Committee on Scholarly Editions
ANNUAL REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
OF THE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION

AUGUST 2019

Background

The Committee on Scholarly Editions (CSE) was created in September 1976 and became a standing committee of the MLA in 1979. It replaced the advisory board of the MLA Center for Editions of American Authors (CEAA) when the CEAA ceased to be a grant-making body funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. The CSE now serves as a clearinghouse for information about scholarly editing and editorial projects, offers advice and consultation to editors on request, honors excellence in editing by awarding emblems to qualified volumes, and promotes dissemination of reliable texts for classroom use and among general readers. Over time the committee has enlarged the range of editions, periods, and languages for which it provides professional advice, and over the past decade it has increasingly considered electronic scholarly editions in various forms. The committee’s central purpose is the review and evaluation of particular scholarly editions, and the consequent decision whether to award the MLA’s “seal of approval” to editions that merit the distinction.

Current Membership

The committee normally has nine members, eight of whom represent various areas and historical periods of literary scholarship while one member represents digital scholarly editions. The membership of the committee for the period 1 July 2018–30 June 2019, with their terms of service noted, was as follows:

Noelle A. Baker, independent scholar (2016-20; coch., 2017-19)
Susan Brown, Univ. of Guelph (2015-19; coch., 2016-18)
Kevin Brownlee, Univ. of Pennsylvania (2015-19)
A. E. B. Coldiron, Florida State Univ. (2015-19)
Monica Diaz, Univ. of Kentucky (2018-22)
Katherine D. Harris, San Jose State Univ. (2016-2020)
George B. Hutchinson, Cornell Univ. (2016-2020)
Tim Machan, Univ. of Notre Dame (2018-22)
Susan Schreibman, Maastricht Univ. (2018-22)
Vincent Sherry, Univ. of Virginia (2018-22; resigned September 2018)

MLA Staff

Angela Gibson, Director of Scholarly Communication
James C. Hatch, Senior Acquisitions Editor (liaison)
Laura Kiernan, Publications Coordinator (liaison)

Activities of the Committee

The cochairs of the CSE serve, whenever possible, in staggered rotation. For 2018-19, Noelle Baker and George Hutchinson co-chaired. As of July 2019, Monica Diaz became co-chair. She’ll serve along with Hutchinson for 2019-20 and thereafter for one more year.

The committee met on 3 January 2019 at the MLA Annual Convention, in Chicago.

During the committee year, the CSE considered the following scholarly editions:

1. Author: Charles Brockden Brown
Editors: Mark L. Kamrath, Stephen Shapiro, and Maureen Tuthill
Publisher: Bucknell University Press
Review manager: George Hutchinson
Vetter: Bryan Waterman
Status: seal awarded

2. Author: Henry James
Title: *The Complete Letters of Henry James, 1883-1884*, volume 2
Editors: Greg Zacharias and Michael Anesko
Publisher: Nebraska University Press
Review manager: Noelle Baker
Vetter: Sarah Wadsworth
Status: seal awarded

3. Author: Brunetto Latino
Title: *Le Opere di Brunetto Latino. Maestro di Dante Alighieri*, Scriba, *Franciscus de Barberino*
Editor: Julia Bolton Holloway
Review manager: Anne Coldiron

For the Annual Convention in 2020, the CSE will sponsor or cosponsor the following sessions:

**New Life for Old Texts: Release from Copyright and the Modernist Canon**

Program arranged by the MLA Committee on Scholarly Editions

*Presiding:* Scott Herring, Indiana U, Bloomington


2. “Casting a ‘Keen Discerning Eye’ on the Harlem Renaissance out of Copyright,” John Young, Marshall U
3. “Raising Cane,” George B. Hutchinson, Cornell U

**Recovery from the Margins: An Electronic Roundtable**

Program arranged by the MLA Committee on Scholarly Editions

*Presiding:* Noelle A. Baker, independent scholar

*Speakers:* Tyler Babbie, U of Washington, Seattle; Emily Datskou, Loyola U, Chicago; Sydney Lines, U of British Columbia; Denise Mary MacNeil, U of Redlands; Alyssa Prosper, independent scholar; Ashley Reed, Virginia Polytechnic Inst. and State U; Joseph Takeda, U of British Columbia; Jordan Von Cannon, Florida Gulf Coast U; Christine Marie Woody, Widener U.

Hampered by a canon that privileges particular genres over “messy” texts, by scholarly rationales and digital encoding predicated on a model of single-author agency and the existence of multiple versions of a single text, and by granting agencies that favor large-scale initiatives, the recovery of texts by women and people of color has suffered setbacks. Panelists explore the ways in which scholarly editions can avoid replicating colonization and marginalization.

For related material, visit scholarlyeditions.mla.hcommons.org/category/blog/ after 10 Dec.

The CSE will have a virtual meeting in September 2019 and meet face-to-face at the 2020 MLA Annual Convention in January.

In conclusion, the chair wishes to thank the individual members of the committee and the MLA staff members, Angela Gibson, James Hatch, and Laura Kiernan for their dedication and hard work in support of the CSE.

Respectfully submitted, Noelle A. Baker, cochair, CSE.