Minutes of the MLA Delegate Assembly

THE DELEGATE ASSEMBLY MET ON 7 JANUARY 2017 AT THE PHILADELPHIA MARRIOTT. First Vice President Diana Taylor presided. The assembly was called to order at 11:16 a.m. The chair made preliminary announcements about the conduct of the meeting and called for a demonstration of the electronic voting system to be used during the meeting and for an explanation of the light at the podium that would warn speakers when their allotted time was about to expire. The chair also explained that, because the meeting was open to all MLA members and to credentialed members of the press, speakers should have no expectation of confidentiality. She added that tweeting was allowed but that no photography or voice or video recording was permitted. The chair announced the quorum for the meeting, which was 83 delegates, because 166 delegates had signed in for the meeting at the beginning. [Note: Of the 286 delegates, 222 (78%) 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), Margaret Noodin moved the adoption of the agenda that was distributed to delegates when they signed in for the assembly meeting, subject to emergency change. The chair asked if there was discussion of the agenda. Since there was none, the chair asked if there were objections to adopting the agenda. There were no objections, so the chair declared the agenda adopted by unanimous consent.

Noodin then offered a motion on behalf of the DAOC that the rules presented to the assembly be adopted. Included were the following special rules that the DAOC had devised for the consideration of Resolution 2017-1 and Resolution 2017-2 (see item 6, below):

1. To determine the order in which the two resolutions will be considered, one folded paper for each resolution will be placed in a container. The parliamentarian will pull one paper at random. The resolution on that paper will be considered first.
2. After debate on the first resolution has concluded, debate will begin on the second resolution before any vote is taken.
3. After debate on both resolutions has concluded, the vote will be taken on them in the order in which they were considered. If only one resolution receives a majority vote, the numbers of affirmative and negative votes will be projected on the screen for both resolutions. If both receive a majority vote, the chair will state "Both resolutions received a majority vote" and proceed according to 4, below. [Note: A majority vote means "more than half the votes cast."]
4. If both resolutions are adopted, the assembly will then be asked to decide by majority vote, without debate, the question "Are the two adopted resolutions in conflict?"

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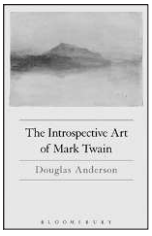
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> The results of that vote will be projected and announced immediately, followed by the numbers of affirmative and negative votes for each resolution. If the assembly determines that the resolutions are in conflict, the resolution that received the highest percentage (not number) of affirmative votes will be forwarded to the Executive Council for review, and the other resolution will be considered "not adopted." If the assembly determines that the resolutions are not in conflict, both resolutions will be forwarded to the Executive Council for review.

Noodin's motion to adopt the rules occasioned no discussion and no objections. The chair therefore declared the rules adopted by unanimous consent.

Again on behalf of the DAOC, Noodin moved that the assembly approve the minutes of the January 2016 meeting as printed in the May 2016 issue of *PMLA*. The chair asked if there were corrections. Since no corrections were offered, the chair declared the minutes approved as published.

2. The assembly elected two of its members, Michelle J. Brazier (English, Raritan Valley Community Coll., NJ) and Maryse Jayasuriya (English, Univ. of Texas, El Paso), to the DAOC for three-year terms (from 9 Jan. 2017 through the close of the Jan. 2020 convention). Voting from a slate of nominees selected by the current officers of the association, the assembly elected Cheryl E. Ball (English, West Virginia Univ., Morgantown), Elizabeth Hutton (English, Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor), Yolanda M. Martinez–San Miguel (Spanish, Rutgers Univ., New Brunswick), and Sarah J. Townsend (Spanish, Penn State Univ., University Park) to the Nominating Committee for two-year terms (2017–18). Voting from a slate of nominees selected by the DAOC, the assembly elected the following persons to the Elections Committee for two-year terms (2017–18): Myrna García-Calderón (Syracuse Univ.), Nasrin Qader (Northwestern Univ.), and Edlie L. Wong (Univ. of Maryland, College Park).

3. The chair called on Margaret Noodin, chair of the DAOC, to present the DAOC's annual report. So that the assembly would have more time to spend on its other business, Noodin briefly reviewed the DAOC's charge, announced that Shaden Tageldin would chair the DAOC in the coming year, thanked her fellow committee members, and said that it had been an honor to serve as DAOC chair. The chair asked if there were questions or comments on the report; no one came forward.

4. The assembly received a report from the Committee on Amendments to the Constitution that consisted of the two amendments to the constitution published on the MLA Web site in September 2016. The first amendment grew out of an Executive Council proposal to align the provision for paid life membership in article 3.C with the new criterion for the granting of life membership after fifty years that the 2016 Delegate Assembly approved (see *PMLA*, vol. 131, no. 3, May 2016, p. 832). The council's proposal also called for the use of a general formulation that would obviate the need for future amendments. The second amendment was based on a motion calling for representation on the Executive Council for part-time faculty members that the 2015 Delegate Assembly approved (see *PMLA*, vol. 130, no. 3, May 2015, pp. 890–92) and that the 2016 assembly clarified (see *PMLA*, vol. 131, no. 3, May 2016, pp. 827–28).

The chair recognized Heather Willis Allen of the DAOC, who, on behalf of the Committee on Amendments to the Constitution, moved that the assembly adopt the first amendment presented in the committee's report. The amendment—to article 3, Membership—read as follows (language subject to change struck, and new language shown in boldface):

> C. *Life members.* Persons eligible for regular membership may become life members by making a single payment, thereafter becoming exempt from the annual payment of dues. ~~With each completed decade of membership, the fee for life membership shall be diminished by one-fourth.~~ **The fee structure for paid life membership shall be included in the dues structure.** In addition, criteria for the granting of life membership shall be included in the dues structure. Members who have met these criteria shall be granted life membership and shall thereafter make no payment.

The chair opened the floor for discussion of this amendment. Since there was no discussion, the chair asked the assembly to vote on the amendment. The assembly approved it by a vote of 157 yes and 10 no.

Again on behalf of the Committee on Amendments to the Constitution, Willis Allen moved that the assembly adopt the second amendment presented in the committee's report. The amendment—to the head paragraph of article 8—read as follows (new language shown in boldface):

> The Executive Council shall be composed of twelve at-large members and two members from the Delegate Assembly. **The Executive Council shall always include at least one MLA member who self-identifies as a part-time faculty member, regardless of category of membership.** In accordance with the provisions of article 8.A.5, at all times there shall be on the Executive Council representation from the three groups of dues-paying MLA members established by the constitution: regular members, student members, and life members. Executive Council members' terms shall begin at the close of the association's convention following their election. A council member's category of membership at the time of election shall stand throughout that council member's term of office. All members of the Executive Council must retain membership in the association during their terms of office.

