

Editor's Column

BY the time this issue appears, I will have returned from the executive office of the MLA to the familiar haunts of academic life—the classroom and the stacks. Soon, like most *PMLA* readers, I will find each new issue a package of surprises. Probably I will not have time to read all the articles, although I will skip some with a guiltier conscience than heretofore. I will, however, read the editor's column with the curiosity of an insider. It has been a rare pleasure to edit *PMLA*. The meetings of the editorial board have sustained their interest and drama; all of us on the board are regularly amazed by the unexpected judgments of our colleagues and by the revelations of the authors' names when our decisions have been reached. Speaking for myself, I have received a priceless education just from listening to Saki Bercovitch, Reinhold Grimm, Myra Jehlen, Uli Knoepfelmacher, John Kronik, Larry Lipking, Nancy Miller, and Maureen Quilligan talk about the unpredictable assortment of essays that have come to us. I will certainly miss those meetings.

By coincidence, this is not only my final column but also the final literary issue of *PMLA*'s one hundredth volume. The MLA's founders had to begin by organizing a convention, but their second action was to start a journal. *PMLA* has undergone many changes in its century of existence; I have discussed some of the recent ones in previous editor's columns. Those hundred volumes contain a history of our profession; its growth and achievements, its problems and failures are chronicled alongside an uninterrupted flow of outstanding scholarship and criticism.

Yet another change is under way. No doubt many of our most diligent readers noticed the item in the March issue announcing that the Executive Council had voted in October 1984 "to move as expeditiously as possible toward the separation of the editorship of *PMLA* and the executive directorship of the association" (256). At the May council meeting, it was further decided that the council should appoint the editor, who would continue to function in the same way as when the editorship and the executive directorship were combined; a report of this meeting was published in the September 1985 issue. The appointment was not made in time for me to announce the new editor's name here, but if all goes well the change in command will have taken place by the time this column appears.

The MLA will thereby fall into line with the usual pattern; very few executive directors also edit their associations' journals. In 1982, when I was appointed, the council had found that many qualified candidates for the executive directorship were reluctant to take on the editorship. Moreover, the nature of the association and the temper of our times have dictated a different role for the executive director from what it used to be; in addition to representing the members and mediating among them, he or she must be deeply involved in communications, liaison, and public relations with outside organizations, especially in Washington. Such work requires more time than an individual has, and the editorship of *PMLA* seemed a reasonable place to relieve some of the burden.

Obviously, I was not deterred by the prospect of editing *PMLA*, and I have enjoyed doing it. It has brought me more into touch with the newest work in fields outside my own. I have taken ad-

vantage of the editor's columns to answer some of the questions that, as a reader, I had always wondered about. I hope that the next editor will continue to regard *PMLA* as a sort of index of the profession and occasionally report on trends in submissions, authorship, and so forth.

Despite its eminent traditions and present prestige, *PMLA* is not free of problems. A complaint I heard frequently, sympathized with, wrote about, argued over with friends, harangued readers about in this column, and ultimately did little to change is *PMLA's* alleged failure to represent all the constituencies of the MLA. For the editor, responding to such a problem poses a challenge; *PMLA* can publish only what is submitted to it and, of course, does publish only a fraction of that. In an important effort to attract a broader range of submissions, the council has accepted the recommendation of the Commission on Writing and Literature that specialists in rhetoric and composition be added to the *PMLA* advisory committee. Like the new editor, they will not have accepted the appointments in time for me to mention their names here, but they should be on the job already as you read this. More exactly, they are probably checking their mailboxes, hoping for envelopes full of manuscripts to read; please give them something to do. In fact, I can think of no better way to welcome the next editor than to urge all members to send their work to *PMLA*. I will look forward to seeing you there.

ENGLISH SHOWALTER

Notes on Contributors

MARVIN CARLSON is professor of theater and director of graduate studies at Indiana University, Bloomington. A former Guggenheim fellow and a current fellow of the American Theatre Association, he has written on theater theory, dramatic literature, and European theater history. His books include *The Theatre of the French Revolution* (Cornell UP, 1966), *Goethe and the Weimar Theatre* (Cornell UP, 1978), and *Theories of the Theatre* (Cornell UP, 1984). In 1986 he will become executive officer of the PhD program in theater at the City University of New York.

SUSAN D. COHEN received her PhD from New York University in 1982; she is an instructor of French at Barnard College. Her article grew out of a paper presented at the first Colloquium of Twentieth-Century French Studies, held at the City University of New York Graduate Center in 1983. A specialist on the work of Marguerite Duras, she has lectured widely on that author and published articles on her in *Les cahiers Renaud-Barrault*, *New York Literary Forum*, and the *Psychoanalytic Study of Literature*. Barnard College awarded her a grant in 1984 to conduct research for a book on Marguerite Duras, which she is now completing. Her interests include French comic narratives of the twentieth century and French women writers.

JAMES DEAN, a visiting assistant professor of English at Tufts University, received his PhD from Johns Hopkins University in 1971. He has taught medieval and Renaissance English literature and expository writing at Colgate University, Stanford University, and (since 1982) Tufts University. He has published articles on Chaucer and other medieval subjects in *Speculum*, *ELH*, and *Chaucer Review*, and he assisted Donald R. Howard with an edition of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and coedited (with Howard) *Troilus and Criseyde*. The present essay is part of a series on the artistry of Chaucer's conclusions. Others in the series are forthcoming in *Philological Quarterly* (on the *Troilus*) and *Chaucer Review* (on the *Parliament of Fowls*).

WAI-CHEE DIMOCK, an assistant professor of English at Rutgers University, received her PhD from Yale. Her reviews and articles (primarily on Melville) have appeared in *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, *Studies in the Novel*, *ESQ*, and *Georgia Review*. The present essay grows out of a senior honors project she directed two years ago. She is on leave from Rutgers this year on an ACLS fellowship, working on a manuscript titled *Homeward Bound: Rhetoric and Audience in Melville's Fiction*.

THOMAS HYDE did graduate work at Oxford and at Yale, where he has taught since 1976. He has written on Spenser in *English Literary Renaissance* and for the *Spenser Encyclopedia* and also on Kyd and Shakespeare in *Renaissance Drama*. Later this year the University of Delaware Press will publish *The Poetic Theology of Love: Cupid in Renaissance Literature*. Morse, ACLS, and NEH fel-