Minutes of the MLA Delegate Assembly

THE DELEGATE ASSEMBLY MET ON 29 DECEMBER 2008 AT THE HILTON SAN FRANcisco Hotel. First Vice President Catherine Porter presided. The assembly was called to order at 1:18 p.m. The chair made some preliminary announcements about the conduct of the meeting, called for a demonstration of the electronic voting system to be used during the meeting, and announced the quorum for the meeting, which was 79 delegates, because 157 delegates had signed in for the meeting at the beginning. [Note: Of the 268 delegates, 176 (65.7%) attended all or part of the meeting (see the list that follows for the names of the delegates in attendance).]

1. On behalf of the Delegate Assembly Organizing Committee (DAOC), Laura Rosenthal moved the adoption of the agenda that had been sent to the assembly. The motion occasioned no discussion and no objections. The chair therefore declared the agenda adopted by unanimous consent.

Rosenthal then offered a motion on behalf of the DAOC that the rules presented to the assembly be adopted. The motion occasioned no discussion and no objections. The chair therefore declared the rules adopted by unanimous consent. The chair also explained the warning-light system that had been installed at the podium to let speakers know how much time they had left before their allotted time expired. The light would turn yellow when speakers had only thirty seconds left and would turn red when speakers' time was up.

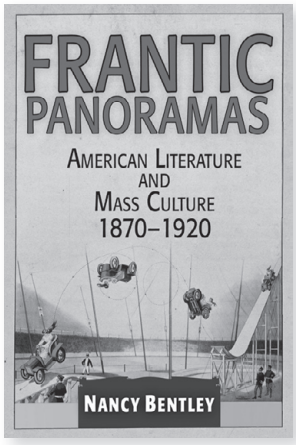
Again on behalf of the DAOC, Rosenthal moved that the assembly approve the minutes of the 2007 meeting as printed in the May 2008 issue of *PMLA*. The chair asked if there were any corrections. Since no corrections were offered, the chair declared the minutes approved as published.

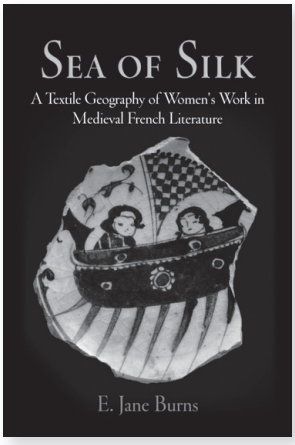
2. The assembly elected one of its members, Teresa Mangum (English, Univ. of Iowa), to the DAOC for a three-year term (from 1 January 2009 through the close of the January 2012 convention). Voting from a slate of nominees selected by the 2008 officers of the association, the assembly elected one person to a one-year replacement term (2009) and four persons to regular two-year terms (2009–10) on the Nominating Committee. Tom Conley (French, Harvard Univ.) was elected to the replacement term; Timothy Carmody (comparative literature, Univ. of Pennsylvania), Paula M. Krebs (English, Wheaton Coll., MA), Tey Diana Rebolledo (Spanish, Univ. of New Mexico, Albuquerque), and Bruce Robbins (English, Columbia Univ.) were elected to regular terms. Voting from a slate of nominees selected by the DAOC, the assembly elected the following persons to the Elections Committee for two-year terms (2009–10): Jonathan Freedman (Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor), Suvir Kaul (Univ. of Pennsylvania), and Melissa Mowry (St. John's Univ., Staten Island).

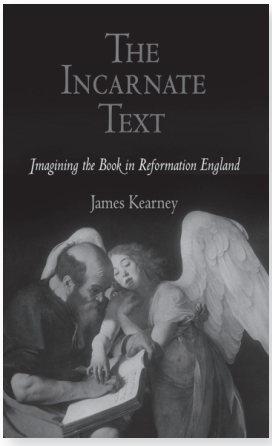
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The assembly also elected Mo Yan to honorary fellowship in the association.

3. The chair called on Laura Rosenthal, chair of the DAOC, to present the DAOC's annual report. After the presentation, Rosenthal asked if there were any questions. There were none. Rosenthal then presented the motion that was included in the DAOC's report for the assembly's consideration. The motion read as follows:

> The DA charges the DAOC to bring forward a proposal to strengthen the resolution process, including consideration of ways to produce more effective resolutions and ways to shorten the time between the submission of a resolution and its ratification.

