

at having committed some such mistake—that errata, like rats, are ever with us.

JOHN DOWLING
University of Georgia

Reply:

Though I am curious to know why John Dowling found my article curious, I am genuinely happy to have provided him with some enjoyment. I am even glad that my essay gave him an occasion to offer *PMLA* readers his witty string of quotations. My consideration of the history of centennials, anniversaries, and other such commemorations has taught me two things: (1) such occasions—like opportunities—are not so much discovered as they are invented or fabricated (sometimes, like Cervantes’s third centennial, over the course of years, other times in days, weeks, or months); and (2) occasionally the issues addressed on such occasions have something to do with the original event or text that occasioned them; occasionally they do not.

JAMES D. FERNANDEZ
Yale University

Is Spanish a Foreign Language?

To the Editor:

I have just returned from a conference of my fellow American Germanists at which I asked a question that no participant could answer. I am writing to solicit help from your readership. The question concerns the appropriateness of the designation *foreign language* for Spanish as a subject of instruction in the United States. This point may well be settled among American Hispanists, but the result of my one casual inquiry suggests that there has been no memorable discussion.

The observation prompting the question is surely obvious. There are millions of American citizens whose one native language is Spanish or who are bilingual. Can we, who place great value on precise speech, say in good conscience that when they speak Spanish they are speaking a “foreign” language?

At the beginning of this century, German was a regional language in the United States. In the course of the twentieth century, it has become a foreign language here. Hence an American Germanist’s sensitivity to the distinction.

We are accustomed to thinking of first the Soviet Union and now Russia as a country with many regional languages. I believe that some of those languages are spoken outside the borders of Russia. But surely within the country they are properly considered regional languages.

I can foresee dislocations that would ensue if Spanish were to be designated a regional language rather than, or perhaps as well as, a foreign language. But our mission is the pursuit of truth, however inconvenient the truth may be.

JOHN VAN CLEVE
Mississippi State University

From *Estaminet* to *Anti-Semite*

To the Editor:

Robert F. Fleissner (Forum, 109 [1994]: 1034), David Spurr (twice—“Myths of Anthropology: Eliot, Joyce, Lévy-Bruhl,” 109 [1994]: 279n10; Forum, 109 [1994]: 1035), Spurr’s colleague Ned Lukacher, and Lukacher’s seminar group (with whom the idea originated [Spurr, “Myths” 279n10]) all accept as fact that *estaminet* in T. S. Eliot’s “Gerontion” is an anagram for *anti-Semite*. All are mistaken: *estaminet* has one *i* whereas *anti-Semite* has two.

ROGER J. CRAIK
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