

## Editor's Column: Uprooted Words on a Bookshelf in Chernivtsi

**W**HEN PAUL CELAN ACCEPTED THE BREMEN LITERATURE PRIZE in 1958, he used the occasion to reflect on the region of his birth: “The landscape from which I—by what detours! But are there such things: detours?—the landscape from which I come to you might be unfamiliar to most of you.” On the syntactic level, Celan’s speech performs the detours (*Umwege*), repetitions, and redoublings of his journey to Germany, a country in which he never lived or spent more than a few weeks but whose language he persisted in calling his own:

It is the landscape that was home to a not inconsiderable portion of those Hasidic tales that Martin Buber has retold for us all in German. It was, if I may add to this topographic sketch something that appears before my eyes now from very far away—it was a region in which human beings and books used to live. There, in the former province of the Habsburg monarchy, now fallen into historylessness [*Geschichtslosigkeit*] . . . Bremen . . . still had the ring of the unreachable. . . . Reachable, near and not lost, there remained in the midst of the losses this one thing: language. (“Speech” 395; *Gesammelte Werke* 185–86)

The former province of the Hapsburg monarchy Celan did not name in his speech was Bukovina, with its capital city Czernowitz (fig. 1). The language that remained near was German, the language he used in addressing his Bremen audience; German was also the language through which Celan, by way of Buber, had received the Hasidic tales from their original Yiddish. The tense and mode in which he describes all this, in 1958, are the past indicative, underscored by the puzzling notion of “historylessness.” I would like to use this column, my last as editor of *PMLA*, to reflect on this troubling idea both in the context of the conversations about the humanities and the discourses of human rights that structure some of the essays and special features

FIG. 1



in this issue and in relation to the legacy of the multiethnic and multilingual region in which Paul Celan locates the origin of his writing.

*Geschichtslosigkeit*: the term is awkward, calling up history as absence, just as the region, for Celan, lives only in a distant past.<sup>1</sup> Language, described as “not lost,” is nevertheless placed under the sign of loss and “in the midst of the losses.” What is loss without history? And what in the present—Celan’s in 1958 and ours in 2006—is the “former province of the Habsburg monarchy,” Bukovina?

Celan did not grow up in the world he evoked in his speech but inherited it from his parents and grandparents. For him, as for most of the Jews in his generation born and raised in Cernăuți, Romania, after World War I, the place remained Czernowitz, the capital of the most remote province of the Austrian Habsburg empire, a city considered the Vienna of the East. Habsburg’s multiculturalist ethos and its emancipation of its Jewish minority had forged a Jewish population that, in the ur-

ban regions of its outlying provinces, enthusiastically embraced the German language, its literature, and the values and standards of Austro-Germanic culture and passed them on to generations born long after the collapse of the empire. The assimilation and acculturation to German culture begun under Emperor Joseph II in the eighteenth century promised Jews, like other minorities, political, economic, and civil integration, while enabling them to maintain and practice their Jewish faith and to perpetuate some of their ethnic and religious traditions. Celan’s speech attests to the strength of this assimilationist pull and to its persistence even after 1918, when Romania annexed the Bukovina region and Jews lost many of the political rights they had gained under the empire. If Celan’s contemporaries, schooled in Romanian, continued (and to this day continue) to promote the idea of the “former province of the Habsburg monarchy,” it was not simply to hold on to and nostalgically celebrate a lost world of yesterday. It was

to resist an enforced Romanianization, with its increasing political, economic, and social restrictions and its parochial nationalism, and to oppose to it some of the linguistic and cultural mixing, and some of the sense of European cosmopolitanism, that characterized Czernowitz's pre-World War I culture. It was to forge what Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, writing about Kafka's Prague, would call a "minor literature" and culture, in a uniquely "deterritorialized" German language—in their terms, a "paper language."

