

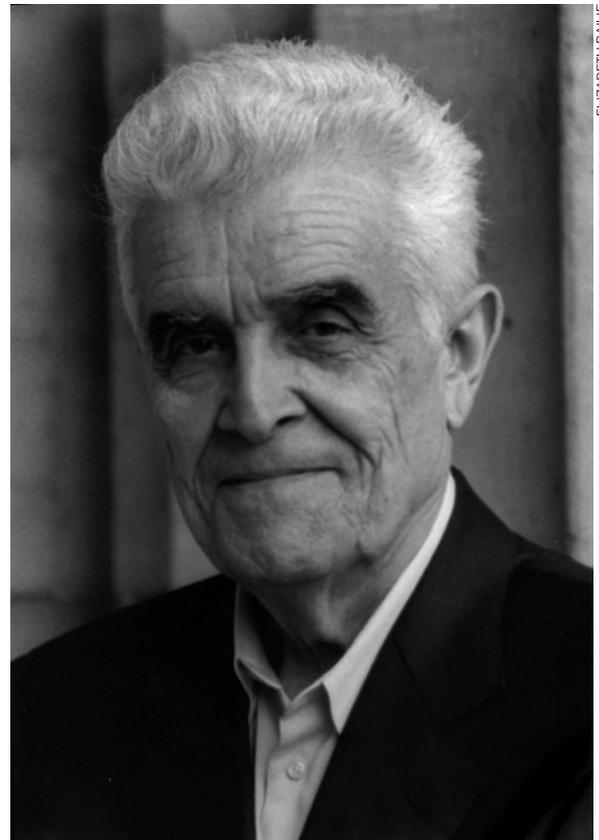
## René Girard Receives Lifetime Achievement Award

The MLA's fifth Award for Lifetime Scholarly Achievement will be presented at the 2008 convention to René Girard, Andrew B. Hammond Professor of French Language, Literature, and Civilization and Professor of Comparative Literature, Emeritus, at Stanford University. The Executive Council selected Girard at the recommendation of the Committee on Honors and Awards. A life member of the MLA, Girard received the MLA's William Riley Parker Prize in 1965.

Girard studied at the École des Chartes in Paris and received a PhD in history at Indiana University. He taught at Duke University; Bryn Mawr College; the University at Buffalo, State University of New York; and Johns Hopkins University. He has been affiliated with Stanford since 1981.

Girard is known as a literary critic, historian, and philosopher of social science. His first book, *Mensonge romantique et vérité romanesque*, was published in 1961 (trans. *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary Structure*, 1966) and introduced his theory of mimetic desire, based on a triangular relationship of subject, model, and object. In *La violence et le sacré*, published in 1972 (trans. *Violence and the Sacred*, 1977), Girard expanded his mimetic hypothesis from literature to anthropology by showing how the victimization process, which involves collective violence against a scapegoat, was a foundation of archaic religion.

*Des choses cachées depuis la fondation du monde*, published in France in 1978 (trans. *Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World*, 1987), applies the mimetic hypothesis to fundamental anthropology, the Judeo-Christian scriptures, and individual psychology. Girard's discussion of Christian scripture marks a turning point in his work toward a nonsacrificial interpretation of Christ's passion. The works that followed—such as *Le bouc*



ELIZABETH BAILE

(continued on next page) René Girard

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*émisnaire* in 1982 (trans. *The Scapegoat*, 1986), *La route antique des hommes pervers* in 1985 (trans. *Job: The Victim of His People*, 1987), and *Je vois Satan tomber comme l'éclair* in 1999 (trans. *I See Satan Fall like Lightning*, 2001)—extended Girard's interest in biblical interpretation. *The Girard Reader*, edited by James G. Williams, was published in 1996.

Girard is the recipient of two Guggenheim Fellowships, the Nonino Literary Prize in 1998, and honorary doctorates from the Frije Universiteit Amsterdam, the University of Innsbruck, the Université d'Anvers, and the University of Padova. Girard is honorary chair of the Colloquium on Violence and Religion, which was established in 1990 to further research and discussion of the themes of his work. In 1996, he received the Académie française's Grand prix de philosophie and was elected to the Académie française in 2005. □

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GOVERNANCE

## Elections Committee Seeks Candidates

At the end of 2009, the seats of sixteen special-interest and thirty-four regional Delegate Assembly representatives will fall vacant. The MLA Elections Committee will meet in January 2009 to begin the process of identifying candidates for these open special-interest and regional seats. Those elected in 2009 will serve in the assembly from 1 January 2010 through the close of the January 2013 convention and must attend the meetings of the assembly in January 2011, January 2012, and January 2013.

The Elections Committee is charged not only with nominating candidates and overseeing the elections but also with ensuring that the various groups within the MLA find representation in the Delegate Assembly. Committee members are therefore interested in hearing from all MLA members who are willing to be candidates in next year's Delegate Assembly elections. Members whose names are already on file at the MLA office need take no additional action at this time. Others who would like to be considered should write to the Elections Committee, c/o Carol Zuses, at the MLA office (czuses@mla.org). □

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GOVERNANCE

## Suggest Yourself or Another Member for a Committee Appointment

One of the annual responsibilities of the MLA Executive Council is to make appointments to seventeen standing committees of the association. The council has always welcomed suggestions for committee appointments from the membership, and last January, in an effort to encourage such suggestions, the council established a new area at the MLA Web site that was designed to allow members to suggest themselves or other members for appointment to specific committees. Over 250 members filled out the committee suggestion form at the Web site, and of the sixty committee appointees selected by the council during its February and May meetings, twenty-one were drawn from the suggestions members made at the Web site.

The council thought this new process for collecting members' suggestions worked very well and wishes once again to invite members to consider suggesting themselves or other members for one of the fifty-five anticipated vacancies on sixteen of the association's standing committees. The Web page for committee suggestions ([www.mla.org/commsugg](http://www.mla.org/commsugg)) provides information on the factors relevant to this new round of committee appointments. Because these factors change from year to year, suggestions made the previous year are not brought forward for the council's consideration. Members will therefore need to deposit new or updated suggestions after consulting the new Web listing of vacancies.

The council will be making appointments to fill these vacancies at its February 2009 meeting, and members' suggestions will be accepted at the Web site ([www.mla.org/commsugg](http://www.mla.org/commsugg)) from mid-November through mid-January. Any questions about committee suggestions should be addressed to Carol Zuses at the MLA office (czuses@mla.org). □

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WEB SITE NEWS

## List of San Francisco Convention Sessions Available Online

As of October, a searchable list of convention sessions is available online at the MLA Web site ([www.mla.org](http://www.mla.org)). This list contains all the sessions in the November (Program) issue of *PMLA* and is searchable in many ways, including by location, subject heading, keywords, and participant name.

The *MLA Convention News and Program Update* will be available online as a PDF in mid-December. □

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## Ideas for *What's the Word?*

*What's the Word?*, the MLA radio program, is now broadcast on more than 350 radio outlets in the United States. It is also aired in Canada, Namibia, New Zealand, and the Philippines.

The MLA Radio Committee, which selects speakers and topics for the programs, welcomes suggestions from MLA members. Please send your ideas to Anna Chang at the MLA office ([achang@mla.org](mailto:achang@mla.org)). □

The *MLA Newsletter* (ISSN 0160-5720) is published four times a year (Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter) by the Modern Language Association of America, 26 Broadway, 3rd floor, New York, New York 10004-1789. The *MLA Newsletter* is edited by the executive director of the association, Rosemary G. Feal. The managing editor is Judy Goulding. The cost of an annual subscription is \$8. The subscription price is included in the dues of all members of the association. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. All news items and letters should be sent to the *MLA Newsletter* at the above address.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *MLA Newsletter*, 26 Broadway, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10004-1789.

## How 'bout That Wordsworth!

Teaching literature and first-year composition back to back lately has made me aware of a curious discrepancy in the kind of writing we expect from students in these domains. In first-year composition, at least as I and many others teach it, students write in response to essays on politics, economics, the media, youth culture, and other current topics. They develop their arguments by “entering the conversation” of their culture, as pictured in Kenneth Burke’s celebrated image of the world of ideas as a never-ending parlor discussion (110–11). The assumption is that persuasive writers need such a conversation to motivate their own arguments—that unless we are provoked by the views of others, we have no reason to make persuasive arguments at all.

In many undergraduate literature courses, by contrast, student writers are not expected to enter comparable conversations, to respond to critics or other readers of literary texts. When I ask literature instructors about the matter, many say they don’t assign criticism, much less expect their students to engage with it. Some say they actively discourage their students from consulting “secondary sources,” which would only interfere with their learning to read texts closely and well.

It’s as if the object of many literature writing assignments is not for undergraduates to enter intense debates about literary works but for them to say smart things about those works in a vacuum: there’s an interplay of light and dark images in this poem; this novel is organized on a contrast between innocence and experience or good and evil; the hero of this play is an object of irony. In making such claims, student writers aren’t expected to address the kind of questions that real readers would ask, like “Does anyone say otherwise?” or “So what?” This leads to essays that make an argument clearly enough but fail to indicate why it needs to be made in the first place.<sup>1</sup>

The result is a curious situation in which students in first-year composition write essays grounded in real-world conversations, while those in ostensibly more advanced literature courses write essays that sound as if they were addressed to nobody and delivered from outer space. This decontextualized literature essay is essentially a version of the old five-paragraph theme applied to a novel, poem, or play. Even when students are asked to cite secondary sources, as they are in longer research paper assignments, the five-paragraph theme is still the model, as the writer cites the sources to support a preestablished thesis rather than to agree, disagree, or otherwise engage with them.