The chair opened the floor for discussion of the amendment; no one came forward. The assembly therefore

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proceeded to a vote on the amendment and approved it by a vote of 156 yes and 13 no. The chair noted that, in accordance with the procedure outlined in the constitution, both amendments would be forwarded to the Executive Council for action.

5. The assembly received a recommendation from the Executive Council and the DAOC that consisted of three proposals pertaining to the association's dues structure. The first proposal was to revise the dues categories for regular members by (1) adding a new dues category for members who are employed less than full-time; (2) replacing the three lowest dues categories in the current structure (Under $15,000; $15,000–$20,000; and $20,000–$30,000) with a single category (Up to $30,000); (3) reducing the remaining fourteen categories to eight, with increased income limits for the two highest income categories; and (4) increasing slightly the dues amount for joint secondary members. The proposal also included a slight increase in the dues amount for student members. The following chart summarizes the proposed revisions to the dues categories. The second proposal was to establish a multiyear membership option under which regular members paying their dues for the current year would be able to pay in advance for up to two additional years. The third proposal was to institute an automatic annual increase of 2.5% in the dues amount for every membership category, rounded to the next dollar, an increase that would be subject to confirmation by the Delegate Assembly at its meeting each January.

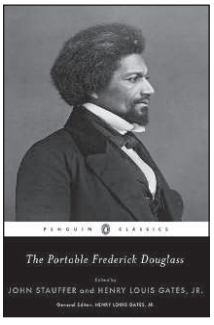
The chair recognized Vicky Unruh of the Executive Council and the DAOC, who explained that the proposals were designed to simplify the processes for joining the association and renewing membership, to facilitate the self-identification of members who are employed less than full-time so that these members may be included more fully in the governance of the association, and to encourage retention. She also noted the progressivity of the new dues-category structure and the savings that the multiyear renewal option would bring to committed members. Unruh asked for questions about the proposals; there were none. On behalf of the council and the DAOC, Unruh moved that the assembly adopt the proposed restructuring of the dues categories. The chair called for discussion of the motion; no one came forward. The chair therefore asked the assembly to vote on the motion, which was approved by a vote of 164 yes and 12 no. Again on behalf of the council and the DAOC, Unruh moved that the assembly adopt the multiyear purchase option for regular members. The chair opened the floor for discussion of this motion. Since there was no discussion, the assembly proceeded to a vote on the motion and approved it by a vote of 172 yes and 3 no. Still speaking on behalf of the council and the DAOC, Unruh moved that the assembly approve the proposal for an automatic 2.5% annual increase in the dues amount for every membership category, subject to confirmation by the Delegate Assembly each year. The chair stated the question and called for discussion. Once again there was no discussion, so the chair asked the assembly to vote. The assembly rejected the motion by a vote of 84 yes and 87 no. [Note: Item 8, below, deals with a motion to reconsider this vote.]

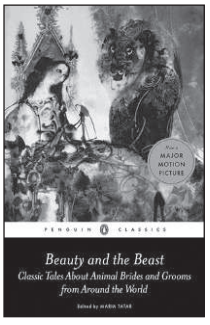
6. In the category of new business were three regular resolutions that were received by the 1 October submission deadline for resolutions. The chair provided the following information about the first two resolutions:

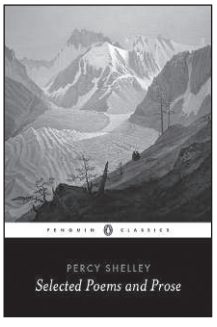
Current Dues Schedule		Proposed Dues Schedule	
Dues Class	Amount	Dues Class	Amount
1 Under $15,000	$28	B Employed Less Than	$25
2 $15,000–$20,000	$46	Full-Time	
3 $20,000–$30,000	$56	1 Up to $30,000	$50
4 $30,000–$40,000	$79		
5 $40,000–$50,000	$94	2 $30,000–$50,000	$80
6 $50,000–$60,000	$112		
7 $60,000–$70,000	$130	3 $50,000–$70,000	$120
8 $70,000–$80,000	$145		
9 $80,000–$100,000	$163	4 $70,000–$100,000	$160
R $100,000–$120,000	$187		
T $120,000–$140,000	$210	5 $100,000–$140,000	$200
V $140,000–$160,000	$232		
W $160,000–$180,000	$260	6 $140,000–$180,000	$250
X $180,000–$200,000	$289	7 $180,000–$220,000	$300
Z Over $200,000	$317	8 Over $220,000	$350
L Joint Secondary	$46	L Joint Secondary	$50
E Student	$23	E Student	$25

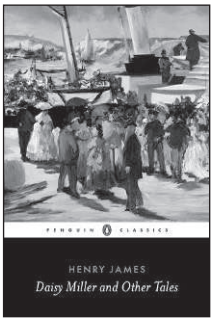
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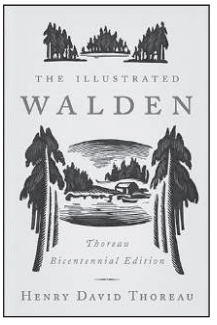
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> Resolution 2017-1 and Resolution 2017-2 both use the word *endorse* in connection with the boycott of Israeli academic institutions. *Endorse* may mean many things to many people, but you are reminded, in the context of the MLA's constitution and resolution process, a resolution is an expression of sentiment or opinion and therefore cannot require the association to take or refrain from taking any particular action that requires the expenditure of association funds or the foregoing of association income. Nor can it require its members to take or refrain from taking any particular action.

She also reminded those present about the rules of debate: Speakers must confine their remarks to the merits of the pending question, refrain from commenting on personalities, and under no circumstances question the motive of another speaker. They should address all questions to the chair, avoid using other speakers' names, refrain from speaking adversely on a prior action not pending, and refrain from speaking against one's own motion. The chair then recognized Gaurav Desai of the Executive Council and the DAOC, who presented the following information on the three regular resolutions:

> The MLA constitution requires the Organizing Committee to hold open hearings on all resolutions and, taking into account the views expressed at those hearings, to present each resolution to the assembly with the annotation "Recommended" or "Not recommended." Yesterday the committee met to decide upon its recommendations.
>
> The committee's constitutional duty to take positions on the substantive merit of resolutions is in tension with its duty to develop and recommend impartial procedures for considering these same resolutions. While this tension has always existed, it is felt most keenly now as the Delegate Assembly prepares to consider three closely related resolutions on a topic that continues to divide its membership.
>
> Over the past two years, the Organizing Committee has taken unprecedented steps to ensure that all parties would receive a fair opportunity to express their opinions on this subject. The committee brokered an agreement that competing resolutions on the proposed boycott be withdrawn at the 2015 Delegate Assembly. It devoted time for discussing the resolutions at the 2015, 2016, and 2017 conventions. And it has now developed unique rules to ensure that each resolution will be debated by the assembly—even if these resolutions are deemed to conflict with one another.
>
> The committee takes seriously its obligation to make recommendations on all resolutions. It takes even more seriously its obligations to ensure impartiality to the opinions of all the members it represents.
>
> For that reason, the Organizing Committee, without regard to the substance of Resolutions 2017-1, -2, and -3, and irrespective of the possible conflict between these resolutions, has decided to transmit all three resolutions to the assembly with the annotation "Recommended."

