
Editor's Note

THE CURRENT VOLUME of *PMLA* has elicited strong responses, praise as well as reproof, even before the year is out. Readers within and outside the association have perceived new directions in the journal's contents and have wondered whether these innovations represent changes in the profession. The answer is that both have evolved together, as is natural, transformed by the debates about the scope and tenor of literary studies. The journal, for its part, has opened its pages to all the voices now striving to be heard, and its referees have looked favorably on materials and methods whose presence in *PMLA* surprises some readers. Catharine R. Stimpson's presidential address to the 1990 MLA convention, included in this issue, expresses the consciousness of difference that lies behind many of these changes.

After the unusually heavy representation of the Hispanic constituency in the January issue, the March number launched seven essays that varied only in the degrees of their daring. The four articles on film constituting the special topic in this issue reflect the journal's position that the cinema is the legitimate business of *PMLA* and signal the Editorial Board's interest in future submissions on this topic. Within their particular frame, these studies are as divergent from one another as are the other essays in the issue. Like the articles selected for earlier special topics, they do not begin to exhaust the field, but they do reflect its richness. From the vantage point of the board, the venture has been a success, and we would like to thank Teresa de Lauretis, of the University of California, Santa Cruz, for her services as coordinator of the special topic on cinema. We are grateful for the time, commitment, and expertise that she invested in a difficult task.

In a further effort to encourage the most wide-ranging discussions in *PMLA*, the Editorial Board has announced a new special topic: Colonialism and the Postcolonial Condition. Members in all fields are invited to send in their work on this subject of pressing importance and, if they wish, to review their projects with the topic coordinators, Linda A. Hutcherson, of the University of Toronto, and Satya P. Mohanty, of Cornell University.

The same cultural and political developments that prompted this special topic undergird the concerns that Betty Jean Craigie, who teaches com-

parative literature at the University of Georgia, expresses in her guest column in this issue. The reverberating cultural collisions that the publication two years ago of Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* provoked have not, to date, had the resonance in *PMLA* that they deserve. The attacks both on the book and on the author through his book expose the fragility of common assumptions of free speech, but Craige places "the Rushdie affair" into the larger context of the strains between cultural identity and globalization. We print her views not as the last word in an ongoing debate or as a position that all will necessarily share but as a standpoint that deserves to be aired and discussed. Reflecting the recent skirmishes about curricular changes in the academy, Craige's admonitions bear on the thinking and teaching of all members.

A change of *PMLA*'s name to *Publications of the Postmodern Language Association of America*, as the writer of a letter to the Forum waggishly suggests, may not be in order. But the incursion and legitimization of new forms of expression, the changing definitions of centers and margins, the status of European and non-European cultures, the place of colonial values and structures in a postcolonial world, the shifting boundaries among political and racial constituencies—these are matters to which *PMLA* cannot remain immune.

JOHN W. KRONIK