The five-paragraph theme does require that writers make an argument—a thesis followed by supporting reasons and evidence followed by a concluding restatement of the thesis—but it’s an argument that’s not *with* anyone or anything, an argument nobody would think of making except to fulfill a school assignment.<sup>2</sup> As my former colleague Maureen McLane put it, the point, in effect, of the classic undergraduate literature essay amounts to “How ‘bout that Wordsworth!”

But surely this type of essay assignment has withered away in the wake of multiculturalism and poststructuralism? You would think so, but in many undergraduate essays I come across, the topic has become more up to date, but the rhetorical form—say something smart about a text in isolation from other views of it—is déjà vu all over again: there’s an oppressed woman in this text; there’s a racial subtext in that one; this one is laced with images of commodification. Since there is still no engagement

with real or imagined other readers, these decontextualized arguments invite the same responses as the old-fashioned ones—“Who would dispute it?” or “What’s the point?”

To be sure, almost any writing assignment can be a valuable exercise in the hands of a thoughtful and creative instructor or an ingenious student. But to be most effective, writers generally need a countervoice, something to push off against, to motivate their writing and give it a point. When literature assignments don’t ask writers to respond to such a countervoice, students understandably grope for things to say and tend to produce opening sentences like these from actual essays: “In Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary*, there are many characters introduced and involved in the story” or “In *1984*, many themes and situations arise right from the beginning of the story.”

You may say, however, that we’re *right* if we don’t expect beginning literature students to enter our critical conversations, which would put most of them to sleep. The kind of classroom essay you’re abusing makes obvious sense as an initiation exercise in how to read, a sufficient “motivation” for writing. But I would reply that not having to confront interpretations of the text that challenge yours retards the process of learning to read more than it helps. The discipline of rigorously summarizing and responding to a critic who doesn’t share one’s pet assumptions is good tonic for the kind of narcissistic current students Tamar Katz describes, who “want to read every text as saying something extremely familiar they might agree with . . .” (qtd. by Laurence 4).

Nor is it only undergraduates who pick up antirhetorical ways of writing about literature, which often persist in the writing of graduate students and faculty members. Many applications for graduate school, for professional fellowships and grants, and for teaching positions get relegated to the rejection pile because the summary of the applicant’s major project runs as follows: “In my dissertation/fellowship project/book manuscript, I argue that Henry David Thoreau’s thinking is in the pragmatist tradition.” Again, since such statements give no indication of whether anyone thinks otherwise or why the issue matters, they leave readers thinking, “And you’re telling me this because . . . ?” Many job talks, conference papers, and published books and articles misfire for the same reason.

Why do writing assignments persist in not asking students to jump into the critical fray? The simplest reason is that it’s not easy to make the critical fray accessible and compelling to undergraduates. Most academic criticism is written for fellow academics rather than for undergraduates, but even journalistic book reviews tend to be addressed to initiated readers, with references and allusions that would lose many students. If this were the only obstacle, however, we would probably find ways to overcome it. Not all criticism is esoteric, and, even if we can’t find any that isn’t, we can work up our own critical prompts and can turn students’ essays and comments in class into critical conversations the students could enter in their writing.

The more important reason we don’t ask students to engage with critics—and the factor that’s hardest to change—is the deep-seated belief of humanists that reading and responding to commentators about a literary text competes with reading it closely and attentively. Underlying this belief is the assumption that, if a literary work is truly great and if we read it receptively,

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the work itself will tell us what to say about it. To read *Paradise Lost* closely and well, according to this way of thinking, is to submit to the text so fully and to get on such intimate terms with its language that the text's literary discourse will transmute itself into our appropriate responses to it as readers.

Good reading, then, according to this view, consists of letting the work itself dictate what we say about it, leaving no need for the mediating provocation of a critical conversation, which will only get in the way. The converse also follows: if our students come away from a classic with no idea what to say about it, it must be their fault for failing to read it well, not ours for failing to recognize the problem of what students are supposed to say about literature and where they are supposed to find it.

Leaving students intimately alone with the text only favors those who come in with some prior literary background—some stock of things to say—while disabling the rest and forcing many of them to resort to CliffsNotes, if not to plagiarism. For texts (whether they are classics or not) don't tell you what to say about them any more than fireplugs or desks tell you to call themselves by those names. As my correspondent James Berger succinctly sums up the problem, "You don't learn to write an English paper by reading a novel."<sup>3</sup> On the contrary, the prompts needed for writing an English paper on a novel come not from the novel but from the conversation about it.

Students need that conversation not only as a prompt for generating their own critical response but also as a model of what critical response to literature looks like. To *produce* a competent version of literary criticism, which, after all, is ultimately what students have to do in literature courses, they need to see some of the stuff. When we fail to assign criticism alongside literary works (or when we *do* assign it but don't ask students to engage with it), in effect we withhold the discourse from students that we ask them to produce and then penalize them when they produce it poorly.<sup>4</sup>

I started out by observing that students in first-year composition are often asked to enter the real conversations of the university and the wider culture, whereas literature students often are not. This difference helps explain why literary study has been privileged over composition in both the status hierarchy and the salaries, teaching loads, and job security of the teachers. Engaging in the real conversations of the university and the wider culture is a practical, useful, and historically specific activity and therefore, according to our traditions, is inferior to communing in isolation with great works. The irony, however, is that privileging literature over composition greatly retards literary study, which flounders when undergraduates write poorly, in part because we exclude them from the critical conversation.

To be sure, not all literature courses are criticism-free zones, and many writing assignments today do ask students to enter important critical debates. Undergraduate research programs certainly represent a promising recent step in the right direction. I sometimes think that a silent battle for the soul of the literature classroom is being waged between those who want students to engage with critics and those who want them to "just read the works." (How this conflict is resolved will probably be more consequential for the teaching of literature than the more celebrated conflicts over theory and the canon.) Since departments and colleges generally don't discuss this or other similar divisions in the faculty, most of us are oblivious to the fact that our students receive confusingly mixed messages as they go from

course to course—from one course, say, in which they read only *Macbeth* or *To the Lighthouse* to another in which they are asked to take sides in debates between formalist and new historicist interpreters of such works. The assumption seems to be that no discussion of these fundamentally different practices is needed (or is possible) and that individual instructors will figure such things out on their own, as will their students. In other words, to put it less euphemistically, I won't mess with your course if you don't mess with mine. But it seems time that we started seeing questions about how we teach literature—just teach the works or teach them as part of a critical conversation?—not as a private matter but as one to talk about together.

Gerald Graff

## NOTES

This essay grew out of talks presented at the 2007 and 2008 ADE Summer Seminars at Kiawah Island, South Carolina, and Santa Fe, New Mexico, as well as at the Bread Loaf School of English and Tulane University in 2007.

1. The same regressive pattern may more or less characterize writing assignments in other disciplines, where undergraduates are not expected to enter the conversations of scientists, historians, and anthropologists (which are assumed to be either too specialized to interest them or too "meta" for them to grasp) but are asked instead to demonstrate knowledge of the subject matter of those disciplines abstracted from disciplinary conversations. Just as literature students read literary works without learning to think and talk like literary critics, they do math and science problems without learning to think and talk like mathematicians and scientists.

2. The AP literature examination does much to establish a monological model of student writing about literature in high schools that often continues through college. See, for instance, the following examples of allegedly successful student writing offered by the 2004 College Board examination pamphlet, *AP English Literature and Composition*. The writers were asked "to compare and contrast" poems by Emily Dickinson and Robert Frost by "analyzing the significance of dark and night in each," while paying close "attention to such elements as point of view, imagery, and structure" (39):

In great literature, darkness is often used as a potent symbol for suffering, sorrow, and even evil at times. Emily Dickinson and Robert Frost utilize the symbolic richness of darkness in these two poems, but while both show a common symbolic element, each poem presents a distinctly different experience with the night. . . . (41)

Literary works throughout history have used darkness and its antithesis, lightness, as various symbols. Sometimes darkness is personified or it represents a hidden fear, while the light contrasts everything the darkness stands for. In the two poems in the passage, the darkness takes on a different meaning. . . . (45)

Both essays go on to show that there is indeed a lot of light and dark imagery in the two poems. Again, all that's missing (since the assignment treats it as irrelevant) is an indication of why that's of interest—a point.

3. E-mail correspondence, 23 June 2008. Quoted with permission.

4. For a fuller elaboration of this argument, see Graff 173–89.

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## The MLA Convention Aims for a C Plus: Critical Conversations, Community Connections, and Competitive Collaborations

By now, most of you know that the dates of the annual convention will shift to January starting in 2011, when we will meet from 6 to 9 January in Los Angeles (there is no December 2010 convention). You may also remember that in 2007 the Ad Hoc Committee on the Structure of the Annual Convention presented a proposal to the Delegate Assembly and the Executive Council to expand the types of sessions offered at the convention and to reform the session allocation process. The Delegate Assembly overwhelmingly supported these plans, and they will make their formal debut at the 2011 convention. In the meantime, my colleagues in the MLA convention office and I would like to give you a preview of the changes and to let you know how to prepare for them. We also want to describe the ad hoc committee's year-round convention concept, which has already begun to take shape.