The chair stated the question on the motion and called for discussion. Discussion came to a close after a brief comment from Rosenthal about the provenance of the motion. The chair then asked the assembly to vote. The assembly approved the motion by a vote of 149 yes and 4 no.

4. The assembly received the report of the executive director and the Finance Committee report. The chair noted that no action on these reports was required but that comments and questions were welcome. Rosemary Feal added that delegates were welcome to comment on the reports or ask questions at any time during the year. Delegates had no comments or questions on the reports, so the chair asked the assembly to turn to the annual reports it had received from the following association committees: *PMLA* Editorial Board, Publications Committee, Committee on Scholarly Editions, Committee on the New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare, Advisory Committee on the *MLA International Bibliography*, Committee on Honors and Awards, Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Rights and Responsibilities, Committee on the Literatures of People of Color in the United States and Canada, Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession, Committee on Information Technology, Radio Committee, Committee on Disability Issues in the Profession, Committee on Community Colleges, and Committee on the Status of Graduate Students in the Profession. After noting that no action on these reports was required but that comments and questions were welcome, the chair called on Dorian Bell of the DAOC to present the reports. He offered highlights of the work of each committee. At the conclusion of Bell's presentation, the chair opened the floor for questions and comments. There were none.

5. The assembly held an open discussion of two topics selected by the DAOC, the advocacy role of the MLA as a scholarly association and how the MLA could best continue to address the increased reliance on contingent labor in the teaching of literature and languages. Delegates had received background information on these topics in advance of the assembly meeting. The chair asked Second Vice President Sidonie Smith to preside over the open discussion. Smith reminded all present that one hour had been set aside for the open discussion, thirty minutes for each topic. She also reminded those in attendance of the rules that would govern the open discussion.

Mary Layoun introduced the first topic, the advocacy role of the MLA as a scholarly association. She said that MLA members have concerns about events in the world that are connected to the humanities, and she reviewed two of the mechanisms, resolutions and motions, that members have at their disposal to raise those concerns within the association. She added that members should be aware of the limits that the MLA's governing documents, especially its charter and constitution, set on association activities and explained that the restrictions imposed by the association's tax-exempt status did not normally apply to the association's resolutions process. Layoun asked speakers to avoid discussing procedures and instead to address the question of what the MLA should be doing to advocate for its members. In response to a question, Rosemary Feal said that the resolutions process produces statements of sentiment that members are free to use in their advocacy efforts. She explained that the association engages in advocacy through organizational coalitions, the majority of which have their offices in Washington, DC; through publications; and through meetings and conferences. She asked speakers to identify the kinds of issues the MLA should focus on.

Several speakers expressed the view that a disciplinary organization like the MLA should focus on the many professional issues that exist in higher education. In this context, the MLA's expertise could be used effectively. All members would benefit from such advocacy, and the MLA's reputation would be enhanced. Several other speakers argued that broader political issues have an effect on the profession and should therefore be considered appropriate subjects for resolutions or other kinds of advocacy activities. The association's governing documents should be interpreted broadly, or amended if necessary, to allow members to take action in defense of humanistic values. Speakers also addressed the importance of the resolutions process, which served to educate the membership on various issues and which might be strengthened as a tool for advocacy.

Gaurav Desai provided an introduction to the second topic, how the MLA could best continue to address the increased reliance on contingent labor in the teaching of literature and languages. He drew attention to the tension that existed within the topic: that it was necessary to argue for improvements in adjunct faculty members' conditions of employment even though the category of contingent labor was responsible for the erosion of tenure-track lines. He deplored the fact that institutions that had converted part-time non-tenure-track jobs to full-time non-tenure-track jobs could cast themselves in a positive light even though they maintained a two-tiered employment system. He also encouraged speakers to comment on the recently released ADE report on the academic workforce in English.