The German speakers of the distant provinces may have been more strongly attracted to German culture because of their political severance from its centers. In a recent documentary, the Yiddish-language poet Josef Burg, interviewed in the city, now part of Ukraine and called Chernivtsi, remarked on the paradox of Cernăuți's interwar German literary production: "When Bukovina was part of Austria for 250 years, there was no major writer with the exception of Karl Emil Franzos. In contrast, between 1918 and 1945, we witnessed a flowering of a generation of wonderful [German and Yiddish] writers. I have trouble understanding this phenomenon. Perhaps it was a natural reaction, a way to protest against a world that had disappeared" (Bechert and Drexel; my trans.). Peter Stenberg highlights the same irony: "There is perhaps no better indication of what German culture has lost than the realization that Czernowitz—the easternmost outpost of that language and the capital city of Bukovyna—must have produced proportionally more major twentieth-century writers, whose native language was German, than any other city" (42). How, in 1958 or in 2006, are such complex historical and cultural shifts and contradictions to be marked and memorialized, especially in view of the destruction of that layered interwar world through Soviet occupation in 1940–41, reannexation to Romania, allied with Nazi Germany, from 1941 to 1944, integration into the Soviet Union from 1944 to 1989, and present-day Ukrainianiza-

tion? After relocations, deportations, killings, and expropriations of its multicultural population, what remains of that former former world and of its intricate reformulations?

In the midst of our current obsession with memory and memorialization, we have devised institutional and artistic structures to address precisely such historical shifts and erasures. Cities like Berlin, Capetown, and Buenos Aires, for example, offer rich models. In eastern central Europe, Kraków and Budapest have recently addressed their multiple pasts. But their innovative attempts are slow to reach places like Chernivtsi, and, certainly, Celan's speech predates them by at least forty years. In 1958, for Celan, living in Paris, Soviet Chernovtsy was as "unreachable" as the Czernowitz of his parents or the Cernăuți of his youth. In fact, these locations existed in separate chronotopes. The Austrian/Romanian "Czernowitz" was evoked as a mythic past in literary works by Czernowitz-born writers elsewhere: in Celan's Paris, Alfred Margul-Sperber's and Alfred Kittner's Bucharest, Rose Ausländer's New York and Düsseldorf, Aharon Apelfeld's Tel Aviv, Gregor von Rezzori's Hamburg and Munich. The Romanian Cernăuți of the interwar years survived in 1950s Romania only as a distant reminder of the greater Romanian monarchy, superseded by what must have been deemed an enlightened if smaller communist state. And the Soviet Chernovtsy no doubt represented a progressive new beginning under communism, predicated on a rejection of its capitalist and imperial history. Perhaps this set of nonintersecting temporalities, ignorant of one another, is what Celan meant by historylessness.

Present-day Chernivtsi, located in the southwestern region of Ukraine, east of the Carpathian Mountains, on the banks of the river Prut, some fifty kilometers north of the Romanian border, cannot in fact hide its history. The city's center was built up by the Hapsburgs in the late nineteenth century to emulate Vienna's urban spaces, and that renewal project eradicated most traces of the

city's Ottoman past. The urban layout; the harmonious late-nineteenth-century yellow- and ochre-colored buildings; the train station, designed by the Viennese architect Otto Wagner; and the municipal theater, recalling Vienna's Burgtheater, all testify to Czernowitz's legendary pre-1918 identity as the Vienna of the East. Traces of Cernăuți's more recent, Romanian past may be less prominent, but they are nevertheless visible in a few central buildings dating from the 1930s and in a remarkable number of faded signs in Romanian, posted on the city's more neglected and chipping facades. The city's Soviet history is conspicuous in a large concrete wall in the central square and in the sprawl of block-style buildings

that surround the center of town and reach far into the countryside. Despite these undeniable architectural layers, however, Chernivtsi's Ukrainian culture seems remarkably monolithic, its multiethnic history largely unmarked by memorial symbols or texts. If we understand the history in Celan's notion of historylessness as a recognizable structure of memory and transmission, Chernivtsi is just beginning to emerge from its historylessness.

