

EDITORIAL COMMENT

The chill of English winters is so miserable, Jeremy Bentham once wrote, "that a great part of the time that would otherwise be employed in driving the quill, is consumed in thinking of the cold." In returning to my native Pennsylvania after an extended exile in the Carolinas, however, it has proven relatively effortless to continue "driving the quill." This being the final issue of *LARR* to appear under my editorship, the temptation to pen a final Comment has been irresistible. Moreover, the experience of the past five years with the journal has brought an accumulation of debts that must be acknowledged, however inadequately. Before undertaking the litany of those whose contributions have made it all possible, let me inform you of the third and final survey of manuscripts and their disposition during the 1974–79 *quinquenio*. These were presented to the Association at our April meeting in Pittsburgh, but bear repetition for the entire readership. The two previous such reports, you will recall, appeared in my Comments of volume 11, number 2 (1976) and volume 13, number 2 (1978).

For the period from October 1977 through January 1979, we received a total of 108 manuscripts (excluding unrefereed research announcements and notes)—a monthly rate slightly higher than that noted previously. Since the first of our eighteen-month reports, the flow has risen slightly over 10 percent. The disciplinary breakdowns (with figures from our two earlier reports in parentheses) are as follows: political science 34% (26 and 23); history 15% (29 and 19); literature and languages 10% (7 and 17); sociology 13% (8 and 9); economics 7% (6 and 11); and anthropology 7% (previously under 2). As before, those falling beneath 3% include ecology, education, folklore, geography, law, medicine, and urban planning. Several observations emerge from these data. Despite my best efforts to eschew potential favoritism toward my own discipline, political science has risen 11 percent during this most recent period. Given the fact that the journal commissions few manuscripts, one may take this as a sign of scholarly activity by political scientists. History, in retaining its customary second-place position, has dropped 4 percent during these months and almost 50 percent from the initial eighteen months at Chapel Hill. For the first time, sociology has displaced economics in third place, and literature and languages, although having fallen from the previous high of 17 percent, is nonetheless higher now than at the beginning of the *quinquenio*. Those disciplines listed above with a representation of less than 3 percent have not changed their pattern throughout these years.

At the risk of disloyalty to the discipline in which I was nurtured, it must be said that the preponderance of articles in political science strikes us as undesirable. Yet it is a function of the number of manuscripts that are submitted; acceptance and rejection rates do not vary significantly from one field to another. When Joseph Tulchin and I undertook our editorial tasks in July 1974, we agreed

—and have repeated both orally and in writing—that political science and history had been unduly dominant in LARR. We travelled to regional meetings and conferences, drew upon the advice and contacts of Editorial Board members, and in a host of ways endeavored to encourage the submission of materials from other fields. We believed that, given the composition of LASA membership, there should be significantly more material from literature and languages, anthropology, geography, music, and the arts. Our efforts to achieve the objective of greater disciplinary balance have met with only partial success. There has been some increase with anthropology, as well as literature and languages; for other disciplines, the situation is largely unchanged. We do claim somewhat more pronounced accomplishments in the Books in Review section, where editorial influence in the solicitation of such essays is obviously far greater and more direct than with article-length manuscripts. Since LARR 13, number 3 and including this issue, we have published 59 book reviews covering 208 works. Of these, 65 were in political science, 37 in history, 34 in literature and languages, 22 in sociology, 21 in anthropology, and 15 in economics; all other disciplines were represented by five or less books.

An additional point deserves to be underlined: during this most recent reporting period, some 30 percent of all manuscripts submitted have come from outside the United States. This, in our opinion, is among the major accomplishments of the five years. For if LARR, and by extension LASA, perceives as one of the most basic missions to enhance scholarly communication and exchange throughout the Americas, there is no better way than to present the work of Latin American scholars in our pages, be it in Spanish, Portuguese, French or English. Here, too, both Joe and I have done our utmost in striving for such an extension and expansion of breadth and comprehensiveness. Members of the Board have assisted through invaluable advice and personal communications, while our Latin American Special Correspondents have also worked to attract more and better manuscripts. Periodic research trips to Latin America have further sharpened the thrust of the undertaking, and have helped to promote the concern with a single scholarly community in the hemisphere. We take little credit, but considerable pride, in having presented the contributions of such figures as Albornoz, Cardoso, Dillon Soares, and O'Donnell, in addition to scores of research reports on the activities and interests of Latin American scholars. This aspect of LARR's responsibilities will become even more broadly encompassing during the coming years under the Tulchin-Valenzuela editorial team.

As my five years as Editor draw to a close, there are a variety of reflections that suggest themselves. Many of these relate to mundane and mechanistic questions that need not be reiterated here. It does seem appropriate, however, to consider briefly the somewhat peculiar and unique nature of the relationship between LARR and LASA. The very fact that the journal was founded prior to the association has helped to shape the organizational and intellectual structure that has evolved. This has been further defined and solidified since 1974, a fact springing in considerable part from the support, enthusiasm, and understand-

ing of the succession of Presidents, Vice-Presidents, and Executive Council members who have come and gone.