The additional formats for sessions are the roundtable with stations (usually with electronic media) and the workshop, which has two types: preconvention (limited number of participants, advance registration, variable length) and standard time (seventy-five minutes during the regular program schedule). Starting in 2011, when you submit Program copy for any session, including special sessions, you will be asked to indicate the format you prefer. In case you are curious about the two new formats, we invite you to preview them at the 2008 and 2009 convention.

This year there will be two roundtables with electronic stations: session 692 ("Electronic Roundtable: A Demonstration of Digital Poetry Archives") and session 724 ("E-Criticism: New Critical Methods and Modalities"). Roundtables in this new format allow a maximum of eight stations. When you attend a session of this kind, you circulate among the stations, discuss the projects with the presenters, and take any materials the presenters have prepared for distribution. You can visit as many stations as you like and proportion your time any way you see fit. We think this innovative format will encourage members to explore new ways of presenting their scholarly and pedagogical research. It also increases the opportunity for conversation and connection (or should I say connectivity?). I should also mention that the stations in the new roundtable format can contain nondigital materials, such as those used in traditional poster sessions (charts, handouts, and so on).

The 2008 convention will also feature several workshops, including an invitational three-hour professional development workshop for community college faculty members led by MLA President Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein-Graff. This workshop ("Teaching the Central Move of Academic Writing") promises to be an important event that brings together colleagues who share common issues related to their teaching and research. The workshop will include breakout sessions so that foreign language and English faculty members can have conversations tailored to their needs. Another preconvention workshop to be held in San Francisco has already filled up with the maximum of thirty registrants: it focuses on evaluating digital work for tenure and promotion and is aimed toward both evaluators and candidates. The facilitators will present case studies and identify effective evaluation strategies and guidelines. During the regular convention hours, a workshop on teaching students how to evaluate Web resources (session 592, "The Good Web"), open to all convention attendees, will present methods

to teach students how to be more savvy Web users, including how to evaluate sites and find information in the deep Web.

Another innovation that we wish to highlight is the collaborative session. These sessions are organized by two entities with guaranteed program space (divisions, discussion groups, allied and affiliate organizations, and MLA committees). Under the guidelines that take effect for the 2011 convention, entities may propose collaborative sessions; these will be allocated on a competitive basis. Entities that collaborate can therefore gain additional sessions, but, more important, they can showcase the kind of wide-ranging scholarship that comes about when groups work together. The ad hoc committee hopes that this new opportunity will promote interdisciplinary work and expand the limits of what each entity can do in isolation. The Division on American Indian Literatures and the Division on Gay Studies in Language and Literature have a collaborative session (563, "Beyond Analogy") on the program this year that focuses on the intersection of the two fields. Because it takes time to formulate proposals for collaborative sessions, members should begin planning for the 2011 convention as soon as possible. At this stage, executive committees of divisions, officers of allied organizations, and chairs of MLA committees can begin discussions about what they may wish to present in collaboration.

We encourage members to use the discussion forums on the MLA Web site to generate ideas about convention sessions. Each division and discussion group has space on the forums, and recent conversations there have centered on topics for the 2009 convention. The convention is transforming into a year-round event as members post comments on past conventions and ideas for future ones. Those who wish to find partners for collaborative sessions can use forums to generate interest. Members can also search the Program at the Web site and will be able to make and print their own convention schedules (we expect this feature, as well as expanded convention material, to be in place by the first week of December). The convention material at [www.mla.org](http://www.mla.org) will also include information on the Presidential Forum and related sessions. The theme this year is "The Way We Teach Now," and Gerald Graff has worked with dozens of colleagues to line up an impressive array of offerings. Members have told me that they've enjoyed exploring sessions connected with the presidential theme, and we hope it becomes a tradition that future presidents will embrace, as Catherine Porter has already done for 2009 (the theme will be "Translation").

Members want more connections to the communities we visit for our annual meetings, and the ad hoc committee has recommended that the MLA Web site feature a section where events and other information can be listed, such as the off-site poetry readings that are often held in conjunction with the convention. Other ideas include listing cultural events of interest to MLA members and tips from those who live in the area on what to do, where to eat, best options for children, and so forth. We are also exploring the possibility of offering organized activities for members, something many other scholarly organizations (usually much smaller than the MLA) have done with success. I remember one such event at a Latin American Studies Association conference in Chicago: it was a tour of the areas of Chicago where Spanish-speaking immigrants lived, with commentary from a professor who knew the history and sociology of the

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places we visited. As we finished the evening over Mexican food at a restaurant in the Pilsen neighborhood, I remember thinking about the connections forged with fellow conference attendees because we had explored the local community in a way not usually afforded by convention structures. Sometimes you have to get out of the hotel!

Let me mention one more idea that came from the ad hoc committee: critical conversations with writers. A highlight for many convention attendees is the chance to hear from creative writers and filmmakers who live in the community we visit or who travel to the meeting from around the world. This year, the distinguished Chinese writer Mo Yan will be in San Francisco: a forum (session 332, "Mo Yan and the Reemergence of Literary Independence in Post-Mao China") is devoted to his work, and he will speak in Mandarin with English translation. In future years, we plan to feature Critical Conversations, sessions

in which writers and scholars converse in a roundtable format. These sessions already appear on the program when divisions or special-session organizers propose them, and they attract large audiences. By formalizing the rubric, we hope to see many more.

I've emphasized all the Cs of the convention—community, connections, collaborations, conversations—but I've omitted the most important one: commitment. I am always impressed with the dedication our members show when it comes to their intellectual pursuits. The Executive Council and its Ad Hoc Committee on the Structure of the Annual Convention are committed to fostering your work in every way we can, and the MLA staff is committed to making the new convention a success. I now ask you to affirm your commitment to the MLA by participating in our annual meeting in the new ways that are opening up, thanks to the collective creativity in which we all have a share and a stake.

Rosemary G. Feal

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## GOVERNANCE

### Proposals for the 2008 Delegate Assembly Meeting Agenda

The following proposals were received at the MLA office by the 1 October deadline for consideration during this year's Delegate Assembly meeting in San Francisco.

Whereas, several of our sister academic organizations in the humanities and social sciences (including the American Anthropological Association and the American Historical Association) have condemned the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq as inimical to the educational and humanistic values we have in common;

Whereas, the responsible actions of these 501(c)(3) organizations show the MLA to be unusual in its avoidance of 'political' resolutions;

Be it resolved that the MLA supports the AAA and AHA resolutions condemning the U.S. occupation of Iraq;

Be it further resolved that the MLA disseminate these resolutions and encourage its members to support them.

*submitted by Michael Bennett on behalf of the  
Radical Caucus in English and Modern Languages*

Whereas Palestinian literature and culture are valuable in themselves;

Whereas the occupation of Palestine has been a critical condition in shaping modern Arabic literature generally;

Whereas those teaching and writing about the occupation and about Middle East culture have regularly come under fire from Zionist groups and others, on evidently political grounds;

Whereas education at all levels in the occupied territories is being stifled by the occupation;

Resolved that the MLA endorses the expansion of teaching and scholarship about Palestinian culture, supports members who come under attack for pursuing such work, and expresses solidarity with Palestinian scholars of culture.

*submitted by Richard Ohmann on behalf of the  
Radical Caucus in English and Modern Languages*

WHEREAS contingent workers constitute a growing proportion of the teaching staff in higher education in the United States,

WHEREAS contingent faculty are underrepresented in governance processes,

WHEREAS the wages and benefits of contingent faculty are significantly inferior to other faculty members' wages and benefits for comparable work,

WHEREAS the academic freedom of contingent faculty is severely circumscribed by the very nature of their employment status,

WHEREAS office allocations, scheduling, and other similar working conditions of contingent faculty are often inferior to those of other faculty, and

WHEREAS the number of female contingent faculty is growing faster than men,

WHEREAS these conditions perpetuate second-class status for more than half a million instructors, lecturers, part-time and adjunct faculty,

BE IT MOVED that the Delegate Assembly requests that the Executive Council convene a committee to adopt guidelines regarding the employment of contingent faculty in the fields of literature, languages and writing, and that these guidelines address governance, wages, research and scholarship support, benefits, academic freedom, working conditions, gender parity, and other employment issues deemed important by the committee, and that the committee align these recommendations with other professional organizations' fair labor standards, and that part of the committee's role will be to help collect, evaluate and distribute data on contingent labor to relevant institutions and organizations. Terms of service, roles and responsibilities of this proposed committee shall be determined by the Executive Council. Membership in this committee shall be by Executive Council appointment, upon nomination by any member of the MLA in good standing.

*submitted by Margaret Hanzimanolis,  
Cathy Birkenstein-Graff, and Chris Bell on behalf of  
the Radical Caucus in English and Modern Languages*

In addition to these new proposals from the membership, the 2008 Delegate Assembly will consider a report from the Del-

egate Assembly Organizing Committee and regular staff and committee reports on association activities.

MLA members are invited to attend the meeting of the 2008 Delegate Assembly during the convention in San Francisco. Members may address the assembly on any of the issues on the assembly's agenda. The assembly meeting will begin at 1:00 p.m. on Monday, 29 December, in Continental 6–9 of the Hilton San Francisco Hotel. Because the assembly meeting is open-ended—recent meetings have lasted four hours or more—even latecomers will have a chance to join in important discussions of association policies.

