



OOLIGAN  
P R E S S

## Manuscript/Proposal Review

### OPEN REJECTION:

#### **Open Rejections**

In an open rejection, only the manuscript is being rejected. In this type of letter, the editor is leaving the door open to an author, but leaving the next move completely in his or her hands. Such letters tell the author that the press would either reconsider a manuscript if a considerable change were made to it or would consider other manuscripts from the author.

Title of Work: The Moby-Dick Blues

Author:

Genre: Adult Fiction

Proposal or Manuscript: Manuscript

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Reviewed by: Brandon Sanford

Date Reviewed: 1/19/14

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### ASSESSMENT:

#### Ooligan Mission:

Ooligan Press is a general trade publisher rooted in the rich literary tradition of the Pacific Northwest. A region widely recognized for its unique and innovative sensibilities, this small corner of America is one of the most diverse in the United States, comprising urban centers, small towns, and wilderness areas. Its residents range from ranchers, loggers, and small business owners to scientists, inventors, and corporate executives. From this wealth of culture, Ooligan Press aspires to discover works that reflect the values and attitudes that inspire so many to call the Northwest their home.

- How well does this book align with the Ooligan's mission as a teaching press?  
*Defend your answer.*

The conceit for *The Moby-Dick Blues* is the discovery of the lost *Moby Dick* manuscript. Taking on this project would probably allow for some literary research in the areas of fact checking. *Moby Dick* is a staple of English classes.

- How would working with this author on this book benefit, or hinder the development of students in the publishing program?  
*Defend your answer.*

Michael Strelow seems like he would bring a lot to the table. He is a published author with an established following. One of his novels was a finalist for the Ken Kesey prize in 2005 for the Oregon Book Awards.

### Compatibility:

- How well does this book align with our submission guidelines?

<http://ooligan.pdx.edu/submissions/>

While the book is set in the pacific northwest, it doesn't seem particularly tied to its location. *Moby Dick* and Melville are an American tradition, not specific to the region. One of its narrators is characterized as "slow," which would fit in with our mission of diversity. If we are focusing on non-fiction and possibly YA novels, this book would be going a different direction than what we intend.

- How does the book fit with our backlist? What comparable titles have we published?

The closest titles in our adult fiction backlist to *The Moby-Dick Blues* are the Lincoln time traveling books, as they also deal with an American icon. I don't think we have anything quite like it.

### Marketability:

- What is the primary potential audience for this book?  
People who are fans of Melville or literature in general.
- Why wouldn't they buy it?  
I think most people in that demographic would be looking more for a literary thriller, which this book isn't.
- What are the potential secondary audiences for this book?

Readers of adult fiction.

- Why wouldn't they buy it?  
Characters don't really engage the reader.
- In your estimation, what would it take to turn this manuscript into a marketable book?  
Characters are used as narrators and are getting lost in the narration. I think having the narrators solely be members of the family would increase the depth of the characters and allow for a richer family dynamic.

The Manuscript:

- What are the book's strengths?  
Interesting concept. Beautiful writing on the level of the line.
- What are the book's weaknesses:  
Too passive, intellectual and caught up in the Arvin and Thorne's thoughts. Thorne does not make a good counter-balance to Arvin as a narrator.
- What does the book need?  
Revisioning to make the story more relatable and emotionally impactful on the reader.

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Explanation of Recommendation:

*Why are we rejecting the manuscript without rejecting the author?*

(1-2 paragraphs to sum up)

Response to author (1-2 paragraphs for open-door rejection manuscripts/1-2 sentences for all others):

Thank you Mister Strelow for submitting *The Moby-Dick Blues* to us for consideration. It has an interesting concept and the way you put sentences together is very beautiful. Unfortunately, at this time we are not interested in publishing *The Moby-Dick Blues*. We are looking for books that engage more with the history and traditions of the northwest specifically, rather than with the literary icons of the US in general. While your book is set in Oregon, Oregon isn't really central to the plot

If in the future you have another novel you would like to submit, please do, especially if it focuses more on the northwest. We would enjoy working with you. Thank you again.