

Annual Report from the MLA Publications Committee, 2012–13

The Publications Committee assesses prospectuses and approves final manuscripts for book publications, consults on policies and priorities for the scholarly communication program, and assists with new initiatives in scholarly communication. In 2012–13, the committee responded to proposals, prospectuses, and manuscripts presented within the various series—Approaches to Teaching World Literature, Options for Teaching, Texts and Translations, etc.—as well as nonseries projects. This year was also the first in which the committee worked under a revised set of procedures.

The Publications Committee met twice in 2012–13 at the MLA office: 27–28 September 2012 and 11–12 April 2013. In attendance were committee members Anne J. Cruz, Morris Eaves, Kathleen Fitzpatrick (chair), Eric Hayot, Deborah H. Holdstein, Todd Curtis Kontje, Kathleen P. Long, Meredith McGill, Shannon Miller, and John Protevi, as well as staff members Anna S. A. Chang, James C. Hatch, and Margit Longbrake.

The new procedures under which the committee is now working are designed to streamline the work of the committee, to create continuity for projects within the context of an annually rotating committee membership, to give staff members more responsibility for the development of projects, and to shorten the time from proposal to publication. In the first year of use, these new procedures appear to be achieving their aims. Individual committee members serve as “leads” in presenting particular projects for discussion by the group, thus distributing the committee’s workload and establishing an expert on the committee to whom staff members can return should further questions about a project arise. Projects are now uniformly brought to the committee for discussion and approval when a full prospectus is submitted, rather than at different stages for different series. Moreover, projects receive intensive scrutiny at the prospectus stage instead of having to wait for the manuscript stage: this greater scrutiny at an earlier stage enables us to grant editors whose prospectuses are approved advance contracts detailing the terms under which the project will be published. While the committee will need to continue to assess these new procedures and adjust them as required, we are hopeful that such an emphasis on the evaluation of the prospectus will reduce the committee’s need to intervene in projects at the manuscript stage.

The committee has also begun discussing the use of *MLA Commons* both for the development of new projects and for creating community around published projects. We anticipate learning from a few experiments in this regard and beginning to develop guidelines and best practices based on those experiences.

The committee made the following editorial decisions during 2012–13:

1. Manuscripts

Approved, usually with required revisions:

Donovan, ed., *Approaches to Teaching Tolkien’s The Lord of the Rings and Other Works*

McLendon, ed., *Approaches to Teaching the Novels of Nella Larsen*

Rosenberg and Grobman, eds., *Service Learning and Literary Studies*

Revision and resubmission invited:

Tarnowski, ed., *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Christine de Pizan*.

The committee also reviewed revisions to the following previously approved manuscripts:

Folsom and Wiltshire, eds., *Approaches to Teaching Austen's Mansfield Park*

Kerr and Herrero-Olaizola, eds., *Teaching the Latin American Boom*

Patruno and Ricci, eds., *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Primo Levi*

Powell and Prasad, eds., *Approaches to Teaching George Sand's Indiana*

Albert, *"Silent Souls" and Other Stories / "Ànimes mudes" y altres narracions*, ed. and trans. McNerney

2. Prospectuses

Approved:

Beal and Busbee, eds., *Approaches to Teaching the Middle English Pearl*

Binfield and Christmas, eds., *Teaching Laboring-Class British Literature of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*

Boggs, ed., *Teaching the Literatures of the American Civil War*

Donadey, ed., *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Assia Djebar*

El-Ariss, ed., *The Arab Renaissance: An Anthology of Nahda Language, Literature, and Media*

Nsue Angüe, *Ekomo*, ed. Sampedro and Janis, trans. Sampedro.

The committee also declined one prospectus.

The committee discussed potential future projects at each of its meetings, suggesting topics that might be pursued: Asian American literature, representations of the French Revolution, science fiction, Irish poetry, modern Chinese literature, Twain, the inclusive classroom, the university in crisis, non-Anglophone postcolonial literature in

translation, Francophone literature of the Americas, literature of the Black Atlantic, sport, and video games.

The committee sponsored two sessions at the 2013 convention in Boston (Teaching Arabic Literature, coordinated by Eric Hayot, and Caribbean Crosscurrents, coordinated by Anne Cruz) and is preparing two sessions for the 2014 convention in Chicago:

109. Theater and Performance in the Age of Dryden

Thursday, 9 January, 3:30–4:45 p.m., Chicago C, Chicago Marriott

Presiding: Deborah H. Holdstein, Columbia Coll., IL

Speakers: Lisa A. Freeman, Univ. of Illinois, Chicago; Nicole Horejsi, Columbia Univ.; Blair G. Hoxby, Stanford Univ.; Deborah Payne, American Univ.; Denys Van Renen, Univ. of Nebraska, Kearney

Through brief presentations and discussion with attendees, speakers address topics related to the overarching theme of the panel, including improvisation and empire in Dryden's *Aureng-Zebe*; the politics of complicity in Dryden's *Amphitryon; or, The Two Sosias*; Roman sources of Oriental tragedy; Dryden's performative tragedy; and cultural and economic (il)logics of the Restoration stage.

502. Women Writers on the Spanish Civil War: Rodoreda, Laforet, and Martín Gaité

Saturday, 11 January, 10:15–11:30 a.m., Parlor C, Sheraton Chicago

Presiding: Anne J. Cruz, Univ. of Miami

1. "Mercè Rodoreda: Living War, Writing War," Maryellen Bieder, Indiana Univ., Bloomington
2. "Refugees and Friendship: Sources of Inspiration for Carmen Laforet's *Nada*," Israel Rolon-Barada, Framingham State Univ.
3. "Carmen Martín Gaité's Concept of Ruins," Roberta Johnson, Univ. of Kansas

Books published between 1 July 2012 and 30 June 2013:

Peter C. Herman, ed., *Approaches to Teaching Milton's Paradise Lost*, second edition

Oliver Lovesey, ed., *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o*

Caroline McCracken-Flesher, ed., *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*

Supriya M. Nair, ed., *Teaching Anglophone Caribbean Literature*

Kenneth M. Price and Ray Siemens, eds., *Literary Studies in the Digital Age*

Franco Ricci, ed., *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Italo Calvino*

Andrew Schonebaum and Tina Lu, eds., *Approaches to Teaching The Story of the Stone (Dream of the Red Chamber)*

Among these titles, *Literary Studies in the Digital Age* represents the MLA's first born-digital, open-access anthology. The essays in the anthology are available for discussion on *MLA Commons* (<http://dlsanthology.common.mla.org/>), and the project will further evolve as the editors solicit and receive submissions for the anthology's future expansion. We look forward to more such experiments in new forms of scholarly communication.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen Fitzpatrick, chair