

**MARTIN PUCHNER TO RECEIVE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION'S
JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL PRIZE FOR *POETRY OF THE REVOLUTION:
MARX, MANIFESTOS, AND THE AVANT-GARDES*; WAI CHEE DIMOCK AND
CYNTHIA WALL RECEIVE HONORABLE MENTIONS**

New York, NY – 3 December 2007 – The Modern Language Association of America today announced it is awarding its thirty-eighth annual James Russell Lowell Prize to Martin Puchner, of Columbia University, for his book *Poetry of the Revolution: Marx, Manifestos, and the Avant-Gardes*, published by Princeton University Press. Receiving honorable mentions were Wai Chee Dimock, of Yale University, for *Through Other Continents: American Literature across Deep Time*, published by Princeton University Press, and Cynthia Wall, of the University of Virginia, for *The Prose of Things: Transformations of Description in the Eighteenth Century*, published by the University of Chicago Press. The prize is awarded annually for an outstanding book—a literary or linguistic study, a critical edition of an important work, or a critical biography—written by a member of the association. Puchner will receive a \$1,000 check and a certificate, and Dimock and Wall will each receive a certificate.

The James Russell Lowell Prize is one of eighteen awards that will be presented on 28 December 2007 during the association's annual convention, held this year in Chicago. The selection committee members were Alison Booth (Univ. of Virginia); Vinay Dharwadker (Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison), chair; Rebecca Haidt (Ohio State

Univ., Columbus); Adelaide M. Russo (Louisiana State Univ., Baton Rouge); and Michael Warner (Yale Univ.). The committee's citation for the winning book reads:

Martin Puchner's *Poetry of the Revolution* is an instant classic that opens new directions for readings in nineteenth- and twentieth-century studies, modernisms and avant-gardes, transnational cultural studies, and comparative literary and linguistic studies. With rigorous yet elegant control of a great diversity of material in several languages, Puchner argues for a new view of the manifesto's importance in cultural history, guiding us through dazzling connections across local, international, political, and generic borders. This stunning study is both a deeply creative critical interpretation and a paradigm-changing map of global political, literary, geographical, and aesthetic relations left largely unexplained by "theories of modernism that depend on a more or less deterministic model according to which modernism is a response to the crisis of rapid modernization."

Martin Puchner is the H. Gordon Garbedian Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University and the author of *Stage Fright: Modernism, Anti-theatricality, and Drama*. He has published or has essays forthcoming in the *London Review of Books*, *Raritan Review*, *Yale Journal of Criticism*, *Drama Review*, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, *New Literary History*, *Theatre Research International*, and *Theatre Journal* among others. His edited books and introductions include *Six Plays by Henrik Ibsen*, Lionel Abel's *Tragedy and Metatheatre*, *The Communist Manifesto and Other Writings*, and the forthcoming *Modern Drama: Critical Concepts*. He is also coeditor of *Against Theatre: Creative Destructions on the Modernist Stage* and of the forthcoming *Norton Anthology of Drama*. He has just signed on as the

new general editor of the *Norton Anthology of World Literature*. He also serves as editor of *Theatre Survey*.

The committee's citation for Dimock's book reads:

At once a work of cosmopolitan scholarship and a deeply personal essay, Wai Chee Dimock's *Through Other Continents* explores the panorama of American literature across "deep time," beyond the confines of language, race, national history, and even the human species. Traversing India, China, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas, Dimock rereads writers ranging from Thoreau, Emerson, Fuller, and James to Naylor and Vizenor as they speculate intertextually, even transcendently, on the humanity of the dead, the treason of the aesthetic, or the significance of the animal. She charts new intersections between poetry and philosophy, science and culture, literature and democracy, and history and war and challenges beginners as well as advanced scholars to reimagine American literature afresh in global time and space.

Wai Chee Dimock is William Lampson Professor of English and American studies at Yale University, where she has taught since 1997. She received her BA from Harvard University and her PhD from Yale University and has also taught at Rutgers University; the University of California, San Diego; and Brandeis University. *Through Other Continents* received honorable mention as well for the Harry Levin Prize of the American Comparative Literature Association and has a companion volume, *Shades of the Planet*, that she coedited with Lawrence Buell. In addition, Dimock is the author of two other books, including *Residues of Justice: Literature, Law, Philosophy*, which received an honorable mention for the James Russell Lowell Prize in 1996.