The chair then called for the implementation of the special rules governing the consideration of the first two resolutions (see item 1, above). It was determined by lot that Resolution 2017-2 would be considered first. This resolution was submitted by Rebecca Comay and David C. Lloyd. It read as follows:

> Whereas the MLA affirms: "When academic freedom is curtailed, higher education is compromised";
>
> Whereas the US materially supports Israel's ongoing violations of human rights and international law;
>
> Whereas these violations include the systematic denial of academic freedom and educational rights for Palestinian scholars and students;
>
> Whereas Israeli universities are instrumental in perpetuating these violations;
>
> Be it resolved that the MLA endorses Palestinian civil society's call for the boycott of Israeli academic institutions; and
>
> Be it further resolved that the MLA affirms the right of faculty and students everywhere to advocate for the boycott of Israeli academic institutions, without retaliation.

The chair recognized Shaden Tageldin of the DAOC, who introduced the resolution on the floor of the assembly on behalf of the proposers of record and said that the DAOC recommended approval of the resolution for the reasons previously stated. The chair opened the floor for discussion of the *resolved* clauses of Resolution 2017-2. She reminded the assembly that twenty-five minutes were available for the discussion of the entire resolution and recognized one of the proposers of record, who had the right to speak first. Comay said that honoring the boycott of Israeli academic institutions would be an act of solidarity to counter the injustices suffered daily by Palestinians and the violations of Palestinians' human rights, including the rights to education and to academic freedom. Such a boycott was justified because of the institutions' complicity in maintaining a brutal military occupation in violation of international law. She added that the institutional boycott was an effective nonviolent tactic and that it respected the academic freedom of individual scholars and students, who would not be prevented from exercising their rights to teach, study, engage in research, travel, or attend conferences. Similarly, the MLA's endorsement of the boycott would not deprive individual members of their right to decide whether to honor the boycott. When the chair called for further discussion, Donald Hall, a member of the Executive Council, made a motion to amend the resolution by adding the following *resolved* clause at the end:

> Be it further resolved that nothing in this resolution binds the MLA as a 501(c)(3) organization to participate in the boycott.

This motion was seconded, and Hall explained that the amendment was prompted by the advice of the

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Anne F. Rothenberg Professor of the Humanities, Department of English; Director, Mahindra Humanities Center; Senior Advisor on the Humanities to the President and Provost, Harvard University
"Statelessness and Death: Reflections on the Burdened Life"

Paul Fleming
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"The Politics of Anecdotes"

Alondra Nelson
Professor, Sociology and Gender Studies, Columbia University; President, Social Science Research Council
"Moral Institutions and Racial Reconciliation after the Genome"

Sari Nusseibeh
Professor of Philosophy, Al-Quds University, Jerusalem
"Sound Minds"

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association's legal counsel and the Executive Council's understanding of its fiduciary responsibility to mitigate liability. It aimed to make clear that the resolution was a statement of sentiment and should not be read as a call for action on the part of the association, since such a call would require a motion instead. An amendment on the floor of the assembly was needed because the constitutional provisions governing the council's review of resolutions do not allow the council to make substantive changes to a resolution that the assembly has approved. The chair opened the floor for discussion of the amendment. A delegate who spoke against the amendment said that it legitimized a resolution that calls for discrimination on the basis of national origin and that it represented an effort on the part of the Executive Council to avoid responsibility for the potentially dangerous consequences of endorsing the boycott. Another speaker was opposed to the amendment because it tried to disguise the intent of the resolution to encourage participation in the boycott. Salah Hassan then addressed the chair to request information on how to propose an amendment to the amendment on the floor. After consulting with the parliamentarian, the chair said that such an amendment was in order. Hassan proposed that the amendment under discussion should be added to the resolution's preamble, since it was already known that resolutions are statements of sentiment. Having consulted again with the parliamentarian, the chair ruled that this amendment to the amendment could not be considered, since only the language of the amendment on the floor was subject to change, not its location. She advised Hassan that his amendment could be considered if the assembly defeated the amendment on the floor and when discussion turned to the resolution's preamble. The chair called for further discussion of the amendment on the floor. Those who spoke argued against the amendment as unnecessary, because of the general understanding of resolutions as statements of sentiment, and as insufficient protection for the association from lawsuits that might arise from an endorsement of the boycott. Discussion of the amendment came to an end, and the chair asked the assembly to vote on it. The assembly rejected the amendment by a vote of 44 yes and 135 no.

The chair called for further discussion of the *resolved* clauses of Resolution 2017-2. Speakers gave the following reasons for their opposition to the resolution: Endorsing the boycott would damage the MLA's reputation as a professional organization and would not solve the problems that Palestinians face. Despite assurances to the contrary, the boycott would affect individuals, not just institutions. Targeting Israeli academics, many of whom are critical of Israeli government policies, is counterproductive. The boycott is not an effective tactic if the goal is to protect the rights of Palestinians; what is needed is the promotion of dialogue and engagement with all parties. The effect of the boycott is to restrict academic freedom, discourse, and collaboration; such restrictions contradict the MLA's mission. When ten minutes remained for discussion of the resolution, the chair reminded the assembly of the need to turn to the preamble. She added that the assembly could come back to the *resolved* clauses after discussing the preamble and extend the time for debate if necessary. She then opened the floor for discussion of the preamble. In response to a point of order, the chair explained that someone who had already spoken on the *resolved* clauses could speak again on the preamble. Most speakers found that the preamble supported the resolution's call to endorse the boycott and presented the relevant issues well, including the need to defend Palestinians' rights to education and academic freedom and to counter the violations of human rights and international law tolerated by Israeli universities and the United States government. One speaker focused on the third *whereas* clause and said that the boycott would not secure Palestinians' educational rights or address serious human rights and humanitarian concerns. The time for discussion of the resolution had come to an end. Rosaura Sanchez made a motion to extend the time for debate. The chair specified an extension of ten minutes for discussion of either part of the resolution and called for a vote on the motion, which was not debatable and required a two-thirds vote for passage. The assembly's vote on the motion was 69 yes (39%) and 106 no (61%), which was not sufficient to extend debate.