So that association members may engage fully with the issues to be discussed at the Delegate Assembly meeting, the necessary documents will be made available at the beginning of the meeting. □

SAN FRANCISCO CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU PHOTO



Coit Tower, Telegraph Hill, San Francisco

CONVENTION

## Annual Convention in San Francisco

There is still time to preregister for the 2008 MLA convention in San Francisco at reduced rates: Regular MLA members save \$25 and nonmembers save \$20 when they register by 1 December. The Program issue of *PMLA* (mailed to members in late October and available in a searchable format on the MLA Web site) gives an idea of the wide range of subjects that will be discussed in more than 800 sessions.

When you are not attending sessions, visiting the exhibit hall, or meeting with colleagues, you can take advantage of the museums, theaters, restaurants, and shopping that San Francisco offers. Visit the MLA Web site ([www.mla.org](http://www.mla.org)) to register, to make your hotel and travel arrangements at discounted rates, and to read up-to-date information about the convention.

Most English sessions and the exhibits are in the Hilton San Francisco. Most foreign language sessions are in the San Francisco Marriott. The Job Information Center and the child care center are in the Fairmont San Francisco. Registration and information areas will open at 12:00 noon on 27 December. Members can obtain copies of the *MLA Convention News and Program Update*, which announces program changes, new exhibits, and MLA election results. (The first issue of the *Convention News* will appear on the MLA Web site in mid-December.) You can also purchase copies of the *Job Information List*, consult the “Who’s Where” list for names and local addresses of colleagues, pick up brochures on local restaurants and tourist attractions, and make restaurant reservations.

The exhibit hall, in the Hilton San Francisco, will open at 9:00 a.m. on 28 December. A complimentary shuttle-bus service will operate throughout convention meeting hours between the Hilton San Francisco, the Fairmont San Francisco, and the San Francisco Marriott. A complimentary transportation service for persons with disabilities will operate throughout the convention (see “Accommodations and Services for Persons with Disabilities” on p. 9). □

CONVENTION

## Convention to Focus on “The Way We Teach Now”

“The Way We Teach Now” is the theme of the Presidential Forum at this year’s MLA Annual Convention in San Francisco. The theme will serve as the topic for the forum and three linked sessions and will provide the focus for more than three dozen related programs sponsored by specific divisions, discussion groups, and allied and affiliated organizations, all representing a broad spectrum. Some of the diverse aspects of teaching today that these sessions will address include the teaching-versus-research opposition, politics in the classroom, student discourse and academic discourse, what students should read and how they should read it, bridging the science-humanities gap, the teaching of creative writing, the impact of technology on teaching, and the teaching of high and popular culture. Taken together, these sessions will demonstrate impressively that our commitment to teaching has never been more serious. I am confident that “The Way We Teach Now” will be a memorable collection of sessions, and I hope to see you at many of them.

Gerald Graff

CONVENTION

## Audio- and Videotaping Guidelines for Sessions

The MLA Executive Council has approved guidelines for audio- and videotaping at the MLA Annual Convention. Audio- or videotaping of sessions is not permitted at the MLA convention without permission of all those present at a session. Only background taping is allowed, not the taping of an entire session. The session organizer must have the consent of all the speakers at a session and must request permission to tape through the headquarters office before the session begins (Union Square 25, 4th floor, Building 2, Hilton San Francisco; Pacific Suite G, 4th floor, San Francisco Marriott). The session organizer will then announce to the audience that audiotaping or videotaping will take place during the session. The deadline for submitting requests to film the convention as part of a creative or documentary project was 15 October. □

## CONVENTION

## Recommendations for Session Presiders

Session presiders should remind participants that a session lasts for one hour and fifteen minutes and that at least fifteen minutes at the end of each session should be left for discussion. Therefore, presiders should tell presenters how much time they have to speak.

When a session runs long, the hotel staff cannot enter the room to prepare it for the next session, and the speakers and attendees waiting to enter the room block hallways and doorways, causing an unpleasant and potentially dangerous situation.

Copies of a brief statement signed by Rosemary G. Feal will be on the head tables in all meeting rooms to remind MLA members of the need to conclude their presentations on time. There is also a second statement that an aide will present to a presider when a session has gone substantially beyond the allotted time. This statement informs the presider that the time limit has expired and asks that the presider conclude the session as quickly as possible.

If you are a speaker, please respect the time limits. If you are a presider, please allow at least fifteen minutes for discussion. □

## CONVENTION

## Important Information about the Job Information Center

Once again the MLA will operate a Job Information Center at the annual convention.

All candidates, departmental representatives, and interviewers who wish to use the facilities of the Job Information Center must be registered for the convention.

There will be a combined center for English and foreign languages. The center, designed to assist both job candidates and interviewers, will be located in the Fairmont San Francisco (Terrace, Terrace level). Job candidates will be able to locate their interviews at the center; there will be no telephone service for interview locations.

**1. Sign-In Desk for Departments.** Departmental administrators or representatives who plan to hold job interviews during the convention, whether in their hotel suites or in the interview area of the Job Information Center, should sign in (indicating name, institution, hotel, and room number) at the Job Information Center so that candidates with whom they have set up interviews will be able to locate them. Although an interviewer's name may appear in "Who's Where," for security reasons hotel switchboards will not give out guests' room numbers—and are in any case extremely busy. A brief stop at the sign-in desk by a thoughtful interviewer can save much confusion and worry for candidates.

The sign-in desk will be open on 27 December from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., on 28 December from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., on 29 December from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and on 30 December from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

**2. Counseling Service.** The Job Information Center Counseling Service affords job seekers the opportunity to discuss individual employment problems with experienced departmental administrators. While counselors cannot help candidates obtain interviews, they can offer concrete advice on such matters as the appropriate content and presentation of vitae and letters of application, the kinds of institutions to which candidates might most profitably apply, and realistic approaches to job interviews. Counselors will be on hand to speak with interested candidates during selected hours from 10:15 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. on 28 and 29 December. Appointments can be arranged through the staff member on duty in the interview area. Each counselee should bring a cover letter and vita.

**3. Interview Area.** For the convenience of departmental representatives and candidates, there will be a combined interview

## CONVENTION

## Program Issue for Members with Visual Impairments

Members with visual impairments who would like to receive a copy of the November 2008 (Program) issue of *PMLA* in a usable format should write or call June Hicks in the executive director's office (646 576-5102; [jhicks@mla.org](mailto:jhicks@mla.org)). □

area for both English and foreign languages within the Job Information Center. Those administrators who wish to use the interview area should schedule interviews either by writing or telephoning candidates before the convention or by leaving messages at the message center; administrators should be aware that communication during the convention can be difficult. Tables in the interview area, which will be open from 12:00 noon to 8:00 p.m. on 27 December, from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on 28 December, from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on 29 December, and from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon on 30 December, will be assigned to departmental representatives on a first-come, first-served basis. Staff members will be on duty in the area to assist interviewers and candidates.

**4. Vacancy Notices.** A list of openings received too late to be included in the December *Job Information List* will be posted on bulletin boards in the center. Departmental representatives should submit detailed descriptions of any last-minute vacancies to an MLA staff member in the center, who will see that they are posted. Such notices may also appear in the February *Job Information List*, so that candidates who do not attend the convention may have an opportunity to apply.

**5. Message Center.** Open from 12:00 noon to 8:00 p.m. on 27 December, from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on 28 December, from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on 29 December, and from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon on 30 December, the message center will help candidates and interviewers who have corresponded before the convention arrange specific interview times and places. The message center will not be useful to those who leave messages at random for persons with whom they have had no earlier contact and who may not even be at the convention. Such messages are rarely picked up.

While every effort will be made to assist candidates and interviewers at the Job Information Center, it should be stressed that the MLA does not have the facilities for introducing candidates and interviewers who have not corresponded before the convention. Very little open interviewing takes place at the convention. Job candidates who do not have prearranged interviews should not plan to attend for the sole purpose of seeking employment.

Meetings 2, 3, 4, 156, 330, 404, and 486 address the job situation; they should interest job seekers and administrators alike. □

## CONVENTION

## Preconvention Workshops and Sessions about Job Seeking

The Association of Departments of English and the Association of Departments of Foreign Languages will sponsor several sessions at the MLA convention to help job candidates and interviewers prepare for the job search, including

- A Preconvention Workshop for Members of Search Committees (2)
- A Preconvention Workshop for Job Seekers: The Job Search in Foreign Languages (3)
- A Preconvention Workshop for Job Seekers: The Job Search in English (4)

These three preconvention workshops will be held in the Fairmont from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on 27 December and have been extended to two hours to allow more time for open discussion from the floor.

Other ADE- and ADFL-sponsored sessions for job seekers include

- Demonstration Interviews for Job Seekers (156)
- Career Opportunities in Two-Year Colleges (404)
- The Job I Got: A Roundtable on the Transition from Graduate Student to Faculty Member (486)

For descriptions of these sessions, see the Fall 2008 *MLA Newsletter* and the convention Program.

In addition, ADE and ADFL will staff the Job Counseling Service located in the Job Information Center. Department chairs will offer their experience and expertise to job candidates (who should each bring a cover letter and a vita) in one-to-one counseling sessions. □

## CONVENTION

## Accommodations and Services for Persons with Disabilities

The MLA is committed to making arrangements that allow all members of the association to participate in the convention. Karin Bagnall in the MLA convention office handles arrangements for persons with disabilities (kbagnall@mla.org). Meeting rooms in the headquarters hotels are accessible by elevator, and the doors are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs. There will be desks in the convention registration and information areas at the Hilton San Francisco (East lounge, Ballroom level), the San Francisco Marriott (north and south registration area, lower B2 level), and the Fairmont San Francisco (outside the Garden Room, Lobby level), staffed by personnel who can provide assistance to convention attendees with disabilities. The convention hotels include rooms that are specifically equipped for persons with permanent or temporary disabilities. The deadline to reserve these rooms was 14 November, though some rooms may still be available. Write or call Karin Bagnall as soon as possible for more information. The convention housing form also includes a space for attendees to request particular equipment or accommodations.