The committee's citation for Wall's book reads:

Cynthia Wall's *The Prose of Things* is a superb account of description in English fiction and prose between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, with special attention to the novel and historical and scientific writing in the eighteenth century. It demonstrates how description expands and intensifies as science and technology permeate the everyday perception of objects, as consumer culture responds to "the sheer material variety" of an imperial and industrial economy, as empiricism alters the priorities of knowledge, and as emergent ways of rural and urban life enrich and elaborate domestic space. Detailed and evocative, Wall's gracefully written book will become required reading on the British novel and a model for studies of description in other genres, periods, and literatures.

Cynthia Wall is a professor of English at the University of Virginia. She received her BA from Saint Olaf College, her MA in philosophy from Northwestern University, and her MA and PhD in English from the University of Chicago. She is the author of *The Literary and Cultural Spaces of Restoration London* and editor or coeditor of six published or forthcoming volumes, including *The Concise Companion to the Restoration and the Eighteenth Century*. Her articles have appeared in such journals as *Eighteenth-Century Studies* and *Philological Quarterly*. She is the recipient of fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Council of Learned Societies, the University of Virginia, and the British Academy and Newberry Library.

The MLA, the largest and one of the oldest American learned societies in the humanities (est. 1883), promotes the advancement of literary and linguistic studies. The 30,000 members of the association come from all fifty states and the District of

Columbia, as well as from Canada, Latin America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. *PMLA*, the association's flagship journal of literary scholarship, has published distinguished scholarly articles for over one hundred years. Approximately 9,500 members of the MLA and its allied and affiliate organizations attend the association's annual convention each December. The MLA is a constituent of the American Council of Learned Societies and the International Federation for Modern Languages and Literatures.

First presented in 1969, the James Russell Lowell Prize is awarded under the auspices of the MLA's Committee on Honors and Awards. Recent winners of the prize include Joseph Roach (1997), David Wallace (1998), Gauri Viswanathan (1999), Mary Baine Campbell (2000), Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass (2001), Jerome McGann (2002), María Antonia Garcés (2003), Giancarlo Maiorino (2004), Diana Fuss (2005), Paula R. Backscheider (2006), and W. J. T. Mitchell (2006). In recent years honorable mention in the Lowell Prize competition has been awarded to John Felstiner and Claudia L. Johnson (1996), Wai Chee Dimock (1997), Joan DeJean and Geoffrey Hartman (1998), Phyllis Blum Cole (1999), Eric L. Santner (2002), Susan Stewart (2003), Wendy L. Wall (2003), Brent Hayes Edwards (2004), Robert Pogue Harrison (2004), and Alan Liu (2005).

Other awards sponsored by the committee are the William Riley Parker Prize; the MLA Prize for a First Book; the Howard R. Marraro Prize; the Kenneth W. Mildener Prize; the Mina P. Shaughnessy Prize; the MLA Prize for Independent Scholars; the Katherine Singer Kovacs Prize; the Morton N. Cohen Award; the MLA Prizes for a Distinguished Scholarly Edition and for a Distinguished Bibliography; the Lois Roth Award; the William Sanders Scarborough Prize; the Fenia and Yaakov Leviant Memorial Prize in Yiddish Studies; 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, for French and Francophone Studies, for Italian Studies, for Studies in Germanic Languages and Literatures, for Studies in Slavic Languages and Literatures, for a Translation of a Literary Work, for a Translation of a Scholarly Study of Literature, and for a Manuscript in Italian Literary Studies.

James Russell Lowell (1819–91) was a scholar and poet. His first important literary activity came as editor of and frequent contributor to the *National Anti-slavery Standard*. In 1848 Lowell published several volumes of poetry, criticism, humor, and political satire, including *The Vision of Sir Launfal* and the first *Biglow Papers*, which firmly established him in the galaxy of American writers of his day. In 1855 he succeeded Henry Wadsworth Longfellow as Smith Professor of French and Spanish at Harvard. Lowell was the first editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* (1857–61) and was later minister to Spain and Britain. James Russell Lowell served as second president of the MLA from 1887 until his death in 1891.