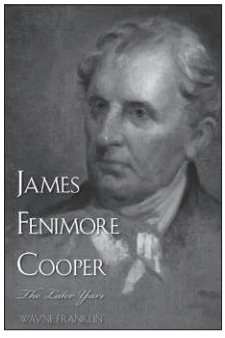
Since the time for discussion of Resolution 2017-2 had expired, the chair implemented the second special rule adopted at the start of the assembly meeting (see item 1, above) and asked the assembly to turn to consideration of Resolution 2017-1, which was submitted by Russell A. Berman and Martin B. Shichtman. It read as follows:

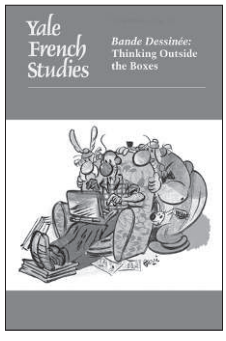
> Whereas endorsing the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel contradicts the MLA's purpose to promote teaching and research on language and literature,
>
> Whereas the boycott's prohibition of the evaluation of work of individual Israeli scholars conflicts with Resolution 2002-1, which condemns boycotts against scholars,
>
> Whereas endorsing the boycott could curtail debates with representatives of Israeli universities, such as faculty members, department chairs and deans, thereby blocking possible dialogue and general scholarly exchange,
>
> Be it resolved that the MLA refrain from endorsing the boycott.

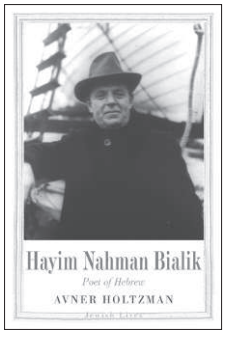
The chair recognized Susan Solomon of the DAOC, who introduced the resolution on the floor of the assembly on behalf of the proposers of record and restated the DAOC's recommendation that the assembly approve all the resolutions received by the 1 October deadline. The chair opened the floor for discussion of the *resolved* clause of Resolution 2017-1. She again reminded the assembly that twenty-five minutes were available for the discussion of the entire resolution and said that one of the proposers of record had the right to speak first. Berman acknowledged

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the legitimacy of members' strong feelings about political issues in the Middle East and around the world and said that it was appropriate to discuss ways to address those issues. However, it was not appropriate for the MLA, whose mission is to promote language and literature research and teaching, to endorse a boycott that would do nothing to address the political issues raised and that amounted to an attack on universities. He added that the current moment in United States history, with its expectations of harder times to come for United States higher education, was not the time to engage in an attack on universities elsewhere in the world. Speakers who supported the resolution argued that engaging in the boycott was not in keeping with the MLA's mission, which called for a stronger focus on professional issues. Other reasons cited for opposition to the boycott included the need to support the antiboycott stance of the American Association of University Professors, the lack of evidence of the complicity of Israeli institutions in violations of human rights and academic freedom, the likely effects of the boycott on individual scholars, and the history of past failed membership votes on related resolutions that showed a lack of membership support for the boycott. Speakers also argued that the boycott would not achieve its goals but would work against those who are trying to promote desired changes in Israeli policies. Those who opposed the resolution made several arguments: that the MLA should respect the call for the boycott from Palestinian organizations and take a stand for human rights and against discrimination; that the situation of the Palestinians justified the boycott, which was a powerful symbolic act; that Israeli universities could not be seen as separate from the government; that the boycott was a nonviolent tactic to force change, not an anti-Israel measure; and that the boycott was in keeping with the MLA's mission to address threats to academic freedom. One speaker raised a procedural point, saying that the assembly should put forward the resolution on endorsing the boycott, since only a vote on that resolution would make the membership's stance on the boycott clear. During the discussion, the chair addressed a point of order relating to arguments being made in support of Resolution 2017-2, which was not on the floor. The chair explained that it was in order to argue against the current resolution by stating one's support for the resolution discussed previously.

When twelve minutes remained for discussion of the resolution, the chair reminded the assembly of the need to discuss the preamble. In response to a point of order, the chair explained that it was necessary to split the overall discussion time between the *resolved* clause and the preamble to ensure that the assembly had the opportunity to discuss the entire resolution. Discussion of the preamble touched on many of the arguments, pro and con, already stated during the discussion of the *resolved* clause. One speaker added that condemning specific acts was preferable to engaging in a general boycott. The final two minutes of discussion time went to assembly members, since the time for comments from nondelegates had expired. When all time for discussion of Resolution 2017-1 expired, the chair proposed to extend debate by ten minutes for both delegates and nondelegates. This motion was not debatable and required a two-thirds vote for passage. The assembly's vote on the motion was 33 yes (18%) and 154 no (82%), which was not sufficient to extend debate. In response to a question from a nondelegate about the handling of the discussion, the chair again explained that discussion time was divided between the two parts of the resolution to ensure discussion of the entire resolution and that people could speak during both sections of the debate but not twice during one section. She added that, according to the assembly's rules, delegates have more speaking time than nondelegates.

The chair then implemented the third special rule adopted at the start of the assembly meeting (see item 1, above) and conducted the votes on the two resolutions that had been discussed in the order in which they were considered. After reading out Resolution 2017-2, the chair asked the assembly to vote on it. She then read out Resolution 2017-1 and asked the assembly to vote on it. After a pause to review the voting results, the chair announced that Resolution 2017-1 was adopted. The votes for both resolutions were then announced and displayed on the screen in the meeting room. The vote on Resolution 2017-2 was 79 yes and 113 no. The vote on Resolution 2017-1 was 101 yes and 93 no. The chair said these results would be forwarded to the Executive Council. Needing a short break, the chair asked Second Vice President Anne Ruggles Gere to preside. After Gere announced election results and conducted runoff elections, First Vice President Diana Taylor returned to the chair.

The third resolution received by the 1 October submission deadline for resolutions was called Resolution 2017-3. It was submitted by Agnes C. Mueller, and it read as follows:

> Whereas repeated attacks on the academic freedom of Palestinian scholars and students by Palestinian political organizations, including both the Palestinian Authority and Hamas, have been documented,
>
> Whereas these attacks on academic freedom constrain scholarly pursuits in Palestinian universities,
>
> Be it resolved that the MLA condemn attacks on academic freedom in Palestinian universities, whether they are perpetrated by the Palestinian Authority or by Hamas.