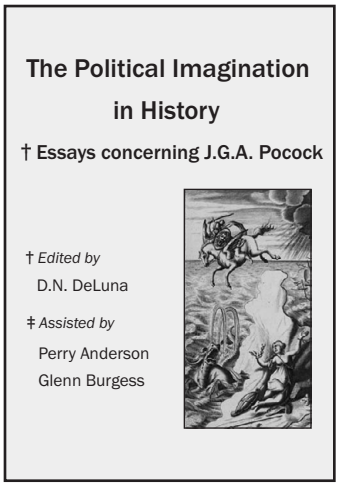
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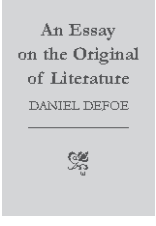
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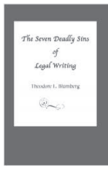
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Initial comments focused on the systemic, long-term nature of the problem of contingent labor in higher education and on the current economic crisis, which had the effect of worsening the situation of adjuncts, particularly through layoffs. Many speakers voiced support for the motion on the assembly's agenda (see item 6, below) that called for the creation of an MLA committee that would work with other disciplinary organizations to address the issues and promote solutions to the myriad problems that the speakers identified (e.g., low pay, lack of job security, lack of opportunity for professional advancement). Several speakers expressed the view that tenured and tenure-track faculty members have a duty to intervene within their departments to stop the deterioration of adjuncts' working conditions. In this context, it was suggested that if tenured and tenure-track faculty members taught lower-division courses, adjuncts would be able to teach more upper-division courses and thereby enhance their professional profiles. Many other aspects of the problem were touched on during the assembly's discussion: institutions' use of a business model that devalues students, faculty members, and education in general; the exclusion of adjuncts from participation in departmental and institutional governance; the overproduction of PhDs and the creation of postdoctoral teaching fellowships, both of which exacerbate the problem; the possibility that all courses in a particular field might be staffed by adjuncts; the negative effects of this staffing system on students, who may be denied access to a teacher whose contract is not renewed. The final speaker drew attention to a proposal in the Kentucky community college system to do away with tenure for new hires and redefine the role of the tenured and tenure-track faculty members, whose ability to advocate for systemic change would thereby be reduced.

The open discussion came to a close after one hour, at which point First Vice President Catherine Porter returned to the chair.

6. In the category of new business, there were two motions that had been received by the 1 October submission deadline and could thus be discussed and voted on by the assembly. The first motion (labeled Motion 2008-1) was submitted by Margaret Hanzimanolis, Cathy Birkenstein-Graff, and Chris Bell on behalf of the Radical Caucus in English and Modern Languages. It read as follows:

> 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.

Gaurav Desai of the DAOC presented the motion to the assembly along with the DAOC's recommendation that the assembly approve the motion. The chair explained the two-stage process of consideration for motions and resolutions with preambles. She would call first for debate and amendment of the *resolved* clause or clauses and then for debate and amendment of the preamble before putting the full text of each item to a vote.

The chair then recognized Mary Layoun of the Executive Council, who presented a council statement conveying the council's strong support for approval of the motion, which dovetailed with work that the council had already undertaken on academic-workforce issues. The chair also recognized Chris Bell, one of the proposers of the motion, who expressed the hope that the assembly would approve the motion so that the proposed committee could work to further discussion of the depressing problems that had just been explored during the assembly's open discussion. He stated for the record that the proposers of the motion were interested in the establishment of a permanent committee and in the appointment of many different types of contingent laborers to the committee.

After these preliminary comments, the chair opened the floor for discussion of the *moved* clause. Michael Bennett proposed a motion to amend the *moved* clause by adding a provision that two-thirds of the members of the proposed committee be contingent faculty members. This motion was seconded, and the chair asked Bennett either to submit his motion in writing or to specify the place where the new language should be added. Having taken into account a comment from Bell, Bennett submitted a

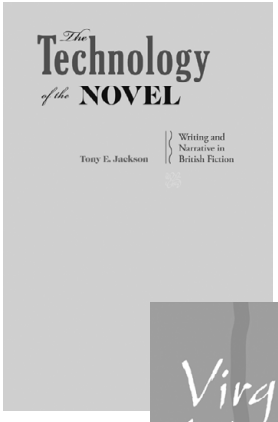
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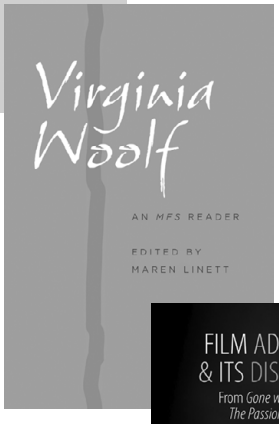
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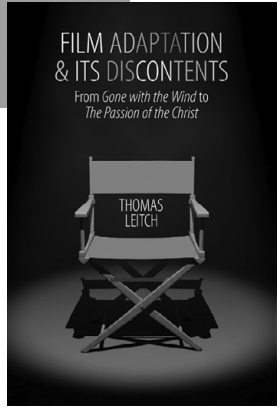
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revised version of his amendment to the chair in writing. The amendment as submitted consisted in the addition of the phrase "composed of a significant majority of contingent faculty" after the phrase "that the Executive Council convene a committee." The chair read out Bennett's written amendment and opened the floor for discussion. After brief discussion, the chair stated the question on the amendment and asked the assembly to vote. The assembly approved the amendment by a vote of 133 yes and 13 no.