**Shuttle Bus.** A complimentary transportation service for persons with disabilities will be available throughout convention meeting hours to transport attendees with disabilities. Arrangements should be made at the desk for persons with disabilities in the Hilton San Francisco (East lounge, Ballroom level), the San Francisco Marriott (north and south registration areas, lower B2 level), and the Fairmont San Francisco (outside the Garden Room, Lobby level) as well as at the satellite desks located in the lobbies of the Hilton San Francisco, the San Francisco Marriott, and the Fairmont San Francisco. Further details and phone numbers will be posted in the headquarters hotel lobbies.

**Sessions.** Speakers are asked to bring five copies of their papers, even draft copies, for the use of members who wish to follow the written text. Speakers who use handouts should prepare some copies in a large-print format (fourteen- to sixteen-point). Speakers should indicate whether they want their papers and handouts returned. Sign language interpreters are available on request. The deadline to arrange for an interpreter was 14 November, though the convention office will make every effort to accommodate late requests. Members who require interpreters should write or call Karin Bagnall as soon as possible.

Please report any problems on-site to the MLA staff members in the headquarters offices at the Hilton San Francisco (Union Square 25, 4th floor, Building 2) or the San Francisco Marriott (Pacific Suite G, 4th floor), and they will do their best to assist you. Hotel staff members may not be able to respond. □

## CONVENTION

## Calls for Papers for 2009 Convention in Philadelphia

The 2009 convention will be held in Philadelphia. Members should familiarize themselves with the guidelines for the MLA convention, which appear on the MLA Web site ([www.mla.org](http://www.mla.org)) and in the September 2008 *PMLA* (pp. 889–94), before writing to the organizers listed below. If not provided, organizers' addresses are available on the MLA Web site to MLA members and listed in the September 2008 *PMLA*. All participants in convention sessions must be MLA members by 7 April 2009. Organizers are responsible for responding to all inquiries. A member may participate as speaker or respondent only twice (e.g., by organizing and chairing a meeting, reading a paper, or serving as a speaker, panelist, or respondent in one or two sessions) at a single convention.

Calls for papers are limited to thirty-five words, including the session title but not the name or address of the organizer.

Groups that announce two or more calls for papers with the same contact person list the contact person only once.

### Divisions

#### *Interdisciplinary Approaches*

##### CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

**Romance and Young Adult Literature.** Romance narratives for teens. Possible topics: history and development of young-adult romance, gender and sexuality issues, comparisons with adult genre romance, etc. 250-word abstracts by 1 Mar.; Catherine Tosenberger (ctosen@gmail.com).

**Screening Childhood.** Reconsidering our understanding of children's literature adapted for film or television. Theorized approaches to book-film "pairs" particularly welcome. 1-page abstracts by 1 Mar.; Erica Hateley (ehateley@ksu.edu).

**Spiritualities in Children's and Young Adult Literature.** Religion and spirituality in children's and young-adult literatures, representing major world religions, spirituality of aboriginal and First World peoples, or neopaganism. 500-word abstracts by 1 Mar.; Keith Dorwick (kdorwick@yahoo.com) and Jameela Lares (Jameela.Lares@usm.edu).

### MLA Committees

#### COMMITTEE ON THE LITERATURES OF PEOPLE OF COLOR IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

**Practices of the Ethnic Archive.** Recent textual discoveries or out-of-print works that can rethink our established ethnic or minority

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canons and the organization, logics, and questions they generate. Abstracts by 26 Feb.; Dana A. Williams (d\_williams@howard.edu).

**Sanctioned Violence: The State and Subjects of Color.** Representations of institutionalized violence in United States minority cultures. Penalization, militarization, and paramilitarization of domestic, civic space—and disciplinary framings of minority subjects. Abstracts by 26 Feb.; Vernetta K. Williams (vernetta@alumni.unc.edu).

**Transformative Texts: Books That Rocked the World.** Single, paradigm-changing literary texts by authors of color in the United States and Canada. How did they rethink, reshape, redirect the field? 250-word abstracts by 26 Feb.; Lan Dong (baerchandong@yahoo.com).

## Special Sessions

These proposed topics for special sessions at the convention have not been approved; the announcements are intended to bring potential organizers and panelists together before organizers send in their final proposals. Organizers and panelists should note the 7 April deadline for membership and the 1 April deadline for submission of final proposals.

**Antireligious Propaganda in Early American Literature.** Any aspect of early American writings that denounces religion or the role of religion in society. 250-word abstracts by 1 Mar.; Hussam S. Timani (hussam.timani@cnu.edu).

**The Concept of the Other and the Poetics of Wallace Stevens.** How does the concept of the other—phenomenological, structuralist, psychoanalytic—reconfigure the problems of Stevens's poetry? Abstracts by 15 Mar.; Bulent Eken (be5@duke.edu).

**Rebecca Harding Davis: Beyond.** On any aspect of Davis's writings after "Life"; new cultural or literary contexts especially welcome. 1-page proposals by 10 Mar.; Sharon M. Harris (sharon.harris@uconn.edu).

**Dogs in Art and Literature in Early Modern Europe.** Any aspect of dogs in the visual culture and written text of early modern Europe. 250-word abstracts by 1 Mar.; Mirzam Handal (mhandal@tulane.edu).

**East Asian Humor and Cultural Modernity.** Critical or historical approaches to comic literature, film, or drama in or about East Asia, in relation to cultural modernity and the politics of humor. 500-word abstracts by 16 Mar.; Alexander C. Y. Huang (acyhuang@psu.edu).

**Elizabethan Literature and the Tudor Aristocracy.** Topics related to the attribution of Tudor aristocratic women on the sonnets. 250-word abstracts by 1 Mar.; Diana Obeid (dobei001@odu.edu).

**French Crises.** Contemporary crises in France's social-historical models and in its insertion within larger constructs (i.e., the EU,

## Deadline for Audiovisual Requests

All requests for audiovisual equipment must be made by the chair of the session by **1 April**. Requests must be received by mail or by fax by 5:00 p.m. on this date. Because the need for audiovisual equipment is a major factor in the scheduling of meetings (and because the movement of equipment is both costly and hazardous), the deadline is firm. Participants should indicate their audiovisual needs when they respond to a call for papers and should check with the chair of the session or with the MLA convention office to be sure that the necessary equipment has been ordered by 1 April.

the global economy, international politics); "déclinisme," its artistic representations, and more. 1-page abstracts by 1 Mar.; Alain M. Gabon (agabon@vwc.edu).

**In Celebration of Blackness and Value.** Responses to Lindon Barrett's "Seeing Double." Address questions of sound versus sight, forms and figures of value; marginality; violence; blackness and Enlightenment thought. Abstracts of papers by 1 Mar.; Jennifer Brody (jennifer.brody@duke.edu).

**Literature of the Hudson River Valley: A Quadricentennial.** Papers on the literature of the Hudson River valley to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Hudson's voyage. 2–3-page abstracts and biographies by 10 Mar.; Sabrina Fuchs-Abrams (sabrina.fuchs-abrams@esc.edu).

**New Directions in Black Autobiography.** Exploring new theoretical, critical, and historical approaches to black autobiography, 1896 to the present; readings of neglected autobiographies that illuminate such new directions. 250-word abstracts and brief vitae by 1 Mar.; Anthony S. Foy (afoy1@swarthmore.edu).

**Nietzsche and Contemporary Critical Practice.** What is Nietzsche's role in the development and self-understanding of the history of literary theory? How can that genealogy be reassessed and reevaluated today? Abstracts by 15 Mar.; Magdalena Ostas (mostas@fau.edu).

**Translating Africa in/and Global Contexts.** What are the theories for reading and translating Africa in global contexts? What is their impact on global reception, teaching, and criticism in and of modern languages? 250-word abstracts by 15 Mar.; Wangui Wa Goro (wagoro@gmail.com).

## Allied and Affiliate Organizations

### SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR SOCIETY

Papers dealing with any aspect of the works or life of Simone de Beauvoir. Titles and 2–3-paragraph abstracts by 10 Mar.; Yolanda Patterson (guyyopat@aol.com).

### CHILDREN'S LITERATURE ASSOCIATION

**Malevolent Metafiction: Good Books Gone Bad.** Metafiction in children's literature: topics include metafiction as ineffective or threatening authority figures, as enculturation, and as subversion. 1-page abstracts by 1 Mar.; Jordana Hall (chlittamuc@yahoo.com).

**Teenaged Monsters.** Why is adolescent development represented as monstrous in horror fiction and film for young adults? Possible areas of inquiry: sexuality, gender, types of monsters, or tropes (e.g., possession, haunting). 1-page abstracts by 1 Mar.; June Pulliam (jpullia@lsu.edu).

### CONFERENCE ON CHRISTIANITY AND LITERATURE

**Faith and Fable in Geoffrey Hill's Poetry.** A roundtable addressing the interactions among religious belief, religious doubt, and the imagination in the poetry of Geoffrey Hill. 250-word abstracts. by 15 Mar.; Emily Merriman (estm@sfsu.edu).

### NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE SOCIETY

**Hawthorne as a Writer of Creative Nonfiction.** All interpretations of the topic of Hawthorne as a writer of creative nonfiction. 250-word proposals for 20-min. papers by 1 Mar.; Sam Coale (samcoale@cox.net).

**Sophia Peabody at Two Hundred.** Her art, writing, editing, illustrations, and influence on Hawthorne's fiction. 250-word proposals for 20-min. papers by 1 Mar.; Sam Coale (samcoale@cox.net).

### ERNEST HEMINGWAY FOUNDATION AND SOCIETY

**Hemingway and African (American) Writers.** How have African (American) authors and critics engaged with Hemingway? How can one teach Hemingway in conjunction with black writers? 150-word proposals by 1 Mar.; Suzanne del Gizzo (delgizzos@chc.edu).

### MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE DRAMA SOCIETY

**Cognitive Theories of Medieval Performance.** Cognitive theory helps us explore medieval performance events and their reception. Work invited from all medieval periods and geographic regions. 1-page abstracts by 15 Mar.; Carolyn E. Coulson-Grigsby (ccoulson2@su.edu).

**Performing Race: Language and Difference in Early Theater.** Papers on medieval and early modern theater from a variety of geographic regions or linguistic traditions. 1-page abstracts by 15 Mar.; Carolyn E. Coulson-Grigsby (ccoulson2@su.edu).

### SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF SOUTHERN LITERATURE

**Music and Writing in the United States South.** Proposals on Southern writing and any aspect of musical expression. 300–500-word abstracts by 5 Mar.; Barbara Ladd (bladd@emory.edu).

**The South and the Sublime.** Any aspect of the sublime in Southern literature. Any historical period, genre, or theoretical framework. 250–500-word abstracts by 5 Mar.; Thomas Haddox (thaddox@utk.edu). □

CONVENTION**2009 Calendar of Dates and Deadlines for Special Sessions**

Address all correspondence concerning special sessions to Stacey Courtney (MLA Convention Office, 26 Broadway, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10004-1789; [scourtney@mla.org](mailto:scourtney@mla.org)), who will direct it to the appropriate person or to the Program Committee. Except where otherwise indicated, the deadline is the close of business on the date listed. For more-specific information, please consult the guidelines published in the September 2008 *PMLA* (pp. 889–94).

- 5 JAN. Deadline for receipt of notices for the Spring 2009 *MLA Newsletter* announcing intent to propose a special session for the 2009 convention and inviting prospective panelists to convey their interest (submit announcements only if you wish to solicit speakers)
- EARLY FEB. Spring 2009 *MLA Newsletter* mailed to members and available online
- 1 APR. Deadline for receipt of requests for audiovisual equipment for the 2009 convention
- 1 APR. Deadline for receipt of requests for waiver of membership requirements for panelists (foreign scholars and persons outside the disciplines of languages and literatures) in special sessions proposed for the 2009 convention
- 1 APR. To ensure that formal proposals for special sessions for the 2009 convention arrive at the MLA office in sufficient time for processing and submission to the Program Committee, they must be postmarked no later than 1 April or submitted at the Web site by 1 April; hand-delivered proposals must be received at the MLA office by the close of business on 1 April.
- 7 APR. Deadline by which organizers and panelists in special sessions proposed for the 2009 convention must be listed on the MLA membership rolls
- 15 APR. Deadline for receipt of requests for funds for speakers (if appropriate) in special sessions proposed for the 2009 convention
- LATE MAY Notification of the Program Committee's decisions mailed to members who submitted proposals for special sessions for the 2009 convention
- MID JUNE Notification of decisions on funding requests mailed to organizers who applied for funds for speakers
- EARLY- MID JULY Program copy proofs and information on date, time, and place of 2009 special sessions sent by the convention office to organizers
- LATE JULY Deadline for receipt of corrections for special session program copy proofs for the November 2009 (Program) issue of *PMLA*
- 24 JULY Deadline for receipt of notices for the Fall 2009 *MLA Newsletter* announcing intent to propose a special session for the 2011 convention and inviting prospective panelists to convey their interest (submit announcements only if you wish to solicit speakers)
- LATE AUG. Information on date, time, and place of 2009 special sessions to be sent by organizers to panelists
- 15 SEPT. Deadline for receipt of notices for the Winter 2009 *MLA Newsletter* announcing intent to propose a special session for the 2011 convention and inviting prospective panelists to convey their interest (submit announcements only if you wish to solicit speakers)
- LATE SEPT. Fall 2009 *MLA Newsletter* mailed to members
- LATE NOV. Winter 2009 *MLA Newsletter* mailed to members
- 27–30 DEC. 2009 MLA convention held in Philadelphia

CONVENTION**Submit Calls for Papers Online**

Calls for papers for the MLA Annual Convention may now be submitted electronically through the MLA Web site under the Convention heading ([http://www.mla.org/submit\\_calls](http://www.mla.org/submit_calls)). Submissions must be received in the convention office by 5 January 2009 and be no more than thirty-five words in length, including the session title, a brief description, submission requirements (papers, abstracts, word or page limits), and a submission deadline (most are listed as early to mid-March). Your name and contact information are not included in the word limit. □

CONVENTION**Forum Proposals Welcome for 2009 Convention**

Convention forums are large public meetings on topics of broad interest; they may be organized by individual members, divisions, discussion groups, MLA committees, allied organizations, or the American Literature Section. (For information on organizing forums, see the Sept. 2008 *PMLA*, pp. 893–94.) Those interested in proposing forums are encouraged to attend the open meeting of the Program Committee at the convention (Tues., 30 Dec., 10:15–11:30 a.m., Union Square 1, Hilton San Francisco). The deadline for submission of proposals is 15 March 2009. The executive director welcomes inquiries ([execdirector@mla.org](mailto:execdirector@mla.org)). □

BOOK NEWS**Call for Contributions to Approaches Series**

The Publications Committee has approved development of *Approaches to Teaching the Novels of Nella Larsen*, edited by Jacquelyn Y. McLendon.

If you wish to contribute to this volume, please visit [www.mla.org/approaches](http://www.mla.org/approaches) and follow the link indicated. □

## ADE and ADFL Online Job Counseling

The Association of Departments of English and the Association of Departments of Foreign Languages offer an online job counseling service to give job seekers year-round access to the advice that senior department chairs have provided annually through both associations at the MLA convention. The Web site currently includes more than 140 responses to common questions about career planning, applying, and interviewing from chairs; from other administrators and faculty members; and from PhDs working in business, government, and nonprofits. Many of these responses have links to thirty-five articles from the *ADE Bulletin* and *ADFL Bulletin* archives that provide more detailed discussion of job seekers' concerns.

The eight categories of the sites are:

- Planning a Career after Graduate School
- Developing an Academic Career
- Developing a Nonacademic Career
- When and Where to Look for an Academic Job
- CVs, Dossiers, Application Letters, Writing Samples, and Portfolios
- Interviews, Campus Visits, Job Talks, and Teaching Demonstrations
- Negotiating Special Situations
- Job Offers

The categories include questions ranging from "What would my job involve as a foreign language faculty member at an MA comprehensive university?" to "How should I handle a telephone interview?" and "How do I negotiate the terms of a job offer?" The site is designed to be flexible and to grow; anyone with suggestions for additional questions or responses should write to Steve Olsen at [solsen@mla.org](mailto:solsen@mla.org).

To access online job counseling, go to the *Job Information List* through the MLA, ADE, or ADFL Web sites and click on "ADE and ADFL Online Job Counseling." The counseling site is a service of the ADE and the ADFL and does not require a password. □

## GRANTS AND PRIZES

### ADE Francis Andrew March Award Presented to David Bartholomae

The ADE Executive Committee will present the ADE Francis March Award to David Bartholomae at the 2008 MLA Annual Convention in San Francisco. The award, established in 1984 to honor exceptional service to the profession of English, is named for Francis March (1823–1911), professor of English at Lafayette College and the first professor of English in America. The committee looks for candidates whose impact reverberates beyond the local to affect the ADE and MLA communities and the profession at large.

David Bartholomae is professor of English and, since 1995, chair of the English Department at the University of Pittsburgh. Bartholomae is a prominent scholar in composition, literacy, and pedagogy. His most recent book is a collection of essays, *Writing on the Margins: Essays on Composition and Teaching*. His earlier book *Facts, Artifacts, Counterfacts: Reading and Writing in Theory and Practice* continues to inform conversations about basic writing. With Anthony Petrosky, he is the editor of *The Teaching of Writing: The Eighty-Fifth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education* and the author of a series of influential textbooks: *Ways of Reading: An Anthology for Writers*, *Resources for Teaching*, *Ways of Reading: Words and Images*, and *Reading the Lives of Others: History and Ethnography*.

Among Bartholomae's numerous previous awards are the 2006 CCCC Exemplar Award and the 2004 MLA Mina Shaughnessy Award for *Writing on the Margins*. Bartholomae served a 2004–06 term on the ADE Executive Committee and a 1998–2001 term on the MLA Executive Council. He was the 2006 ADE president, served on the ADE Ad Hoc Committee on Assessment, and chaired the ADE Ad Hoc Committee on Staffing and the MLA Ad Hoc Committee on MLA Style.