The chair recognized Cheryl Naruse of the DAOC, who introduced the resolution on the floor of the assembly on behalf of the proposer of record and repeated the DAOC's recommendation that the assembly approve all the resolutions received by the 1 October deadline. The chair opened the floor for discussion of the *resolved* clause of Resolution 2017-3. She again reminded the assembly that

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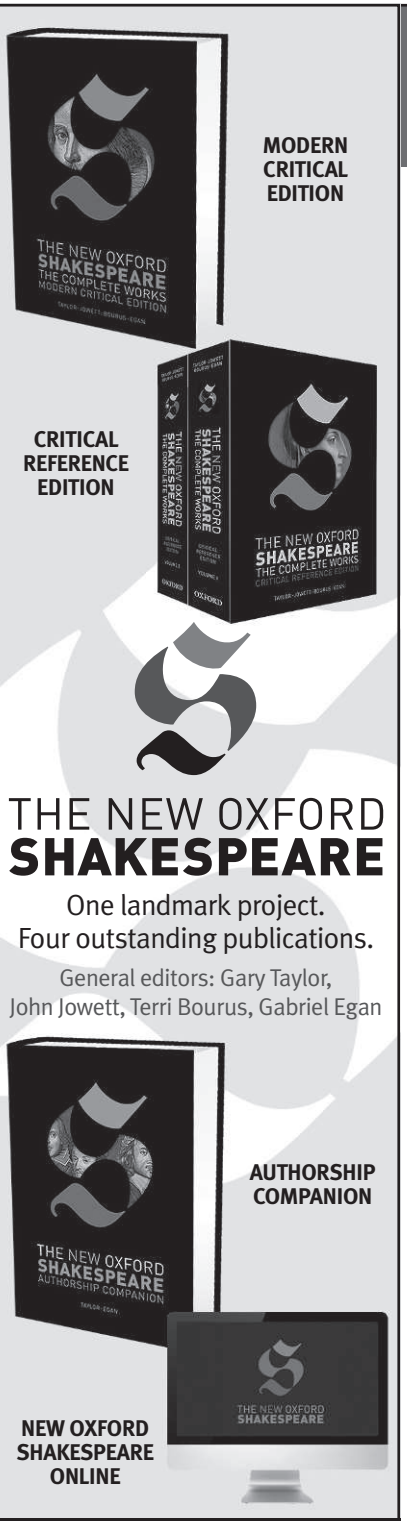
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twenty-five minutes were available for the discussion of the entire resolution and said that this time would be divided approximately evenly between discussion of the *resolved* clause and discussion of the preamble. She asked if the proposer of record, who had the right to speak first, wished to speak. The chair recognized Russell Berman, who said that Agnes Mueller could not attend the meeting and had asked him to speak in her place. Since this substitution was not permitted, Berman's comments were his own. He said that, while it was important to address issues of academic freedom in Palestinian universities, the assembly's previous discussions had been divisive and hurtful. In the interest of reconciliation, Berman made a motion to lay the resolution on the table. The chair asked Berman to make a motion to postpone consideration of Resolution 2017-3 indefinitely instead. He did so, and the motion to postpone indefinitely was seconded. The chair opened the floor for discussion of this motion. Rachel Harris raised a point of order, asking if Berman could be allowed to decide which motion he wished to make, to lay on the table or to postpone indefinitely. The chair called for a brief pause in the proceedings to allow for a parliamentary consultation. When the meeting resumed, the chair asked the parliamentarian to clarify the point. The parliamentarian explained that a motion to lay on the table is used to set aside the pending question temporarily when another item of urgent business arises. A motion to lay on the table was therefore not in order. She said that a motion to postpone indefinitely was the appropriate measure. Its adoption would kill the resolution for the remainder of the assembly meeting. The motion was debatable, and the debate could go into the merits of the resolution. The motion to postpone consideration of Resolution 2017-3 indefinitely was therefore on the floor for discussion. Several speakers opposed adoption of the motion because they wanted to reject the resolution, which was characterized as racist and unfair, as an attempt to erase Israel's responsibility for most violations of academic freedom, and as a transparently tactical move on the part of BDS opponents. Speakers who favored postponement cited three reasons: the resolution was a general statement that would not be as effective as specific statements addressing particular violations of academic freedom, the assembly was not well informed about the issues that the resolution aimed to address, and it was necessary to oppose the politicization of the association. David Pan made a motion to close debate. This motion was seconded, and the chair called for a vote on the motion, which was not debatable and required a two-thirds vote for passage. The assembly closed debate on the motion to postpone Resolution 2017-3 indefinitely by a vote of 130 yes (82%) and 28 no (18%). The motion to postpone consideration of Resolution 2017-3 indefinitely therefore came to an immediate vote. The assembly approved the motion to postpone indefinitely by a vote of 83 yes and 78 no. Therefore, the assembly did not consider Resolution 2017-3.

7. Also in the category of new business was one emergency resolution—so designated because it was received after the 1 October deadline for submission of regular resolutions. It had been submitted to the DAOC in early December. The text of the emergency resolution, labeled Emergency Resolution 2017-4, and the statement it refers to were distributed to delegates immediately before the assembly meeting. Submitted by Michael Bérubé, the resolution read as follows:

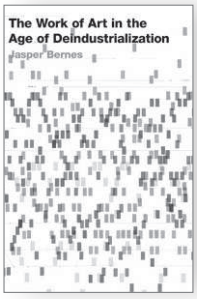
> WHEREAS, the Modern Language Association upholds the ideal of free and unfettered scholarly exchange, including the right of scholars to travel across international borders;
>
> WHEREAS, the MLA opposes discrimination—among faculty, staff, and students—on the basis of race, gender, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, religion or national origin; and
>
> WHEREAS, the MLA is aware that the Trump Administration threatens to violate these core principles of democracy and academic freedom,
>
> BE IT RESOLVED that the MLA strongly endorses the statement of the American Association of University Professors, "Higher Education After the 2016 Election," and urges members to disseminate it widely.

The chair reminded the assembly that it could consider an emergency resolution only if three-fourths of the members agreed to consider it. Since the question of consideration involved a procedural motion that was not debatable, the chair called for an immediate vote on the question. The assembly's vote, 115 yes and 22 no, was sufficient to allow the assembly to discuss and take action on the resolution. The chair recognized Angelika Bammer of the Executive Council and the DAOC, who introduced the resolution on the floor of the assembly on behalf of the proposer of record and presented the DAOC's recommendation that the assembly adopt the resolution. The chair explained the two-stage process of consideration for a resolution with a preamble: she would call first for debate on and amendment of the *resolved* clause and then for debate on and amendment of the preamble before putting the full text of the resolution to a vote. She also said that twenty-five minutes were available for the discussion of the entire resolution and that this time would be divided approximately evenly between discussion of the *resolved* clause and discussion of the preamble. The chair then opened the floor for discussion of the *resolved* clause and recognized the proposer of record. Bérubé said he had been asked in recent days why the resolution focused on the statement issued by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), and he offered two responses: the MLA and the AAUP should speak with one voice on issues of academic freedom, and the AAUP statement was not limited to one hundred words.

