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## **PETER BOXALL TO RECEIVE MLA'S JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL PRIZE FOR *THE PROSTHETIC IMAGINATION***

New York, NY – 6 December 2021 – The Modern Language Association of America today announced it is awarding its fifty-second annual James Russell Lowell Prize to Peter Boxall, professor of English at the University of Sussex, for his book *The Prosthetic Imagination: A History of the Novel as Artificial Life*, published by Cambridge University Press. The prize is awarded annually for an outstanding book—a literary or linguistic study, a critical edition of an important work, or a critical biography—written by a member of the association.

The James Russell Lowell Prize is one of eighteen awards that will be presented on 8 January 2022, during the association's annual convention, to be held in Washington, DC. The selection committee members were Susan Bernstein (Brown Univ.); Ivonne del Valle (Univ. of California, Berkeley); Jeremy A. Lopez (Univ. of Toronto); John K. Noyes (Univ. of Toronto); Nicholas D. Paige (Univ. of California, Berkeley), chair; Katharina Natalia Piechocki (Univ. of British Columbia); and Cherene Monique Sherrard-Johnson (Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison). The committee's citation for the winning book reads:

*In *The Prosthetic Imagination: A History of the Novel as Artificial Life*, Peter Boxall writes a new history of the novel, tracing the development of the form in parallel to the development of the technologies that have reshaped “the way we understand the relation between thought and thing, shifting the balance between the mimetic and the prosthetic.” As Boxall moves from More to Cervantes; Behn and Defoe to Austen and Eliot; Melville, Proust, and Joyce to DeLillo, Coetzee, and Atwood, he demonstrates that within the novel's power to picture the world—to represent consciousness—resides a power to remake the world—to envision new forms of consciousness, new forms of interface between self and world. Boxall offers both an admonitory and a hopeful view of literature's ability to help us “think our way into the unpictured world to come.” *The Prosthetic Imagination* is equally impressive in its extraordinary breadth of reference and its finely wrought close readings.*

The Modern Language Association of America and its over 23,000 members in 100 countries work to strengthen the study and teaching of languages and literature. Founded in 1883, the MLA provides opportunities for its members to share their scholarly findings and teaching experiences with colleagues and to discuss trends in the academy. The MLA sustains one of the finest publication programs in the humanities, producing a variety of publications for language and literature professionals and for the general public. The association publishes the *MLA International Bibliography*, the only comprehensive bibliography in language and literature, available online. The MLA Annual Convention features meetings on a wide variety of subjects. More information on MLA programs is available at [www.mla.org](http://www.mla.org).

First presented in 1969, the James Russell Lowell Prize is awarded under the auspices of the MLA's Committee on Honors and Awards. Other awards sponsored by the committee are the William Riley Parker Prize; the MLA Prize for a First Book; the Howard R. Marraro Prize; the Kenneth W. Mildener Prize; the Mina P. Shaughnessy Prize; the MLA Prize for Independent Scholars; the Katherine Singer Kovacs Prize; the Morton N. Cohen Award; the MLA Prizes for a Scholarly Edition and for Collaborative, Bibliographical, or Archival Scholarship; the Lois Roth Award; the William Sanders Scarborough Prize; the Fenia and Yaakov Leviant Memorial Prize in Yiddish Studies; the MLA Prize in United States Latina and Latino and Chicana and Chicano Literary and Cultural Studies; the MLA Prize for Studies in Native American Literatures, Cultures, and Languages; the Matei Calinescu Prize; the MLA Prize for an Edited Collection; the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prizes for Comparative Literary Studies, for French and Francophone Studies, for Italian Studies, for Studies in Germanic Languages and Literatures, for Studies in Slavic Languages and Literatures, for a Translation of a Literary Work, and for a Translation of a Scholarly Study of Literature; and the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Publication Award for a Manuscript in Italian Literary Studies. A complete list of current and previous winners can be found on the [MLA website](#).

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