It would be bootless to cite the names of all those *LASA* officials with whom we have worked. It is fitting, however, to single out for a special vote of appreciation two individuals—Richard Fagen and Felicity Trueblood. It was at the time of the former's presidency, early in my editorship, that previously ambiguous or ill-defined issues over the *LARR-LASA* relationship required resolution. Richard's highly constructive and thoughtful collaboration was of inestimable value in sorting out these questions. The understandings have endured, to the benefit of the journal, *LASA*, and, most importantly of all, the readership and membership. I am confident that the ties and mutual commitments will remain firm in the period ahead. Concerning Felicity, I am merely restating the deep debt and obligation that so many of us owe her. Cooperation with the Secretariat, and by extension the *LASA Newsletter*, was unfailingly effective and fruitful. With the Secretariat now located at the University of Illinois, I am confident that a similar relationship will be visible through the good efforts of Joe Tulchin and Carl Deal.

This must also be the occasion to acknowledge those who have served as members of the Editorial Board. Chosen in consultation with the Executive Council, these scholars from many disciplines have performed at an impressive level of dedication, scholarship, and the best of honest and judicious professionalism. To the extent that *LARR* may have moved forward during our stewardship, the credit in considerable part is theirs. Manuscript evaluations, advice on other appropriate readers, the identification of reviewers and authors, suggestions and proposals on policy questions—in these and other ways their participation has been crucial. As I have written to each of them, the mere listing of names on the inside front cover is but a minor and totally inadequate way of recognizing their contributions to *LARR*. They have my undying appreciation and admiration.

It is even less possible to thank properly the dozens who have given freely of their time and talent to the fundamental work of providing anonymous manuscript reviews. Even were it not for space limitations, the tenets of our profession preclude their citation by name. But to all of them, on behalf of the readership and the *LARR* staff, my profound gratitude. In addition, I must acknowledge deep personal and professional satisfaction in the wide acquaintanceship engendered by correspondence and communication with all those who extended to *LARR* the privilege of examining and evaluating their work. Whether or not their submissions ultimately saw the light of day on the printed page, they enriched both my own experience and that of the journal. Those whose work was accepted were cooperative and helpful as we worked together in presenting their ideas and findings in the best and clearest possible fashion. With those whose work was judged inappropriate to *LARR*, we attempted to provide detailed assessments and opinions. Surprisingly, little animosity was encountered, although some is inevitable given the nature of the enterprise and the malaise of contemporary academia.

To be sure, there were occasional letters of anger and of protest, but their numbers were quite small. Moreover, our pages have always been open to both authors and readers as a means of further exchange of views and ideas. We have been pleased with the exchanges that have appeared in the Communications section, and would willingly have published more. In several instances, those who sent initial letters of complaint subsequently chose not to air their grievances in print. They were, and will continue to be, more than welcome to do so.

I lack the stylistic grace or felicitous turn of phrase with which to import the proper sense of indebtedness to my colleagues and coworkers—Joe Tulchin, Leah Florence, and James Padgett. They constitute an exceptionally talented, if extraordinarily individualistic, trio. Tulchin, the creative genius and visionary of the team; an intellect intimidating in its sharpness and acuity, combined with judgment that never failed (with one historic exception). Florence, née Palanjian, the Little Armenian, whose editorial and business talents are matched only by the uncommon capacity to control the rest of the staff and make us smile while being manipulated. And Padgett, flautist *extraordinaire*, master of languages, organizer of our daily tasks; ever willing (if not always eager) to undertake the dull, nitty-gritty chores without which LARR would flounder and capsize.

These three brought to our collaboration professionalism, dedication, and élan. If occasionally flaky and often cantankerous, they were but reflecting my own occasional irreverence and jackassery. Together we came to appreciate the most subtle manifestations of Murphy's Law; or its corollary, "the chance of the bread falling buttered-side down is directly proportional to the cost of the carpet." There were times when our destinies seemed guided by such universal forces; such moments were, fortunately, transitory and fleeting. It is not immodesty on my part—an element foreign to my character—to say that our accomplishments since 1974 are largely the work of Joe, Leah, and James. Their continuation with LARR, accompanied by Arturo Valenzuela, augurs well for the readership and for Latin American studies. In rejoining the ranks of that readership, I leave them my love and thanks.

Former presidents in Venezuela become *senadores vitalicios*, with the constitutional option of seeking another term ten years hence. But fear not; neither will I become an *editor vitalicio* nor seek to return in 1989! Enough.

Un abrazo fuerte,
John D. Martz

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