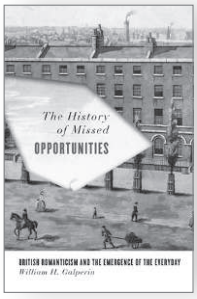
The chair called for further discussion of the *resolved* clause. Since there was none, the chair called for

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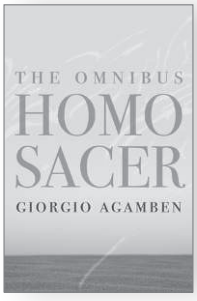
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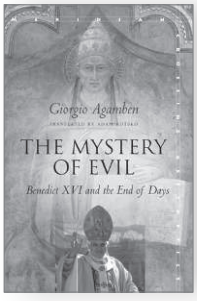
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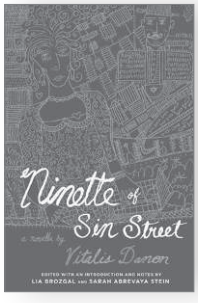
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discussion of the preamble. Jonathan Skolnik made a motion to amend the second *whereas* clause by inserting after "national origin" the phrase "and specifically anti-Muslim racism, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia." This motion was seconded, and the chair called for discussion of the amendment. Skolnik explained that his amendment responded to comments made during the previous day's open hearing on the need to include such issues as Islamophobia. Speakers who opposed the amendment noted that the resolution's references to race, religion, and national origin made the added language unnecessary and preferred the addition of a reference to political belief. When discussion came to an end, the chair asked the assembly to vote on the amendment. The assembly rejected it by a vote of 8 yes and 127 no. The chair called for further discussion of the preamble. Donald Hall made a motion to amend the second *whereas* clause by inserting "political belief" after "religion." This motion was seconded. After brief discussion, the chair called for a vote on the amendment. The assembly adopted it by a vote of 136 yes and 4 no.

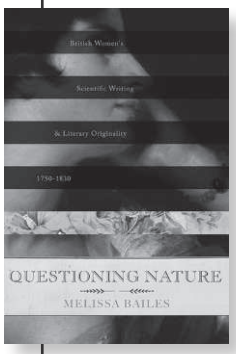
The chair asked if there was further discussion of either part of the resolution. Margaret Ferguson suggested that, since the MLA is an international organization, the resolution also refer to a United Nations statement on academic freedom. Since only delegates can propose motions, Salah Hassan, on Ferguson's behalf, made a motion to amend the *resolved* clause by inserting the phrase "and the UN 'Statement on Academic Freedom'" after the second comma and replacing the word "it" with "these statements." With these changes, the *resolved* clause would read as follows: "Be it resolved that the MLA strongly endorses the statement of the American Association of University Professors, 'Higher Education After the 2016 Election,' and the UN 'Statement on Academic Freedom' and urges members to disseminate these statements widely." Hassan's motion was seconded, and the chair called for discussion of the proposed amendment. Three speakers questioned the relevance of the United Nations statement to a resolution that focused on a specific situation in the United States. There were also questions about the content of the United Nations statement. It was not possible to display the statement on the screen in the meeting room, so Ferguson read it to the assembly: "Higher-education teaching personnel, like all other groups and individuals, should enjoy those internationally recognized civil, political, social and cultural rights applicable to all citizens. Therefore, all higher-education teaching personnel should enjoy freedom of thought, conscience, religion, expression, assembly and association as well as the right to liberty and security of the person and liberty of movement. They should not be hindered or impeded in exercising their civil rights as citizens, including the right to contribute to social change through freely expressing their opinion of state policies and of policies affecting higher education." She said that what she had read was part of a section of a longer document. The next speaker noted that the document in question was titled "Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel" and that the text read out was only a small portion of a much longer document. Monique Balbuena made a motion to close debate; the chair called for a vote on the motion, which was not debatable and required a two-thirds vote for passage. The assembly closed debate on the motion to amend the *resolved* clause by a vote of 132 yes (94%) and 9 no (6%). Responding to two questions from the floor, the chair said that the assembly did not have the document referred to in the amendment and that the amendment referred to the whole document, not just the portion that was read to the assembly. The chair then asked the assembly to vote on the pending motion to amend the *resolved* clause of Emergency Resolution 2017-4; the assembly rejected the amendment by a vote of 27 yes and 111 no.

When the chair asked for further discussion of the resolution, Brooke Opel made a motion to amend the second *whereas* clause by inserting "color, age" after "ethnicity." This motion was seconded. Opel explained that color was distinct from such categories as race, ethnicity, and national origin and that the reference to age was needed to cover all bases. The chair called for discussion of the amendment. Since there was no discussion, the chair asked the assembly to vote. The assembly adopted the amendment by a vote of 121 yes and 11 no. The chair asked for further discussion of the resolution. While stating their support for the resolution, several speakers criticized the resolution process itself as inadequate to address situations (e.g., the politicized delegitimization of research) where a stronger intervention was needed. In the current instance, it produced only a tactical measure instead of a substantive statement that addressed all the national and international aspects of the situation that are relevant to the MLA. Bérubé defended the resolution as the best that could be achieved within the limits of the resolution process but called for the creation of new processes to broaden the types of expression available to the association.

Domnica Radulescu then made a motion to amend the third *whereas* clause by inserting after "MLA" the phrase "based on statements made during the 2016 presidential election" and replacing "Trump Administration threatens to violate" with "new administration poses a potential threat to." The chair opened the floor for discussion of the proposed amendment. After brief discussion, Skolnik raised a point of order regarding the presence of a quorum. The chair reminded the assembly that 83 members were necessary for a quorum and ordered a count of the house. Skolnik then asked to withdraw his point of order, since he did not wish to delay the proceedings. Without objection, the point of order was withdrawn. Balbuena then made a motion to close debate on the amendment. Seeing no one at the microphones, the chair

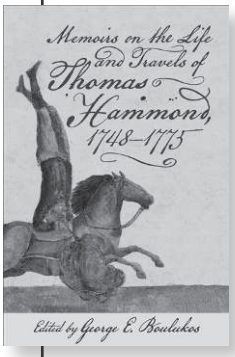
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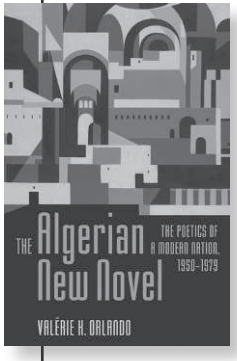
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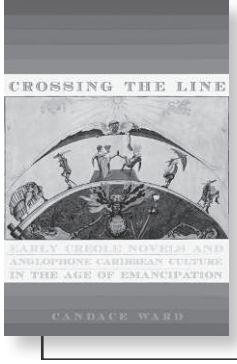
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declared that debate was closed and asked the assembly to vote on the proposed amendment. The assembly rejected it by a vote of 52 yes and 62 no. When discussion of the resolution resumed, Donald Larsson made a motion to amend the third *whereas* clause by replacing "that the Trump Administration threatens to violate" with "is aware of current and imminent political threats to." This motion to amend was seconded, and Larsson explained that his aim was to broaden the resolution to address attacks on core principles that are taking place at all levels of government. Since there was no discussion of the proposed amendment, the chair asked the assembly to vote on it. The assembly rejected the amendment by a vote of 45 yes and 67 no. Balbuena made a motion to close debate on the resolution. The chair asked if there were any objections to voting immediately on the resolution. There were no objections, so the chair asked the assembly to vote on the twice-amended resolution. The assembly approved it by a vote of 104 yes and 8 no. The text of the resolution approved by the assembly read as follows:

