essays.
2. Study the submission requirements for each journal to which you plan to submit an article. Reformat your MS to follow those guidelines. This step may take time but will allow you to generate a MS that is not physically distracting to the editors, who may then focus on the content and your argument.
3. Ensure that the scope of the argument matches the page length suggested for submissions to that particular journal. Avoid trying to do too much in too few pages, but never send twice as many pages to a journal requesting 5,000 – 8,000 words per essay. "Succinct" works as a mantra.
4. Use a spellchecker, but also proofread your MS backwards, starting at the last page, which disrupts your familiarity with the material and allows your brain to see typos.
5. Collaborate. (a) Obtain feedback from one or two scholars in your department, institute, or field of research. (b) Practice and exchange editing services among your peers.

### III. 6 strategies to AVOID

1. Extensive bibliographical or theoretical preamble. Reviewers may ask for an early footnote containing a concise bibliographical survey that features important works in the area that your argument does not take up directly. However, eschew an overly long survey of "research-to-date," which only carries prestige in a dissertation or in a book bibliography entitled "Works Consulted."
2. Wide-ranging survey as the essay's *raison d'être*.
3. Offer much valuable and fascinating research on the back of an unclear agenda. Spurn insufficient analysis, tenuous argumentation, and illogical construction.
4. Polemic and unsubstantiated remarks on other scholars' work or on the authors who were competing contemporaries of your subject author.
5. Restating arguments presented by earlier literary critics and researchers because you neglected to read past 1995 in the scholarly literature.
6. Colloquial phrases and stylistic ambiguities. Ban indistinct language from your MS.

### IV. 3 innovative methods to consider

1. Accept the challenges and benefits of co-authorship.
2. Embrace interdisciplinary scholarship.
3. When an editor offers a "revise and resubmit," do it! And work with your editor: incorporate the reviewers' suggestions for revision; upon resubmitting offer an outline of how you revised your paper in line with those suggestions; and include any objections and explanations of why you declined to follow a specific suggestion. Most reviewers are offering their take on what would make this essay better, but you should also be happy with the way your work appears in the journal.