The chair asked if there was further discussion of the amended *moved* clause. Ashley Puig Herz proposed a motion to amend the *moved* clause by adding the word "permanent" before the word "committee" in the phrase that was the object of the previous amendment. This motion was seconded, and the chair opened the floor for discussion of the proposed amendment. A delegate asked if the Executive Council had the power under the MLA constitution to create such a committee. Rosemary Feal responded in the affirmative and noted that the constitution refers to standing committees, not permanent committees. Since there was no further discussion, the chair stated the question on the amendment and asked the assembly to vote. The assembly approved the amendment by a vote of 127 yes and 20 no. The chair asked if there was further discussion of the twice-amended *moved* clause. No one came forward.

The chair then opened the floor for discussion of the motion's preamble. Sima Godfrey proposed a motion to amend the first *whereas* clause by adding the words "and Canada" at the end. This motion was seconded, and the chair called for discussion of the proposed amendment. Since there was none, the chair asked the assembly to vote on the amendment. The assembly approved it by a vote of 146 yes and 4 no. The chair asked if there was further discussion of the amended preamble. Cynthia Skenazi said that the sixth *whereas* clause needed revision to take care of a grammatical problem. She proposed that the words "the number of" be inserted before the last word, "men." The chair asked if there were any objections to making this correction. There were none, so the correction was made by unanimous consent.

The proposers of the motion were asked why the motion did not mention the effects that the use of contingent labor has on students. Two reasons were given: that the effect on students was a given and did not need to be specified and that it was difficult to find a formulation that would not run the risk of being taken as a criticism of adjuncts themselves. Marshall Brown proposed a motion to amend the preamble by adding a new clause after the fourth *whereas* clause:

> Whereas the conditions affecting the work of contingent faculty may have a serious deleterious effect on the education provided to students in the classroom,

This motion was seconded, and the amendment was submitted in writing to the chair. Discussion of the proposed amendment ensued. Several speakers expressed concern about the wording of the amendment and how it would be read by outsiders. A delegate raised a point of information and asked whether teaching assistants, who are trainees, were included in the category of contingent faculty members. One of the proposers of the main motion answered that the category included all academic laborers who are not covered by the tenure protection system: part-timers, non-tenure-track faculty members, graduate student teaching assistants, and those holding postdoctoral appointments. The delegate urged that the proposed committee consider the special situation of graduate student teaching assistants. When discussion of the merits of the proposed amendment continued, two nondelegates suggested alternatives to the language of the proposed amendment, and a delegate said she wished to propose a different amendment. At the chair's request, the parliamentarian advised the delegate to urge the assembly to vote down the amendment that was under consideration and then offer a new one. After brief further discussion, the chair announced that the time for discussion of the proposed amendment had expired and that the amendment would come to an immediate vote. The assembly defeated the amendment by a vote of 34 yes and 107 no.

The chair asked if there was any further discussion of the amended preamble. John Domini proposed a motion to amend the preamble by adding the phrase "faculty working conditions are student learning conditions" at the end of the fifth *whereas* clause. This motion was seconded and occasioned no discussion. The chair therefore asked the assembly to vote on the proposed amendment. The assembly approved it by a vote of 94 yes and 41 no. The chair again asked for further discussion of the preamble. Kamala Platt made a motion to amend the preamble by reversing the order of the fifth and sixth *whereas* clauses. The chair asked if there were any objections to making this change. Since there were no objections, the order of the clauses was reversed by unanimous consent.

The chair asked if there was any further discussion of the amended motion. No speakers came forward. The chair stated the question on the adoption of the amended motion and called for a vote. The assembly approved the amended motion by a vote of 136 yes and 2 no. The text of the motion approved by the assembly read as follows:

> Whereas contingent workers constitute a growing proportion of the teaching staff in higher education in the United States and Canada,
>
> 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 the number of female contingent faculty is growing faster than the number of men,

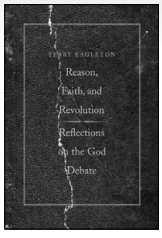
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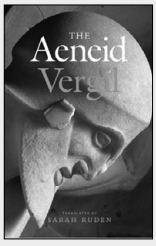
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> Whereas office allocations, scheduling, and other similar working conditions of contingent faculty are often inferior to those of other faculty, and faculty working conditions are student learning conditions,
>
> Whereas these conditions perpetuate 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 permanent committee composed of a significant majority of contingent faculty 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.