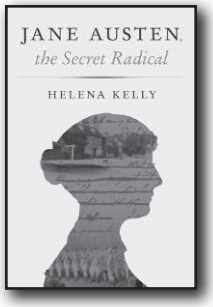
> WHEREAS, the Modern Language Association upholds the ideal of free and unfettered scholarly exchange, including the right of scholars to travel across international borders;
>
> WHEREAS, the MLA opposes discrimination—among faculty, staff, and students—on the basis of race, gender, class, ethnicity, color, age, sexual orientation, disability, religion, political belief, or national origin; and
>
> WHEREAS, the MLA is aware that the Trump Administration threatens to violate these core principles of democracy and academic freedom,
>
> BE IT RESOLVED that the MLA strongly endorses the statement of the American Association of University Professors, "Higher Education After the 2016 Election," and urges members to disseminate it widely.

8. Rachel Ihara made a motion to reconsider the vote on the automatic 2.5% annual dues increase (see item 5, above). She said that she had voted with the prevailing side without considering the factors that might have necessitated the proposed annual increase. The motion to reconsider was seconded, and the chair called for discussion of whether to reconsider the previous vote. Since there was no discussion, the chair asked the assembly to vote on the motion to reconsider; it was approved by a vote of 67 yes and 32 no. The chair therefore opened the floor for further discussion of the motion calling for an automatic annual dues increase of 2.5% for every membership category, subject to confirmation by the assembly each year. Rosemary Feal explained that the proposed dues increase was needed to fund the new projects that the association was undertaking, including Connected Academics. She added that the last dues increase had gone into effect for the 2015 membership year, that the MLA's membership fees were lower than those of comparable associations, and that the percentage of overall revenue coming from membership dues was also lower for the MLA than for other associations. Several members of the Executive Council spoke in support of the motion. They noted that the council had given very careful consideration to the proposed dues increase, that it was important to provide support for projects aimed at strengthening member services and public outreach, and that the progressivity of the new dues-category structure ensured that the most vulnerable members would see only small dues increases, if any at all. Another supporter of the motion agreed that the progressive scale provided protection for members in the lower dues categories and added that it was important to enable the MLA to continue to serve its members. A speaker who opposed the motion said that the dues increase would be a financial hardship for many. Discussion came to an end, and the chair asked the assembly to vote on the motion calling for an automatic annual dues increase of 2.5% for every membership category, subject to confirmation each year by the Delegate Assembly. The assembly approved the motion by a vote of 86 yes and 10 no.

9. The assembly received a report from the Program Committee on the committee's proposals for new and revised convention session formats, which the committee had developed pursuant to the association's strategic plan. The Executive Council reviewed the committee's proposals in October 2016 and forwarded them to the assembly for comment. The report covered the following session formats: working groups, poster sessions, roundtables, and workshops. Working groups will address specialized topics over several sessions during a single convention. They will replace the three-year seminars that were proposed as part of the reorganization of divisions and discussion groups into forums. MLA members, not forums or other entities, will be able to organize working groups. The steps involved include a call for participation, selection of a group of eight to twelve participants, and submission of a proposal to the Program Committee. Poster sessions will accommodate large-scale presentations of projects that may or may not be digital. They are intended to supplement electronic roundtables, which function as small-scale digital poster sessions. Individual members may submit proposals to the Program Committee for posters or project demonstrations highlighting work that may be pedagogical, institutional, or research-oriented; presenters will be available during the poster session to discuss the projects with attendees. The committee proposed to revise the current roundtable format, which organizers normally use to gather many short formal presentations, to emphasize a new focus on open discussions of broad scholarly or professional questions and on sustained engagement between panelists and attendees. Finally, the committee proposed to expand the current workshop format, which has provided convention attendees at various career stages with opportunities for career development, by means of two new scheduling options that will enable more attendees to participate: holding

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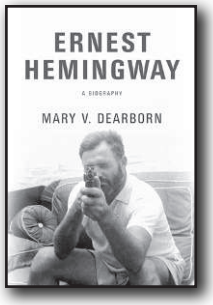
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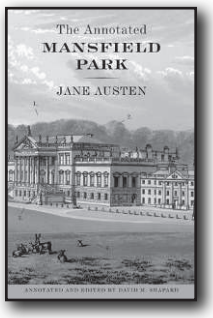
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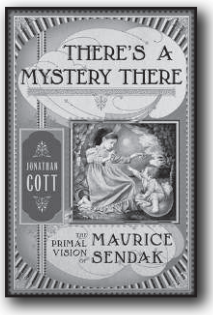
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workshops during more convention time slots and offering particular workshops twice during the convention.

The chair recognized Kathleen Fitzpatrick, associate executive director and director of scholarly communication, who presented the report to the assembly and invited comments. The chair opened the floor for discussion; no one came forward. Since the assembly did not identify any problems or recommend any changes, the new and revised session formats will be implemented for the 2018 MLA Annual Convention.

10. The assembly received the report of the executive director, the Finance Committee report, and annual reports 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, Committee on Disability Issues in the Profession, Committee on Community Colleges, Committee on the Status of Graduate Students in the Profession, and Committee on Contingent Labor in the Profession. The chair recognized Lenora Hanson of the Executive Council and the DAOC, who presented the reports from the association's committees. She encouraged delegates to read the reports and to send any questions to the MLA office. The chair asked if there were comments on the reports; there were none. The chair then recognized Rosemary Feal to present the executive director's report and the Finance Committee report. Feal called attention to the information in the second report about the projected budget deficits for the 2015–16 and 2016–17 fiscal years, but she noted that the association's cash reserve was strong and that, beginning in 2017–18, the operating budget would receive annual support from the MLA endowment. She added that the association faced the same challenges as the wider profession (e.g., poor job market, declining library acquisitions and book sales), challenges that the Executive Council was already addressing, and that the new executive director would need to consider ways to enhance revenue streams going forward. She then invited questions about the reports; no one came forward.

