

**JONATHAN P. EBURNE TO RECEIVE MLA'S JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL PRIZE
FOR *OUTSIDER THEORY: INTELLECTUAL HISTORIES OF UNORTHODOX IDEAS*;
SARA BLAIR TO RECEIVE HONORABLE MENTION FOR *HOW THE OTHER HALF
LOOKS: THE LOWER EAST SIDE AND THE AFTERLIVES OF IMAGES***

New York, NY – 4 December 2019 – The Modern Language Association of America today announced it is awarding its fiftieth annual James Russell Lowell Prize to Jonathan P. Eburne, of Pennsylvania State University, for his book *Outsider Theory: Intellectual Histories of Unorthodox Ideas*, published by the University of Minnesota Press. Sara Blair, of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, is receiving an honorable mention for her book *How the Other Half Looks: The Lower East Side and the Afterlives of Images*, published by Princeton University 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.

The James Russell Lowell Prize is one of eighteen awards that will be presented on 11 January 2020, during the association's annual convention, to be held in Seattle. The selection committee members were Jay Clayton (Vanderbilt Univ.); Rita Felski (Univ. of Virginia); Sabine Hake (Univ. of Texas, Austin); Sangeeta Ray (Univ. of Maryland, College Park), chair; and Michael Rothberg (Univ. of California, Los Angeles). The committee's citation for the winning book reads:

Jonathan Eburne's *Outsider Theory: Intellectual Histories of Unorthodox Ideas* is an original and extremely erudite book with a fresh perspective on a wide range of movements, texts, and ideas that fall outside traditional investigations of intellectual histories. Eburne's attention to the ways errant, marginal, and often hermetic ideas circulate forces us to question how we know what we know. The book brings together high and low cultures, often eclectic and esoteric, to explore how knowledge is produced and revised. Eburne's ethical commitment to tracking without fetishizing the unorthodox over a thousand years of human history makes this book both unique and essential to our understanding of how institutional knowledge relies on our comprehension and incorporation of the weird and the heterodox.

Jonathan P. Eburne is professor of comparative literature, English, and French and francophone studies at Pennsylvania State University. He is editor in chief and cofounder of the award-winning *ASAP/Journal* and editor of the Refiguring Modernism book series published by Pennsylvania State University Press. He is the author of *Surrealism and the Art of Crime* and coeditor of *Leonora Carrington and the International Avant-Garde*; *The Year's Work in Nerds, Wonks, and Neocons*; *The Year's Work in the Oddball Archive*; and *Paris, Capital of the Black Atlantic*. Eburne has edited or coedited special issues of *Modern Fiction Studies*, *New Literary*

History, African American Review, Comparative Literature Studies, Criticism, and ASAP/Journal. He is founder and acting president of the International Society for the Study of Surrealism, president of the Association for the Study of Dada and Surrealism, and in 2015 was president of the Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present.

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

Sara Blair's *How the Other Half Looks: The Lower East Side and the Afterlives of Images*, an obvious allusion to Jacob Riis's influential exposé on the tenements of the Lower East Side, analyzes the visual history of that neighborhood from the 1800s to the twentieth century. Rather than rehashing the numerous studies on Riis's book, Blair examines a wide array of visuals, streets, dwellings, and people, as well as poetry and literature, to illuminate why this neighborhood continues to provide fodder for different media representations. *How the Other Half Looks* is tightly written and deeply researched and has a truly interdisciplinary lens.

Sara Blair is Patricia S. Yaeger Collegiate Professor of English, faculty associate of American culture and Judaic studies, and vice provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. She holds a PhD from Stanford University. Blair's publications include *Harlem Crossroads: Black Writers and the Photograph in the Twentieth Century*; *Remaking Reality: U.S. Documentary Culture after 1945*, coedited with Joseph Entin and Franny Nudelman; *Trauma and Documentary Photography of the FSA*, coauthored with Eric Rosenberg; *Henry James and the Writing of Race and Nation*; and numerous essays in such venues as *American Literary History*, *Images*, *PMLA*, and *ELH*. Her work has been supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Council of Learned Societies, and Michigan Humanities fellowships. She has collaborated with curators at the Detroit Institute of Arts, the International Center of Photography, and the Addison Gallery of American Art; served as a consultant or adviser to a variety of photographic projects and exhibitions; and curated exhibitions at the University of Michigan's Institute for the Humanities and the Middlebury Art Museum. Her current work focuses on the afterlives of the photograph in the digital era and on virtual reality and its story-worlds.

The Modern Language Association of America and its over 25,000 members in 100 countries work to strengthen the study and teaching of languages and literature. Founded in 1883, the MLA provides opportunities for its members to share their scholarly findings and teaching experiences with colleagues and to discuss trends in the academy. The MLA sustains one of the finest publication programs in the humanities, producing a variety of publications for language and literature professionals and for the general public. The association publishes the *MLA International Bibliography*, the only comprehensive bibliography in language and literature, available online. The MLA Annual Convention features meetings on a wide variety of subjects; the 2020 convention in Seattle is expected to draw over 5,000 attendees. More information on MLA programs is available at www.mla.org.

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 have been Laura Dassow Walls, Phillip H. Round, Simon Gikandi, Stephen Greenblatt, Sianne Ngai, David Rosen and Aaron Santesso, Anna Brickhouse, Caroline Levine, Branka Arsić, and Deborah L. Nelson. In recent years honorable mention has been awarded to Joseph Litvak, Andrew F. Jones, Leah Price, Michael North, Ramie Targoff, and Susan Scott Parrish.

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. Mildenberger 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 Scholarly Edition and for Collaborative,

Bibliographical, or Archival Scholarship; 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; the MLA Prize for Studies in Native American Literatures, Cultures, and Languages; the Matei Calinescu Prize; the MLA Prize for an Edited Collection; 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, and for a Translation of a Scholarly Study of Literature; and the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Publication Award 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.