Prior recipients of the ADE Francis March Award are June Aldridge (Spelman Coll.), Wayne C. Booth (Univ. of Chicago), Mary Burgan (AAUP and Indiana Univ., Bloomington), Marcia Dalbey (Eastern Michigan Univ.), Carole Edmunds (Kellogg Community Coll., MI), Phyllis Franklin (MLA), John Gerber (Univ. of Iowa), Charles B. Harris (Illinois State Univ.), Richard Lloyd-Jones (Univ. of Iowa), Andrea Lunsford (Stanford Univ.), J. Hillis Miller (Univ. of California, Irvine), Jacqueline Jones Royster (Ohio State Univ.), Robert Scholes (Brown Univ.), Philip Smith (Univ. of Pittsburgh), and Patricia Meyer Spacks (Univ. of Virginia). ADE welcomes nominations for this award. Anyone wishing to nominate a candidate should contact Doug Steward, Associate Director of Programs and ADE, 26 Broadway, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10004-1789 ([ade@mla.org](mailto:ade@mla.org)). □

## MEETINGS

### 2009 ADE Summer Seminars

Chairs, directors of graduate and undergraduate studies, and other administrators from English departments of all types gather annually at the ADE Summer Seminars. Attending seminars affords participants the opportunity to establish support networks of trusted colleagues; consult with one another in confidence; pass on lore, tips, and lessons learned; collaborate on the best responses to today's problems; alert one another to emerging problems and opportunities in administration, curricula, and scholarship; develop administrative know-how; gather information to take back to their campuses; gain wide perspective on their local situations; and lend their individual expertise in support of the ADE's authority to issue statements of best practices, statistical analyses, policy recommendations, and reports from the field and to the field.

Seminar East will be held in conjunction with ADFL 11–14 June in Providence, Rhode Island, hosted by the Cogut Center for the Humanities at Brown University. ADE Seminar West will be held 22–25 June in Las Vegas, Nevada; Douglas Unger and Christopher Hutchins at the Univ. of Nevada, Las Vegas, will host.

Information about programs, registration, and accommodations will be announced at the ADE Web site ([www.ade.org](http://www.ade.org)) and in a brochure that will be mailed to ADE members in April. For further information, please write or call David Laurence, Director, ADE, or Doug Steward, Associate Director, at the MLA office (646 576-5132; [ade@mla.org](mailto:ade@mla.org)), or consult the ADE Web site. □

## GRANTS AND PRIZES

## Renate Schulz Receives the ADFL Award for Distinguished Service to the Profession

The ADFL Award for Distinguished Service in the Profession will be presented to Renate Schulz, professor of German studies at the University of Arizona, during the 2008 MLA convention in San Francisco. The ADFL award honors eminent scholar-teachers for exceptional contributions to the field of foreign languages and literatures at the postsecondary level. Schulz is founding codirector of the Center for Educational Resources in Culture, Language, and Literacy, a Title VI language center at the University of Arizona. She was instrumental in establishing the University of Arizona's interdisciplinary PhD program in second language acquisition and teaching and the joint University of Arizona–University of Leipzig transcultural German studies PhD program.

Colleagues speak of Renate Schulz's renown as a scholar, editor, educator, and advocate who has had tremendous impact on all levels of the profession. Her work on reading and assessment influenced the crafting of the early ACTFL guidelines as well as the National Standards. They point to the influence of her research on the training of TAs in graduate foreign language departments. One writes, "She has been a major force in pushing for a more engaged, communicatively oriented and socially and culturally relevant foreign language education. Thanks to Renate Schultz's work, applied linguistics has acquired *droit de cité* in German departments, and her efforts have been emulated around the country."

Renate Schulz is acclaimed for her clear-eyed assessment of what we know and do not know about language teaching methodology, her insistent look at the kinds of materials we use to convey the image of the other, her repeated querying and wrestling with the contested issue of "culture," her crucial role in program administration and program building across disciplinary aisles, and her indefatigable presence and dynamic leadership in national and international professional organizations.

Previous recipients of the ADFL Award for Distinguished Service to the Profession are Mahmoud al-Batal (Emory Univ.), Heidi Byrnes (Georgetown Univ.), Dan Davidson (Bryn Mawr Coll.), Andrew Debicki (Univ. of Kansas), Elvira García (Univ. of Nebraska, Omaha), Dorothy James (Hunter Coll., City Univ. of New York), Michael Katz (Middlebury Coll.), Christopher Kleinhenz (Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison), Claire Kramsch (Univ. of California, Berkeley), Seiichi Makino (Princeton Univ.), Jean Perkins (Swarthmore Coll.), and Guadalupe Valdés (Stanford Univ.). ADFL welcomes nominations for this award. Anyone wishing to nominate a candidate should contact David Goldberg, Associate Director of Programs and ADFL, 26 Broadway, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10004-1789 (adfl@mmla.org). □

## MEETINGS

## 2009 ADFL Summer Seminars

The ADFL Summer Seminars offer department chairs and program heads three days of intense professional exchange about life and work in departments of foreign languages. Plenary sessions and workshops address national trends in the humanities and in the teaching of language, literature, and culture and deal with the nuts and bolts of departmental governance. Seminars also feature preseminar workshops for chairs newly appointed or just completing the first year of their appointment. Seminar East will be held in conjunction with ADE 11–14 June in Providence, Rhode Island, hosted by the Cogut Center for the Humanities at Brown University. Seminar West will be held 24–27 June in Tucson, Arizona, hosted by the College of Humanities of the University of Arizona. Speakers and topics will be announced in the *ADFL Bulletin*; at the ADFL Web site ([www.adfl.org](http://www.adfl.org)); and in a brochure detailing housing, meals, and excursions that will be mailed to ADFL members in early spring. For further information, please write or call Nelly Furman, Director, ADFL, or David Goldberg, Associate Director, at the MLA office (646 576-5132; [adfl@mmla.org](mailto:adfl@mmla.org)), or consult the ADFL Web site. □

## BOOK NEWS

## Four New MLA Titles Published

The MLA will publish four new titles in late fall and early winter 2008. *An Anthology of Nineteenth-Century Women's Poetry from France in English Translation, with French Text* was edited by Gretchen Schultz. Women poets in nineteenth-century France made important contributions to major stylistic innovations—from the birth of elegiac Romanticism to the inauguration of free verse—and many were prominent in their lifetime, yet only a few are known today, and nearly all have been unavailable in English translation. Of the fourteen poets of this anthology some were wealthy, others struggled in poverty; some were socially conventional, others were cynical or defiant. Their poems range widely in style and idea, from Romantic to Parnassian to symbolist. Gretchen Schultz, author of *The Gendered Lyric: Subjectivity and Difference in Nineteenth-Century French Poetry*, provides literary history and biographical notes to show the crucial role women played in nineteenth-century French poetry and to explain why they were criticized and—in the creation of the canon—often eclipsed. The volume costs \$11.95 (MLA members \$9.56) in paperback.

The original French text and English translation of Marceline Desbordes-Valmore's *Sarah* was published in October. It is the twenty-second volume in the MLA series Texts and Translations. The novella was translated and edited by Deborah Jenson and Doris Y. Kadish. In the introduction to this 1821 novella by Desbordes-Valmore, Jenson and Kadish explain its autobiographical background, political context (the revolt of blacks against Napoléon's soldiers), and literary genre (sentimentalism). *Sarah* was a precursor to anticolonial and antislavery texts by Claire de Duras, Victor Hugo, George Sand, and Alphonse de Lamartine. Both the text and translation volumes cost \$9.95 (MLA members \$7.96) in paperback.

Also recently published was *Approaches to Teaching the Writings of Bartolomé de Las Casas*, edited by Santa Arias and Eyda M. Merediz. The work of Bartolomé de Las Casas poses a number of challenges in the classroom: students need help seeing the relevance of a sixteenth-century Dominican missionary to their lives, understanding his colonial-imperial context, and negotiating the apparent contradictions among his evangelizing

(continued on next page)

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and his varying stances on Indian and black slavery in the New World. The essays gathered in this volume show teachers how to introduce and engage with *Las Casas*—one of the first voices to criticize European treatment of the native populations of the Americas and crucial today to studies of imperialism, colonialism, and human rights—in a wide range of courses, undergraduate and graduate. The volume costs \$37.50 (MLA members \$30.00) in cloth and \$19.75 (MLA members \$15.80) in paperback.

Edited by Philip E. Smith II, *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Oscar Wilde* includes a wide range of essays about Wilde's work, which is now taught in a variety of university courses: in literature, theater, criticism, Irish studies, cultural studies, gender studies, and gay studies. This volume, like others in the *Approaches* series, is divided into two parts. The first, "Materials," suggests editions, resources, and criticism, both in print and online, that may be useful for the teacher. The second part, "Approaches," contains twenty-five essays that discuss Wilde's stories, fairy tales, poetry, plays, essays, letters, and life—from the perspective of a wide range of disciplines. The volume costs \$37.50 (MLA members \$30.00) in cloth and \$19.75 (MLA members \$15.80) in paperback.

To purchase these or other MLA publications, please call customer services (646 576-5161), fax your order (646 576-5160), or place your order through the MLA Web site at [www.mla.org](http://www.mla.org). The MLA accepts Visa, MasterCard, and American Express. □

## Profession 2009 Call for Papers

*Profession* is a journal of opinion about and for the modern language profession. With advice from the members of the *Profession* Advisory Committee, the editor selects articles covering a range of topics of professional concern, trying to give a voice to MLA members working in diverse subject areas and situations.