Take the beautiful, neobaroque municipal theater (fig. 2). The larger-than-life statue of the German dramatist Friedrich von Schiller that stood at its entrance when it opened in Czernowitz in 1905 was removed in 1922 when militant nationalist Romanian students

FIG. 2

Photo by David  
Glynn, 2006



stormed the theater during a German-language production of Schiller's *The Robbers*. Neither this event nor the statue itself is marked anywhere in the city, though those who know can still find the statue's enormous base in an alley behind the former German Cultural House, where it was relocated. No one knows what happened to the statue. In contrast, the statue of the Romanian poet Mihai Eminescu that followed Schiller at the entrance to the theater now stands in front of a pleasant café, but no explanatory plaque makes Eminescu's important role in the city's history available to the passerby. He was replaced in front of the theater by the Ukrainian national poet Olga Kobylanska, whose imposing bronze figure now stands near its entrance, her predecessors forgotten. But the theater's side facades are still decorated with busts of an international array of classic dramatists and composers: Shakespeare and Wagner stand alongside Beethoven, Pushkin, Goethe, Schiller, Mozart, Haydn, and the Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko. Some of these date from the time of the theater's construction, while others were added later, but nowhere are these transformations recorded.

Nor does the city have a museum that details its shifts in national identity and the cultures and subcultures that coincided with and followed each other there: the municipal museum showcases Ukrainian art, and the historical museum organizes special exhibitions on particular periods in the region's Ukrainian history. And, although many of the city's numerous churches survived and continue their mission, the wealthy and imposing seat of the Orthodox bishops is now the university, and the large Jewish temple, built in the Moorish style, once the most prominent of numerous houses of Jewish worship, functions as a movie theater with barely a trace of its former role (a small plaque to the famous tenor Josef Schmidt, who sang in the temple as a cantor in the 1930s, can be found in a billiard room in the building's interior). The other large Jewish synagogue, more recently

a factory, carries no signs of its former function at all. The Czernowitz Jewish ghetto, formed in October 1941 to intern sixty thousand Jews, two-thirds of whom were deported within a month and a half to Transnistria, is commemorated by two small, almost invisible plaques, one washed out, the other, across the street, more readable, in Ukrainian and Yiddish. These plaques are supplemented by other recent memorial and scholarly efforts: plaques commemorating the birth houses of the poets Paul Celan, Erwin Chargaff, Rose Ausländer, Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger, and Eliezar Steinberg; a monument to Celan built in a small square near the house in which he lived at the beginning of the war; and the establishment of an interdisciplinary Bulowina research center at the Jurii Fed'kovich University. The university also installed a plaque naming all its rectors since its foundation in 1875, thus connecting the different phases of its existence.

The most interesting memorial in the city can be found in the former Jewish Cultural House, whose stairway had been decorated with cast-iron Stars of David (fig. 3). During



FIG. 3

Photo by David  
Glynn, 2006

the Soviet period, when such signs of religion were frowned on, two corners were sawed off each star to create an abstract decoration of a series of squares (fig. 4). In the mid-1990s, after Ukrainian independence, the missing corners were carefully reattached (fig. 5), although a few of the Soviet squares remain. An explanatory plaque relates the history of these decorations.

In one sense, then, the notion of historylessness is no longer applicable as Chernivtsi authorities promote the installation of such memorial symbols and undertake preparations to celebrate the city's six-hundredth birthday in 2008 and to apply to UNESCO to name the city center a heritage site. Merchants are newly required to renovate the facades and sidewalks of their properties, and recently the mayor named a commission to advise him on the city's architectural preservation.

In spite of these acts of memorialization, however, the city and its culture still suffer from incommensurable temporalities that correspond well to the notion of historylessness. This is as true of the many visitors and tourists who come to find Czernowitz's distant past and who ignore its present as it is of the current inhabitants who greet the visitors in relative indifference to a history that is palpable all around them. One has only to search for "Czernowitz" on the Web to

find a great deal of information in English, German, Romanian, and Hebrew about the Austrian provincial capital, its literature, and its culture and about the Romanian history of the interwar years but relatively little about present-day Chernivtsi (see especially [czernowitz.ehpes.com](http://czernowitz.ehpes.com), [www.czernowitz.de](http://www.czernowitz.de), and [www.city.cv.ua](http://www.city.cv.ua)). Visitors can download street maps with German street names and lists recording the changes to Romanian, Soviet, and now Ukrainian designations. So little has changed architecturally that one can walk through the city like a time traveler, identifying the pre-1918 Ringplatz, the Herrengasse, the Hauptstrasse, and the Theaterplatz, without even having to convert these to their contemporary equivalents: Zentraina, Kobylanskaia, Holovna, and Teatralnaia. As visitors, returning in the guise of what they consider the "real Czernowitzers," overlay maps and exclaim at the sameness of the buildings and the difference in the city's spirit and character, current inhabitants and their concerns are made invisible, interlopers in their own urban space (see Osatschuk).