The second motion in the category of new business was submitted by Michael Bennett on behalf of the Radical Caucus in English and Modern Languages and was designated Motion 2008-2. It read as follows:

> 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 such 'political' motions and resolutions;
>
> Be it moved that the MLA supports the AAA and AHA resolutions condemning the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq;
>
> Be it further moved that the MLA disseminate these resolutions and encourage its members to support them.

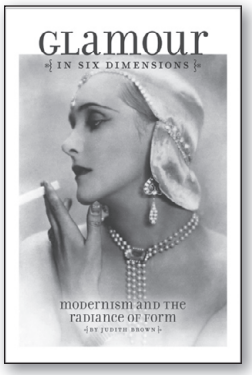
Paula Rabinowitz of the DAOC presented the motion to the assembly. Before opening the floor for discussion of the motion, the chair recognized the proposer of record, who explained that the motion was designed to make the point that the MLA could act as other disciplinary organizations do and take stands on current issues without endangering its tax-exempt status. The chair then opened the floor for discussion of the *moved* clauses. After two speakers expressed their support for the motion, Katie Kane made a motion to amend the first *moved* clause so that it would directly state the MLA's condemnation of the United States invasion and occupation of Iraq. This motion was seconded, and the chair asked Kane to submit the text of her proposed amendment in writing. Speakers stated several reasons for their opposition to the amendment: a more direct condemnation of United States actions would have to be a resolution, not a motion; an amendment aimed at condemning United States actions should address more than the situation in Iraq; and the amendment would vitiate the force of the motion by removing from consideration the statement of solidarity with other organizations and the endorsement of those organizations' richly textured and well-articulated resolutions. Maria Damon then asked the chair if it was possible to offer a different amendment that would preserve the original motion's statement of solidarity with the American Anthropological Association (AAA) and the American Historical Association (AHA). After the chair responded to Damon's question, Kane offered to withdraw her proposed amendment. Since the withdrawal of the proposed amendment required the consent of the assembly, the chair asked if there were any objections to this course of action. There were no objections, so the amendment that Kane had proposed was withdrawn. Damon then offered a motion to amend the first *moved* clause as follows: "Be it moved that the MLA joins the AAA and AHA in condemning the U.S invasion and occupation of Iraq." This motion was seconded, and the chair opened the floor for discussion of the amendment. There was no discussion of the amendment, so the chair asked the assembly to vote. The assembly approved the amendment by a vote of 95 yes and 20 no.

The chair asked if there was any further discussion of the *moved* clauses. Jonathan Gil Harris noted that the second *moved* clause needed to be revised since the reference to the resolutions of the AAA and the AHA had been removed from the first *moved* clause. He therefore proposed to replace "these resolutions" in the second *moved* clause with "the AAA and AHA resolutions." The chair asked if there were any objections to making this change. There were none, so the change was adopted by unanimous consent.

The chair then called for discussion of the motion's preamble. Bonnie Kime Scott made a motion to amend the preamble by striking the second *whereas* clause, for which insufficient evidence had been provided. This motion was seconded, and the chair opened the floor for discussion of the proposed amendment. Since there was no discussion, the chair called for a vote on the amendment. The assembly approved it by a vote of 110 yes and 11 no. After the chair asked for further discussion of the preamble, Ashley Puig Herz made a motion to add a *whereas* clause that would provide further justification for the *moved* clauses. This motion was seconded, and the chair asked Puig Herz to submit the text of her proposed amendment in writing. Puig Herz then informed the chair that she wished to comply with a request from the sponsors of Motion 2008-2 and withdraw her motion to amend the preamble. Since the