For *Profession 2009*, the members of the committee seek previously unpublished essays, of 1,800 to 5,000 words, on current intellectual, curricular, and professional trends and issues that are of importance to the field. The committee is interested in receiving submissions on the following issues: academic freedom in the twenty-first century, new approaches to the deterioration of full-time faculty positions, and outcomes assessment in language and literature. Suggestions for special topics and sections are also welcome.

Though *Profession* is a journal of opinion, authors should express their views in a scholarly mode—using analysis, documentation, and persuasion—to ensure that readers will be able to engage with their essays.

Letters to the editor and short comments on articles in *Profession 2008*, of no more than 800 words, will also be considered. *Profession* does not publish articles by the same author two years in a row. The postmark deadline for submissions is 16 March 2009. Documentation should conform to the *MLA Style Manual*, third edition (2008). Address materials to the editor, Rosemary G. Feal, at the MLA office. □

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Field Bibliographers Invited

The Advisory Committee on the *MLA International Bibliography* invites scholars and other professionals to serve as field bibliographers and graduate students to serve as assistant bibliographers. Both examine scholarly materials and send citations and indexing information to the MLA office. Service to the bibliography is performed under the supervision of MLA staff members, who provide training in indexing practices.

Some field bibliography fellowships are also available. Address inquiries to Bibliographic Information Services at the MLA headquarters office ([bibliography@mla.org](mailto:bibliography@mla.org); 646 576-5053).

At its annual meeting on 20 and 21 October 2005, the Advisory Committee discussed the essential value of work done by field indexers and the prevalent misunderstandings and confusion regarding indexing work. Those present at the meeting resolved to summarize the many reasons for becoming an indexer:

- Indexers provide an important service to the profession in general and to students, scholars, teachers, and researchers in particular. Indexing for the *MLA Bibliography* allows one to contribute to literary scholarship by ensuring that important texts are made accessible to their key audience. The indexer has a sense of satisfaction knowing that his or her work is helping to preserve and disseminate current scholarship for future scholars by making it easily accessible in an enduring format. Bibliographies and bibliographers serve as a valuable source of information for others.
- Bibliographers find indexing personally enriching. Committing oneself to read publications in a field on a regular basis provides an excellent opportunity to keep up with the current scholarship in the discipline, particularly within one's specialty. It keeps one aware of current interests, trends, and scholarship in a given field and allows one to keep on the cutting edge of research.
- One becomes acquainted with aspects of a discipline that one might never experience. Indexing forces the bibliographer to broaden the scope of his or her knowledge. It educates one on topics that later become part of one's teaching and shapes curriculum decisions. Indexing articles outside one's field of expertise gives a broader perspective and appreciation of what is being done in all fields of the diverse study of modern languages. Even articles not exactly in one's field can provide helpful examples for use in teaching.
- The processes of notation and classification sharpen one's intellect. Experience as a field bibliographer gives one invaluable knowledge of the bibliography, insights never gained before becoming an indexer. One gets to know libraries and librarians and online resources. This knowledge about bibliographical practices assists in research and enables one to provide the best help possible to students and faculty members when they are researching a particular area of literary scholarship.
- The work done as a field bibliographer is seen as valuable by an institution and counts toward the annual review process. A yearly letter from the bibliography to an administrator at the indexer's university underlines the value of the work being performed and the scholarly skills necessary to carry out the job. This may prove useful for promotion and tenure considerations. □

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Rosemary G. Feal, Executive Director

D E A D L I N E S

## Fellowships and Grants

The following list includes fellowships and grants that have deadlines between 1 January and 31 March. More-specific information, such as eligibility, description of grants, number of grants awarded, and sources for further details, can be found in the September 2008 PMLA (pp. 1250–82).

### JANUARY

- 5 American Research Center in Egypt
- 5 National Foundation for Jewish Culture Dissertation Fellowships
- 5 United States Institute of Peace
- 5 Yale University Agrarian Studies
- 7 Center for Cultural Analysis, Rutgers University
- 10 American Association of University Women Educational Foundation
- 10 John Carter Brown Library
- 10 Newberry Library
- 12 Camargo Foundation
- 13 Institute of Historical Research Mellon Fellowships for Dissertation Research in the Humanities
- 15 American Academy in Rome
- 15 American Antiquarian Society
- 15 American Association of University Women Educational Foundation
- 15 Archaeological Institute of America
- 15 Gilbert Chinard, Harmon Chadbourn Rorison, and Edouard Morot-Sir Fellowships
- 15 Kosciuszko Foundation
- 15 Massachusetts Historical Society Fellowships
- 15 Phi Beta Kappa Society Mary Isabel Sibley Fellowship
- 15 Winterthur Research Fellowships in American Art, History, and Culture
- 15 Yale Center for British Art
- 16 American Council of Learned Societies Fellowships and Grants
- 16 University of California, Los Angeles, Fellowship Program in Ethnic Studies
- 19 Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities, Vanderbilt University
- 26 Erasmus Institute
- 30 American Council of Learned Societies Fellowships and Grants
- 31 W. Ormiston Roy Memorial Fellowship
- 1 University of California, Los Angeles, William Andrews Clark Memorial Library
- 1 Center for Jewish History Fellowships
- 1 Children's Literature Association
- 1 Friends of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, Libraries Grants-in-Aid
- 1 Hemingway Society and Foundation, Smith-Reynolds Founders Fellowships
- 1 IREX (International Research and Exchanges Board)
- 1 Massachusetts Historical Society Fellowships
- 1 Midwest Victorian Studies Association
- 1 Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center
- 9 Linguistic Institute Fellowships
- 13 Swann Fellowship
- 15 American Institute for Maghrib Studies
- 15 American Numismatic Society
- 15 Massachusetts Historical Society Fellowships
- 15 National Women's Studies Association
- 15 Phi Sigma Iota Awards in Foreign Languages
- 16 American Psychoanalytic Association Fellowship Program
- 16 University of Chicago Library Special Collections Research Fellowships
- 28 Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture

### MARCH

- 1 American Classical League
- 1 American Philosophical Society
- 1 Library Company of Philadelphia and Historical Society of Pennsylvania
- 1 Massachusetts Historical Society Fellowships
- 1 Newberry Library
- 15 American Handel Society Research Fellowship
- 15 Archaeological Institute of America
- 15 Friends of the Longfellow House
- 15 IREX (International Research and Exchanges Board)

### FEBRUARY

- Arizona State University Institute for Humanities Research
- 1 University of California, Los Angeles, Center for Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Studies

U P C O M I N G M L A D E A D L I N E S

**DECEMBER**

- 1 Preregistration deadline for the 2008 convention
- 10 Deadline for receipt of MLA election ballots (covering contests for second vice president, Executive Council, Delegate Assembly, and division executive committees)
- 12 Deadline for receipt of 2008 convention addresses for "Who's Where"

**JANUARY**

- 2 Deadline for receipt of offprints and books for inclusion in the 2008 *MLA International Bibliography*
- 5 Deadline for receipt of convention calls for papers for the Spring 2009 *MLA Newsletter*
- 9 Deadline for receipt of departmental administrators' job listings for the February 2009 *Job Information List*
- 16 Deadline for receipt of field bibliographers' submissions for inclusion in the 2008 *MLA International Bibliography*
- 31 Deadline for receipt of proposals for honorary members and fellows

**MARCH**

- 1 Deadline for receipt of entries for the 2009 James Russell Lowell Prize competition for books published in 2008
- 6 Deadline for receipt of departmental administrators' job listings for the April 2009 *Job Information List*
- 15 Deadline for receipt of forum proposals for the 2009 convention
- 16 Postmark deadline for submissions for *Profession 2009*

**APRIL**

- 1 Deadline for receipt of entries for the Lois Roth Award and the MLA Prize for a First Book for books published in 2008
- 1 Deadline for receipt of *MLA International Bibliography* fellowship applications

- 1 Deadline for submission of manuscripts for the *PMLA* special topic *Celebrity, Fame, Notoriety*
- 1 Postmark and Web submission deadline for program copy from divisions, discussion groups, MLA committees, and allied and affiliate organizations
- 1 Postmark and Web submission deadline for proposals for special sessions for the 2009 convention
- 1 Postmark deadline for requests for audiovisual equipment for the 2009 convention
- 7 Deadline for receipt of requests for waiver of membership requirements for participants in the 2009 convention; organizers and panelists at the 2009 convention must be listed on MLA membership rolls
- 15 Deadline for receipt of requests for funds for speakers at the 2009 convention
- 30 Deadline for receipt of applications for dues subsidies for residents of developing or soft-currency nations

**MAY**

- 1 Deadline for receipt of entries for the 2009 competitions for works published in 2008 for the MLA Prize for Independent Scholars; the Mina P. Shaughnessy Prize; the Kenneth W. Miltenberger Prize; the Katherine Singer Kovacs Prize; the William Sanders Scarborough Prize; the MLA Prize in United States Latina and Latino and Chicana and Chicano Literary and Cultural Studies; and the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prizes for Comparative Literary Studies, Italian Studies, and French and Francophone Studies; for works published in 2007–08 for the MLA Prize for a Distinguished Scholarly Edition; the Morton N. Cohen Award for a Distinguished Edition of Letters; and the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prizes for Studies in Slavic Languages and Literatures and a Translation of a Scholarly Study of Literature

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