It is ironic to find such limited interest and understanding precisely in a place that is generally remembered and indeed mythified for its multiethnic tolerance and multicultural intersection under the Hapsburgs. Celan speaks of Hasidic tales read in German to "us all," including himself and his Bremen audience in a common "we." Czernowitz and Cernăuți German coexisted with Romanian, Ukrainian, Polish, and Yiddish. At one point, the man who would become Romania's national poet, Mihai Eminescu, and the Jewish, Galician-born German-language writer Karl Emil Franzos were classmates in Czernowitz. Eminescu wrote some of his early poems in German, as did the Ukrainian writers Felix Niemchevski, Osip Jurii Fed'kovych, Alexander Popovich, Isidor Vorobkevich, and Olga Kobylanska. (Eminescu would later become an ardent Romanian nationalist and would repudiate his earlier work, while the Ukrai-

FIG. 4

Photo by Leo Spitzer, 2006



nian writers would turn increasingly to the Ukrainian language and traditional Ukrainian motifs in their textual production.)<sup>2</sup> In 1908 Czernowitz hosted the first international Yiddish-language conference designed to promote acceptance of the everyday language of Jews living in eastern Europe and to standardize its orthography and grammar. Czernowitz was chosen as an appropriate place for such a gathering of delegates from all over the world because of the political integration of its Jewish population in the region's multiethnic fabric and also because of its proximity to the Hasidic centers in neighboring villages such as Sadagora. A number of Jewish writers in Czernowitz—Itzig Manger, for example, and, later, Josef Burg—chose Yiddish over German, Romanian, and Russian as their literary language, participating in the Yiddishist movement that aimed to solidify the literary status of Yiddish and its role as one of the Jewish “national” languages, alongside Hebrew. The linguistic multiplicity of the region certainly also influenced the German that was spoken and written in the city itself and by Czernowitz writers in their deportation, emigration, and exile, as Rose Ausländer describes:

The different linguistic influences naturally colored the Bukovina German—unfavorably, from the perspective of linguistic purists and the insecure. But the language was also enriched through new words and expressions. It had a special physiognomy, its own palette. Under the surface of the speakable, there were deep, far-reaching roots to the area's many cultures—roots that intersected in multiple ways and that endowed the sound of words with resonance and imagery, spice and power. (“Erinnerungen” 33; my trans.)

Present-day Chernivtsi has lost its diverse population and with it the memory of its vibrant, multicultural life. In 1910 the city consisted of 87,000 inhabitants: about 25 percent Ukrainians, 29 percent Romanians, 32 percent Jews, and small proportions of Poles,

Germans, and Magyars. In contrast, the 2001 census counted 240,000 inhabitants—79 percent Ukrainians, 11 percent Russians, 4.5 percent Romanians, and a fraction of Moldavians, Poles, and Jews. That memory, along with the emancipatory vision incarnated in the idea of Czernowitz and of the Bukovina landscape, has nevertheless not sunk into oblivion. With no small amount of irony, Celan asserted it in 1958, as “the language [that] remained, not lost, in spite of everything. But it had to pass through its own answerlessness, pass through frightful muting, pass through the thousand darkneses of deathbringing speech. . . . Passed through and came to light again, ‘enriched’ by all this” (“Speech” 395). For Celan the language in which he wrote his poems was a form of orientation and “direction.” It shaped the poem, which, in an image recalling Osip Mandelstam, “as a manifestation of language and thus essentially dialogue, can be a message in a bottle [*Flaschenpost*] sent out in the—not always greatly hopeful—belief that somewhere and sometime it could wash up on land, on heartland perhaps” (396; *Gesammelte Werke* 186).<sup>3</sup>

