



Contact: Paula M. Krebs
646 576-5102, awards@mla.org

**MLA AWARDS WILLIAM RILEY PARKER PRIZE FOR ARTICLE IN *PMLA* TO
ROBIN BERNSTEIN AND TO WILLIAM STROEBEL; THEODORE MARTIN
RECEIVES HONORABLE MENTION**

New York, NY – 6 December 2021 – The Modern Language Association of America today announced the cowinners of its fifty-eighth annual William Riley Parker Prize for an outstanding article published in *PMLA*, the association’s journal of literary scholarship. The authors of this year’s winning essays are Robin Bernstein, Dillon Professor of American History and professor of African and African American studies and of studies of women, gender, and sexuality at Harvard University, and William Stroebel, assistant professor of modern Greek and comparative literature at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Bernstein’s article “‘You Do It!’: Going-to-Bed Books and the Scripts of Children’s Literature” appeared in the October 2020 issue of *PMLA*. Stroebel’s article “Longhand Lines of Flight: Cataloging Displacement in a Karamanli Refugee’s Commonplace Book” appeared in the March 2021 issue of *PMLA*. Theodore Martin, associate professor of English at the University of California, Irvine, is receiving an honorable mention for “War-on-Crime Fiction,” which appeared in the March 2021 issue of *PMLA*.

The William Riley Parker Prize is one of eighteen awards that will be presented on 8 January 2021, during the association’s annual convention, to be held in Washington, DC. The members of the selection committee were Carrie Hyde (Univ. of California, Los Angeles); Suzanne Parker Keen (Hamilton Coll.); Robert St. Clair (Dartmouth Coll.); and John H. Smith (Univ. of California, Irvine), chair. The committee’s citation for Bernstein’s article reads:

With “‘You Do It!’: Going-to-Bed Books and the Scripts of Children’s Literature,” Robin Bernstein offers a masterful account of what she identifies as a distinct subgenre of children’s literature. Her discussion of *Goodnight Moon*, that most iconic of nighttime stories, opens up in an almost disarming way and becomes an engaging, riveting, and searching exploration of the socioanthropological status of the child-parent relationship in late capitalism. Instead of offering a top-down imperative making children go to sleep, these bedtime stories, Bernstein argues, enact a (sometimes humorous) scene of negotiation in which the parent does not have the upper hand. Providing an exemplary demonstration of the narrative dynamics of multiple audiences, Bernstein deftly draws on performance studies to present a compelling functional—rather than formal or content-based—theorization of genre.

The committee’s citation for Stroebel’s article reads:

With “Longhand Lines of Flight: Cataloging Displacement in a Karamanli Refugee’s Commonplace Book,” William Stroebel offers a dazzling display of erudition and scholarship as he brings to light a refugee poem by a member of the Karamanli, a Greek Orthodox Christian community displaced from Turkey from 1923 to 1925. This gripping study is about—and performs—the crossing of borders and languages. The ballad

Stroebel recovers is composed in Turkish, written in the Greek alphabet, and exists only in handwritten form in commonplace books. Stroebel gives this displaced poem—which he has transcribed and translated—and culture a voice but also uses this particular case study of a so-called minor literature to raise larger issues for the study of world literature.

The committee's citation for Martin's article reads:

Theodore Martin's "War-on-Crime Fiction" is a model for how a specific literary form, what Martin terms the war-on-crime novel, opens up a window on the social, economic, and political developments of the second half of the twentieth century. His essay subtly examines the way this subgenre contributed to the racialization of criminality in the 1960s and 1970s. By theorizing new sets of characters—the beat cop, the revolutionary, and the vigilante—Martin deftly interweaves crucial moments in the historical transformation of the United States into a carceral state together with literary representations that abetted and challenged the transformation. Martin shows how this detective genre becomes "a contested literary site for managing competing cultural responses to a regime of dispossession."

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.

The MLA's oldest award, the prize for an outstanding article in *PMLA* was first presented in 1964. In 1968 the prize was named in memory of a distinguished former editor of the journal and executive secretary of the association, William Riley Parker.

The William Riley Parker Prize is awarded under the auspices of the MLA's Committee on Honors and Awards. Other awards sponsored by the committee are the James Russell Lowell 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](#).

William Riley Parker (1906–68) was executive secretary of the MLA and editor of *PMLA* from 1947 to 1956. In 1959 he was elected to serve as the MLA's sixty-ninth president. Internationally known as the founder and director (1952–56) of the MLA's Foreign Language Program and author of major studies and essays about foreign language education in the United States, Parker was a scholar of English literature and author of major books and articles on Milton and other

British poets and writers. At the time of his death, he was distinguished professor and chair of the Department of English at Indiana University, Bloomington.