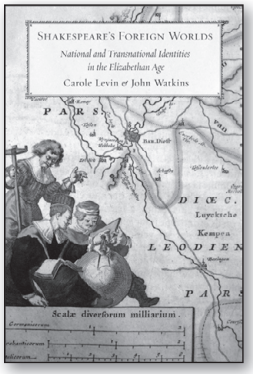
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text of the amendment had not been submitted in writing, the chair acknowledged the withdrawal of the amendment and called for further discussion of the preamble. Stephen Knadler made a motion to amend the first *whereas* clause by splitting it into two separate clauses to foreground the more substantive reasons for the MLA's opposition to the situation in Iraq. This motion was seconded, and the chair asked Knadler to submit the text of his proposed amendment in writing. One speaker expressed opposition to the amendment because the *whereas* clause in its current form fit very well with the *moved* clauses and the overall focus of the motion, which was to support the resolutions put forward by other organizations. In response to a question from the chair, Knadler said he wished to withdraw his motion to amend the first *whereas* clause. Since the text of the amendment had not been submitted in writing, the chair acknowledged the withdrawal of the amendment and asked if there was any further discussion of the preamble. There was none, so the chair asked the assembly to vote on the motion as amended. The assembly approved the motion by a vote of 105 yes and 18 no. The text of the motion approved by the assembly read as follows:

> 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;
>
> Be it moved that the MLA joins the AAA and AHA in condemning the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq;
>
> Be it further moved that the MLA disseminate the AAA and AHA resolutions and encourage its members to support them.

7. Also in the category of new business, there was one regular resolution that was received by the 1 October submission deadline for resolutions. The resolution, which was referred to as Resolution 2008-1, was submitted by Richard Ohmann on behalf of the Radical Caucus in English and Modern Languages. It read as follows:

> Whereas Palestinian literature and culture are legitimate subjects of study;
>
> 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 teaching and scholarship about Palestinian culture, supports members who come under attack for pursuing such work, and expresses solidarity with Palestinian scholars of culture.

Bonnie Kime Scott of the DAOC presented the resolution to the assembly along with the DAOC's recommendation that the assembly approve the resolution. Before opening the floor for discussion, the chair recognized the proposer of record and asked if he wished to make an introductory statement. Ohmann made a brief comment on the need to support the study of Palestinian literature, noted his understanding that a substitute resolution would be proposed, and said he would defer the rest of his remarks until after the substitute had been proposed. The chair opened the floor for discussion of the *resolved* clause of Resolution 2008-1. Cary Nelson made a motion to amend the resolution by substituting the following text for the original:

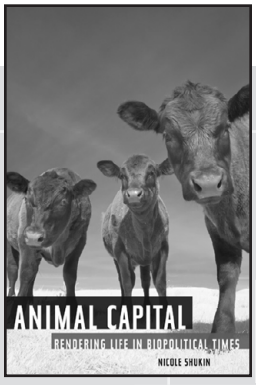
> Whereas the literature and culture of the Middle East are legitimate subjects of study;
>
> Whereas the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has played a role in shaping the culture of many nations in the region and has made this area of study a conflicted one in the United States;
>
> Whereas the MLA needs to support the academic freedom of all scholars but should remain neutral in the conflict;
>
> Resolved that the MLA endorses the expansion of teaching and scholarship about Palestinian and Israeli culture, supports members who come under attack for pursuing such work, and expresses solidarity with Israeli and Palestinian scholars.

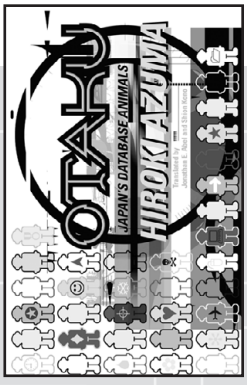
Nelson explained that the substitute resolution was intended as a nonbiased statement of support for the study of all elements of Middle Eastern culture and as a statement that promoted the academic freedom of all scholars who pursue such study. He added that a neutral statement would be a more effective tool for a disciplinary association like the MLA. The motion to amend the resolution by substitution was seconded, and the chair reviewed the procedure for the consideration of a substitute resolution. First, the original resolution would be opened to amendment, and then the substitute resolution would be opened to amendment. After both versions of the resolution had been perfected, the assembly would be asked to vote on whether to accept the substitute resolution in place of the original resolution. After the assembly had chosen the version of the resolution that it wished to consider, no further amendments would be allowed.