On my recent visit to Chernivtsi, I did find the memory of the city's layered past precisely in a place where Celan's poems, among many others, “washed up” and found what, after Buber, Celan calls their “addressable



FIG. 5

Photo by Leo Spitzer, 2006

you" (396; my trans.). I came upon it, along with Celan's books, on a bookshelf on Klara Zetkina Street. "[H]uman beings and books"—nowhere has this conjunction become clearer to me than in the apartment of Rosa Roth Zuckermann, a language-and-literature teacher in Chernivtsi, who died in 2002 at ninety-three but whose library has to this date remained intact, testifying to her personal and to her generation's stubbornly persistent cultural identity. One of the last to have witnessed most of the city's many violent changes and interruptions through the twentieth century, Rosa Roth Zuckermann rebuilt the library she had left behind during the tragic deportations to Transnistria, during which she lost her parents, her husband, and her young son. Her books reflect more than personal taste and more, also, than personal history.

Besides her native German and her daily Romanian, Rosa Zuckermann, like Celan, also studied Hebrew, French, and some Yiddish; she studied Spanish, having secured visas to Chile in 1937, though she could not bear to leave her parents behind; she learned Russian during the city's Soviet occupation in 1940–41 and then again after 1944; and, especially after 1989, she spoke Ukrainian daily. She learned her English in the ghetto of Bershada in Transnistria, where a family of Cernăuți deportees who sheltered her after the deaths of her family members taught it to her as a means of healing her severe depression. Languages were her lifeline, her avocation, her profession. Zuckermann worked as a language teacher in a technical high school in Soviet Chernovtsy, and when she lost that position as a Jew, she gave private lessons in German, English, and French to Ukrainian children and adults until shortly before her death. Her pupils came to her apartment, and there, on Zuckermann's bookshelves, they must have found the traces and intersections of the histories the city could not adequately commemorate.

The books included the principal German Jewish Bukovina pre- and postwar writers, as well as some of the traditional texts that shaped their work, and thus Rosa Zuckermann's haphazard-looking library is a testament not only to the vibrancy and persistence of the "former province"'s distinct culture but also to its dispersal and dissolution. Most obvious were the collections by Czernowitz authors published recently and, in some cases, posthumously in German and Austrian paperback and hardback editions, as well as English, French, Russian, and Ukrainian translations of their works: volumes of poetry by Paul Celan and Rose Ausländer and books about them in numerous languages; the correspondence between Celan and Nelly Sachs; monographs by Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger, Viktor Wittner, and Alfred Kittner; and two recent anthologies of Bukovina literature, *Fäden ins Nichts gespannt* and *Versunkene Dichtung der Bukowina*. These books were not shelved but faced outward as if in a bookstore window display, and Celan's and Ausländer's portraits stared out from several covers (fig. 6). Behind and below them were German classics—Goethe, Schiller, Hauptmann, Storm, Meyer, Keller, Rilke, Mann, Heine—and a number of other German Jewish writers, like Lion Feuchtwanger, as well as Czernowitz's own Karl Emil Franzos. Stefan Zweig's *Die Welt von gestern* (*The World of Yesterday*), his memoir of Hapsburg-era optimism and post-World War I deterioration and disheartenment, was also displayed face-outward in the bookcase, as though to serve as a comment on its entire contents, as was Feuchtwanger's *Exil* and Marcel Reich-Ranicki's *Mein Leben*. And yet, despite what seemed like an overwhelming emphasis on literature embodying or referring back to a no-longer-existent Austro-German world of yesterday, there were Romanian works by Eminescu and Ion Luca Caragiale, many Russian and Ukrainian titles—Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Gogol, Bakunin,

Kobylanska—and more recent publications, as well as late-twentieth-century German, English, American, and French novels and recent-vintage reference works, particularly in German, such as *Der große Duden*. And the bookshelves also contained writings on the concentration camps (Viktor Frankl, Bruno Bettelheim, and Primo Levi), as well as Israeli fiction in German translation—Amos Oz, for example.

