

that they should be. I've so frequently done a subject or author search and found that a major book that came out three or four years earlier on the topic was not cited. Also, major articles in major journals (e.g., *Style* in a particular case) are frequently not included. I realize that presses should be sending in their copies, but that is expensive, and most presses these days even refuse to send out an adequate number of review copies. Couldn't the *MLA Bibliography* personnel check all the issues of all the major journals (the ones they explicitly say are included) in the library just to make sure everything has been included? Particularly for scholars working in libraries that do not have many journals, tracking down relevant publications by themselves is often impossible.

Another problem that I have found annoying has been the difficulty of getting a session accepted at the MLA convention. The criteria for acceptance of a session are not at all clear, particularly to a resident abroad. However, it would be extremely interesting to American colleagues, I believe, to hear what foreign scholars, with their often quite different approaches, may have to say on some issues in English literature. Perhaps at this point the presence of the MLA and *PMLA* abroad is stronger than the presence of non-American scholars in the organization or the journal.

It has been suggested in the Forum that foreign scholars find it extremely hard to get papers accepted by *PMLA*. This is not a problem peculiar to *PMLA*, however, but a problem affecting all American scholarly journals. It is extremely difficult, even after perusing back issues of a journal in the library and reading descriptions of what kind of articles it solicits, to really know what type of journal to contact for a particular piece of work. This is a problem for European scholars who are working on a range of topics and periods and in a variety of methodologies. European professors of English do not grow up as eighteenth-century scholars or Renaissance specialists, and they therefore do not in their graduate education imbibe a list of some ten journals relevant to that area. I have frequently found that Europeans' breadth of approach, which should be a valuable asset, becomes a hindrance once they try to publish their work in the United States. What seems perfectly all right in Europe turns out to be too eclectic or insufficiently theoretical (it doesn't mention the big names on the first page of the article) from many American perspectives. There is no deliberate discrimination against European scholars in this but rather an unthinking expectation of a particular format for articles that, naturally, is foreign to scholars from abroad. It is therefore important, I believe, for the editors of *PMLA* and other American journals to be more aware of such diversity of content and form when evaluating

papers from non-American contributors. What European scholars have to offer the American market is, precisely, their difference from the standard American article. Here, too, *PMLA* could take a step in the right direction by encouraging more participation by European, African, and Asian scholars.

Let me close this letter by saying again how wonderful it is to be a member of the MLA, particularly if one lives abroad and has the excitement of a whiff of academia from across the Atlantic whenever the next issue of *PMLA* arrives in the mail. With *Profession* (this year a full volume even), this enjoyment has reached a new high.

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### Edward W. Said's Presidency

*Editor's note: The following letters bring this exchange to its conclusion.*

To the Editor:

My friend Edward Said is indeed frequently intemperate in political polemic, especially when he has been attacked, and I think that it harms his/our cause. As mentioned in Jon Whitman's letter (Forum, 114 [1999]: 106), I was, in fact, the target of this polemic on one occasion (and I didn't enjoy it). Nevertheless, Said has always been able also (and almost miraculously) to maintain a strict separation between the realms of political activism and academic life, such that at the very same time that he was assaulting us in print on political issues, he was expressing strong material support for us as scholars and academics on other fronts.

Would that his adversaries in the academy could maintain such separations. Zionist academics not infrequently seek to silence the voices of anti-Zionists in the academy, especially those of us who are Jewish or work in Jewish studies. At the MLA convention, I have been told in open session that I have no right to "abuse" Israel from a position in the United States.

Whitman's letter belongs to this category of attempted suppression of free discourse and to no other.

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### Reply:

In citing the disturbing record of public attacks by Edward W. Said (Forum, 114 [1999]: 106–07), I considered