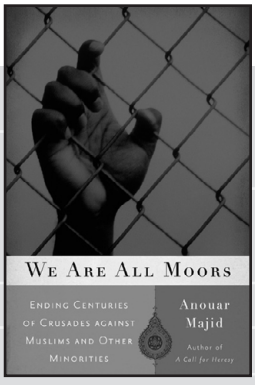
The chair called for amendments to the *resolved* clause of Resolution 2008-1 as originally proposed. Dorian Bell made a motion to amend the final phrase of the *resolved* clause so that it would read "scholars of Palestinian culture" instead of "Palestinian scholars of culture." He said that the amended language was more usefully inclusive and was better in keeping with the rest of the resolution, which did not specify the identity of the scholars doing work in this subject area. The chair said that the proposed rewording could be adopted by unanimous consent

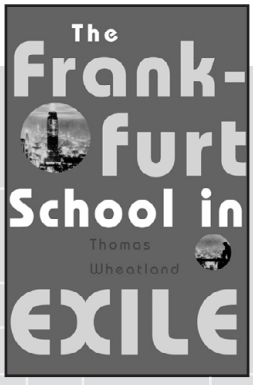
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if there were no objections to the rewording. There were no objections, so the proposed rewording was adopted.

Since there were no further amendments to the *resolved* clause, the chair called for amendments to the preamble of Resolution 2008-1 as originally proposed. Gaurav Desai proposed a motion to amend the third *whereas* clause by striking everything after the words "under fire." His proposal was intended to tighten the prose of the resolution by removing vague wording. This motion was seconded, and the chair opened the floor for discussion of the proposed amendment. Several speakers opposed the amendment because the wording to be deleted was not vague but referred to attacks on scholars of Palestinian culture that were well documented. A supporter of the amendment said that the resolution would be strengthened by removing a limiting reference to specific groups and motivations. Since there was no further discussion of the amendment, the chair asked the assembly to vote. The assembly approved the amendment by a vote of 64 yes and 44 no.

The chair asked if there were further amendments to the preamble of the original resolution. Cary Nelson made a motion to strike the second *whereas* clause because the reference to Palestine was neither neutral nor clear. This motion was seconded, and the chair called for discussion. Two speakers acknowledged the problem that Nelson cited but urged the assembly to defeat the amendment so that they could propose different solutions to the problem. Two other speakers were opposed to the amendment because of the interdependence of the second and third *whereas* clauses. Since there was no further discussion of the amendment, the chair asked the assembly to vote. The assembly defeated the amendment by a vote of 17 yes and 70 no.

The chair again called for further amendments to the preamble of the original resolution. Kamala Platt made a motion to amend the third *whereas* clause by inserting the phrase "from extra-academic anti-Palestinian groups on expressly political grounds" at the end, after the words "under fire." This motion was seconded, and the chair asked Platt to submit her amendment in writing. Platt did so, and the chair called for discussion of the amendment. After two speakers criticized different aspects of the wording of the amendment, Platt proposed to revise her amendment to read "from anti-Palestinian groups on extra-academic grounds." The chair asked if there were any objections to changing the wording of the amendment. There were none, so the chair called for discussion of the amendment in its new form, which the chair repeated. Since there was no further discussion, the chair asked the assembly to vote. The assembly approved the reformulated amendment by a vote of 47 yes and 39 no.

In response to the chair's request for further amendments to the preamble of Resolution 2008-1, Joseph Loewenstein proposed to amend the second *whereas* clause so that it would read, "Whereas the conditions in the occupied territories have been critical in shaping modern Arabic literature generally." This motion was seconded. The chair repeated the wording of the amendment and called for discussion. Those who supported the amendment thought that it solved the problem that the defeated amendment to strike the second *whereas* clause had sought to address. Those who opposed the amendment wanted to maintain the original clause's references to Palestine and the occupation. When there was no more discussion, the chair asked the assembly to vote on the amendment. The assembly approved it by a vote of 50 yes and 36 no.

The chair asked if there were any further amendments to the preamble of Resolution 2008-1 as originally proposed. There were none, so the chair proceeded to the next step in the process of amendment by substitution and asked if there were any amendments to the *resolved* clause of the substitute resolution. Claudia Breger made a motion to amend the final phrase of the *resolved* clause so that it would read "scholars of Israeli and Palestinian culture" instead of "Israeli and Palestinian scholars." This motion was seconded, and the chair called for discussion of the amendment. After brief discussion, the chair asked the assembly to vote on the amendment. The assembly approved it by a vote of 69 yes and 13 no.