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

12. The chair called for announcements; there were none.

13. The chair declared the 2017 meeting of the Delegate Assembly adjourned sine die at 3:57 p.m.

Delegates in attendance:

Forum Delegates: Fabian R. Alfie, Palmar Maria Alvarez-Blanco, Sigrid Anderson Cordell, Elizabeth Anker, Eric Aronoff, Ian Balfour, Mary McAleer Balkun, John C. Brereton, Natalia Brizuela, Kristina Bross, James J. Brown, Jr., Pamela Brown, Johannes Burgers, Zahid R. Chaudhary, T. Craig Christy, Samuel Cohen, Ann Baynes Coiro, Rhonda Collier, Mary Jean Corbett, Stef Craps, Carol DeBoer-Langworthy, Matthew V. Desing, Lorenzo Fabbri, Catherine Fung, Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, Grant Glass, Martin Joel Gliserman, Carolina Gonzalez, Sandor Goodhart, Nathan Gorelick, Yogita Goyal, Omaar Hena, Peter James Hitchcock, Patrick Colm Hogan, Benjamin Kahan, Rajender Kaur, Thomas Koenigs, Lee Konstantinou, Kir A. Kuiken, Jessie M. Labov, Carmen Lamas, Michael LeMahieu, Alex Lubin, Susan H. Lurie, Ellen MacKay, Laurence Mall, Katherine S. Maynard, Alberto Moreiras, Laura Murphy, Jane Mushabac, Christopher John Newfield, Laura O'Connor, Sharon O'Dair, Judy Olson, Daniel E. O'Sullivan, Thomas Augustine Prendergast, Susanne Rinner, Cristian Roa, Monique Rodrigues Balbuena, Richard T. Rodríguez, Kristin C. Ross, Francesca Royster, Seth Rudy, Jeffrey Sacks, Eve Salisbury, Maurice A. Samuels, Miléna Santoro, Jonathan S. Skolnik, Alexandra Socarides, Jane F. Thrailkill, Sylvia Tomasch, Gabriel Trop, Per Urlaub, Felipe Valencia, Priya Wadhera, Rachel A. Walsh, Ariel Watson, Johanna Watzinger-Tharp, Sarah G. Wenzel, Jennifer Wicke, Adrienne Williams Boyarin, Sebastian Wogenstein, Elizabeth R. Wright, Duncan McEachern Yoon, Ming-Bao Yue.

Special-Interest Delegates: Kadji Amin, Anastassiya Andrianova, Karyn Marie Ball, Sukanya Banerjee, Olivia Banner, Karen Elizabeth Bishop, Lauren M. Bowen, Frank Cha, Anne Cheng, Erin Cowling, Ivonne del Valle, Hsiu-Chuang Deppman, Héctor Dominguez, Sébastien Dubreil, Leigh Gilmore, Richard Hardack, Salah D. Hassan, Ghenwa Hayek, Rachel Ihara, Maryse Jayasuriya, Rebecca Lorimer Leonard, Elizabeth Mathews Losh, Paul Manfredi, Suzanne Matson, Charlotte Pressler, Teresa Marie Purvis, Janice A. Radway, Ignacio F. Rodeño Iturriaga, Stephen Sheehi, Karen Shimakawa, Barbara Spackman, Rebecca Jane Stanton, Megan L. Sweeney, Joyce Lynn Tolliver, Amanda L. Watson, Susan Weeber, Timothy F. Weiss, Belinda Wheeler, Patrick Williams, Veli N. Yashin.

Regional Delegates: Carlos Abreu Mendoza, Lisa Berglund, Russell A. Berman, Katia C. Bezerra, Mariana Bolivar Rubin, Michelle J. Brazier, Stephen Matthew Brockmann, Sarah Carpenter, Matthew Cheney, Sarah E. Chinn, Olivia Jones Choplin, Maria Chouza-Calo, Necia N. Chronister, Shalyn Claggett, Lara Langer Cohen, Susan Cook, Melinda Cro, Sean Dempsey, Kit Dobson, Stacey Lee Donohue, Erica Edwards, Caroline Egan, Jonathan Elmer, Christopher Eng, Audrey A. Fisch, Gregory Foran, Marc Fortin, Sima N. Godfrey, Jürgen E. Grandt, Nathan Grant, Brian Gutierrez, Todd Herzog, Caroline Kyungah Hong, Kasongo Kapanga, David Kim, Corey Lamont, Maria F. Lander, Donald F. Larsson, Jill LeRoy-Frazier, Anna Lillios, David C. Lloyd, Charles Waite Mahoney, Sharina Maillo Pozo, Kyle McAuley, John McGowan, Seth Michelson, Feisal G. Mohamed, Alex Mueller, Nasser Mufti, Susan Yukie

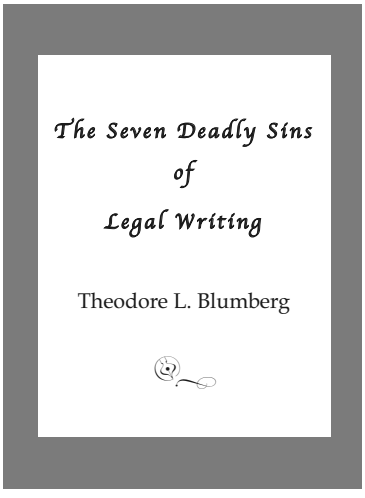
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Delegates Representing Regional MLAs: Ezra Cappell, Christopher Kendrick.

Officers and Members of the Executive Council: Kwame Anthony Appiah, Emily Apter, Angelika Bammer, Brian Croxall, Gaurav G. Desai, Anne Ruggles Gere, Donald E. Hall, Lenora Hanson, Paula M. Krebs, David Palumbo-Liu, David Tse-chien Pan, Vicky Unruh.

Members of the Delegate Assembly Organizing Committee: Cheryl Narumi Naruse, Margaret A. Noodin, Susan Solomon, Shaden M. Tageldin, Heather Willis Allen.

Parliamentarian: Jeanette N. Williams.

Parliamentarian Designate: Daniel E. Seabold.

Clerk: Rosemary G. Feal.

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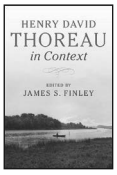
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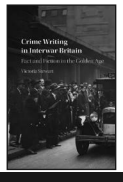
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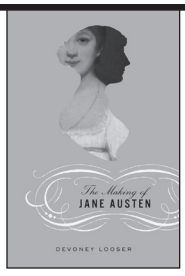
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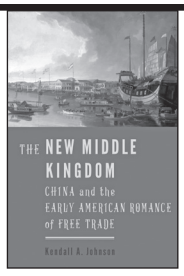
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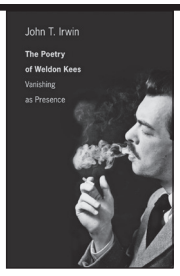
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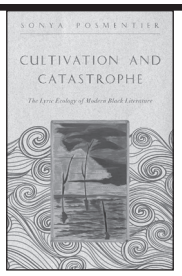
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