“Those volumes,” Rosa Zuckermann had indicated to me on a previous visit, pointing to the German classics, “were the books of my youth. My mother knew poetry by Heine, Schiller, and Goethe by heart, and she and my father introduced me to their poems as a young girl. They only had four grades of formal schooling, and they were very religious, but they were very well read in German. There are only a few specimens like me left here, I mean old Czernowitzers still speaking German and reading these books.”

Like language for Celan, books, a personal library, can give “direction” and “orientation.” Unlike memorial plaques, libraries grow and change. They testify to cultural continuity and multiplicity, to mobility, to intercultural dialogue. The messy shelves, stuffed full in all directions, record the lively correspondence Rosa Zuckermann entertained with writers abroad who sent her their own books and books by other authors they thought she might enjoy or wish to use in her teaching. There is a lifetime of reading on those shelves, a fleeting memorial to a cultural fabric that did not, after all, disappear with the person who inherited, assembled, and reassembled it. On those dusty bookshelves, we find what Rose Ausländer called the “uprooted word” (“entwurzeltes Wort”) of the Czernowitz/Cernăuți past. Ausländer connects the uprooted words with the “austrianless” time that does not allow her German words to become rooted (“Das Erbe”; my trans.). Celan uses this same image more violently, speaking of “Zungenentwurzeln” (uprooting of the tongue) and



commenting ironically on his own “kleines Wurzelgeträum,” his small early dream of rootedness, which still holds him, blood-inundated (“blutunterwaschen”), constituting a deadly possession (“Todesbesitz”).<sup>4</sup>

If the words on Rosa Zuckermann’s shelves are uprooted, they are so perhaps in a sense that makes them better able to connect with the culture’s ever-shifting presents. That connection contains and perpetuates the *idea* that characterized the “former province”—the idea of multicultural tolerance, of emancipation, humanism, language, and reason, of cosmopolitan citizenship based on legal rights, which was so powerful as to persist in that world and in its diasporic dispersal even at the most insane moments of brutality and annihilation.

It persisted, for example, for my grandfather, Max Gottfried, a lawyer, raised and

Fig. 6

Photo by Leo Spitzer, 2006

educated in the Austrian Hapsburg Czer-nowitz. "This cannot be possible," he is said to have exclaimed on 11 October 1941. "This violates the European Declaration of Human Rights." On that day in Romanian Cernăuți, members of the Jewish Council were ordered by the authorities to go from house to house telling Jewish inhabitants to pack a few of their belongings and to gather by 6:00 p.m. in the area of the city that had been declared the Jewish ghetto. They were to place their apartment keys in an envelope to be deposited with the ghetto command as they entered the ghetto area. By the end of that afternoon, the city's approximately sixty thousand Jews were barricaded in a small section of the city in appalling conditions, and three days later, there began the massive deportations to Transnistria, a region between the rivers Dniester and Bug that Romania (in alliance with Nazi Germany) had annexed from Ukraine. My grandfather, along with about twenty thousand fellow Jews, managed to secure one of the deportation waivers granted by the mayor and the region's governor to Jews necessary to the city's functioning. After several weeks of moving from place to place in the ghetto, he and his family returned to the apartment they had left under protest and duress. When he did so, and when he reclaimed his books and other belongings only to slowly sell them off or trade them for food and fuel during the ensuing winter, did he finally understand that he had legally been excluded from the cosmopolitan citizenship rights he stubbornly asserted by invoking a universal declaration that, by 11 October, had long since not applied to him? In voicing his protest and disbelief in the language of a declaration signed in 1789 and affirming the rights of human beings and citizens, Max Gottfried appealed to the promise of emancipation and education he had enjoyed as an assimilated Jewish citizen of the "former province." For the Jewish inhabitants of fascist Cernăuți, facing expulsion, deportation, and expropriation, and

indeed relegation to subhuman, extralegal status, the *idea* of universal, cosmopolitan *rights* embodied in the declaration must have provided continuity with the ethos they had so deeply internalized. It provided solace, re-course, hope against hope.