Since there were no further amendments to the *resolved* clause of the substitute resolution, the chair called for amendments to the preamble of the substitute resolution. There were none, so the chair opened the floor for discussion of whether to accept the amended substitute resolution in place of Resolution 2008-1 as amended on the floor. Speakers who favored consideration of the latter said that their support was based on the original resolution's clear focus on a culture and an area of study that was under attack, as had been shown in the resolution's documentation. Other areas of study could and should be addressed in separate resolutions. Support for the substitute resolution was based on its evenhanded coverage of Palestinian and Israeli culture. The chair announced that no more time remained for discussion of the question of whether to accept the substitute resolution in place of the amended original and called for a vote. The assembly rejected the substitute resolution by a vote of 19 yes and 64 no. The chair then stated the question on the adoption of Resolution 2008-1 as amended on the floor, noted that no time remained for discussion, and asked the assembly to vote on the adoption of the resolution. The assembly adopted the resolution by a vote of 77 yes and 9 no. The text of the resolution approved by the assembly read as follows:

> Whereas Palestinian literature and culture are legitimate subjects of study;
>
> Whereas the conditions in the occupied territories have been critical in shaping modern Arabic literature generally;
>
> Whereas those teaching and writing about the occupation and about Middle East culture have regularly

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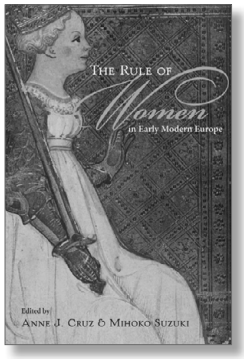
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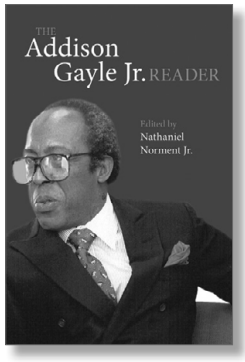
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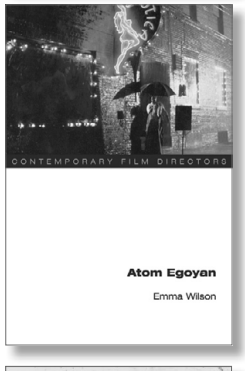
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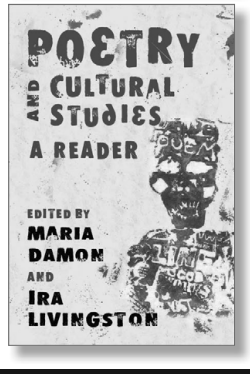
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come under fire from anti-Palestinian groups on extra-academic grounds;

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

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

8. The chair called for the announcement of other items of new business, noting that any new proposals could be discussed but could not be voted on until the next assembly meeting. No one came forward.

9. The chair called for announcements. There were none.

10. Since there was no further business before the assembly, the chair declared the 2008 meeting of the Delegate Assembly adjourned sine die at 5:12 p.m.

Delegates in attendance:

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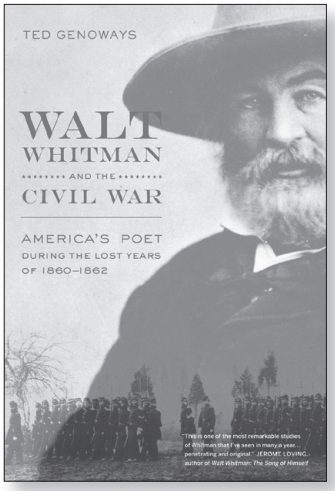
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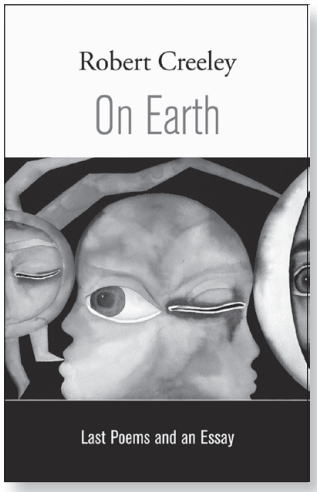
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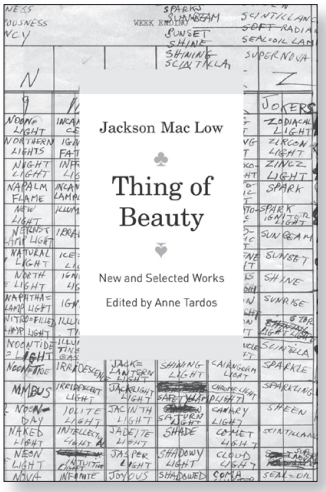
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