I offer this story as my own reflection on the important critical discussions about the humanities and human rights contained in this issue. Perhaps because of the kind chuckle with which my parents used to tell me that story, I always took my grandfather's statement as a sign of his naïveté, his adherence to an emancipatory promise that, as Kara Walker's haunting cover image, from her series *The Emancipation Approximation*, devastatingly suggests, is likely to end in disappointment and loss. In a more "reparative reading," I now have an inkling of what the performative force of my grandfather's defiant claim might have been at that dark moment in 1941.<sup>5</sup> Voiced in the terms of what must certainly have seemed a former former world, whose traces still exist, ever so transiently, on the bookshelf of Rosa Roth Zuckermann, it serves here as a testament to the power the human rights movement holds for those whose rights, and whose humanity, are at risk.

It remains for me to thank the colleagues who have made my work on *PMLA* stimulating and pleasurable—indeed, one of the most rewarding experiences of my professional life. I have had the enormous pleasure, in the last three years, to work closely and daily with wonderful members of the MLA editorial office: Judy Goulding, Eric Wirth, Annabel Schneider, Margit Longbrake, Sara Hasselbach, Sara Pastel, and Erin Farber. Their collegiality, generosity, and professionalism are unparalleled. I have learned from them how one can enable and encourage excellence by upholding the most rigorous and exacting standards.

The journal is made by its authors, and I thank our colleagues for providing me with

such rich reading over the past few years. As I have indicated in previous Editor's Columns, reading many hundreds of readers' reports by generous and attentive members of the *PMLA* Advisory Committee and consultant readers has made me a great fan of anonymous peer review. I've been fortunate indeed to coincide on the Editorial Board with Nancy Armstrong, Marianne DeKoven, Wai Chee Dimock, Barbara Hahn, María Herrera-Sobek, Christie A. McDonald, Harsha Ram, Bruce Robbins, Pierre N. Saint-Amand, Susan A. Stewart, Diana Taylor, and Patricia Yaeger. I thank them for their dedication and good will and for their memorable discussions. I am also grateful to Dartmouth College and Columbia University for their institutional support and to the MLA executive directors Phyllis Franklin and Rosemary G. Feal and presidents Marjorie Perloff, Mary Louise Pratt, Robert Scholes, and Domna C. Stanton for their confidence.

Every dimension of putting the journal together is indeed a collective effort: the structure of large professional organizations ensures that the editors of their journals have limited power. If I nevertheless take full responsibility for the Editor's Columns I have written, it is not to suggest that I have not had a great deal of help and advice in composing them. In last May's issue of *PMLA*, Lucy McDiarmid said she first shows everything she writes to a group of her smartest friends, and, usually with great trepidation, I do the same. For their tough and generous critiques and suggestions on every one of my columns, I thank especially Leo Spitzer (with whom I am writing a book about the afterlife of Czernowitz), Nancy K. Miller, Diana Taylor, and Judy Goulding. I am also grateful for the incisive readings, bibliographic hints, stylistic editing, and challenging questions of Irene Kacandes, Temma Kaplan, Agnes Lugo-Ortiz, Ivy Schweitzer, Joseph Slaughter, Silvia Spitta, Susan Suleiman, Sonali Thakkar, Roxana Verona, and Susan Winnett. I thank Eric Wirth, editor extraordi-

naire, for his meticulous and elegant editorial suggestions and for saving me from many an infelicity. And now it is with great confidence and eager anticipation that I hand the journal to the next editor, Patricia Yaeger.

Marianne Hirsch

## NOTES

1. For reasons that will become clear in this essay, I prefer Felstiner's translation, "historylessness," to Baer's "ahistoricity."
2. On the multilingual literary culture of this region, see, e.g., Colin; Heymann.
3. See Felstiner's interpretation of these lines and of their relation to Mandelstam (111–18).
4. From Celan's poems "Du liegst hinaus" and "Kleines Wurzelgeträum," in *Gesammelte Werke* 73, 92. See Liska on the root metaphor in Celan.
5. See Sedgwick on "reparative" as opposed to "paranoid" reading.

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