DAVID ROSEN AND AARON SANTESSO TO RECEIVE MLA’S JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL PRIZE FOR THE WATCHMAN IN PIECES: SURVEILLANCE, LITERATURE, AND LIBERAL PERSONHOOD; MICHAEL NORTH TO RECEIVE HONORABLE MENTION FOR NOVELTY: A HISTORY OF THE NEW

New York, NY – 3 December 2014 – The Modern Language Association of America today announced it is awarding its forty-fifth annual James Russell Lowell Prize to David Rosen, of Trinity College, and Aaron Santesso, of the Georgia Institute of Technology, for *The Watchman in Pieces: Surveillance, Literature, and Liberal Personhood*, published by Yale University Press. Michael North, of the University of California, Los Angeles, has received honorable mention for *Novelty: A History of the New*, published by the University of Chicago 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 sixteen awards that will be presented on 10 January 2015, during the association’s annual convention, to be held in Vancouver. The selection committee members were Bruce Thomas Boehrer (Florida State Univ.); Fred L. Gardaphe (Queens Coll., CUNY); Elisabeth Akhimoff Ladenson (Columbia Univ.), chair; Mariselle Meléndez (Univ. of Illinois, Urbana); and Herbert F. Tucker (Univ. of Virginia). The committee’s citation for the winning book reads:

*The Watchman in Pieces* is outstanding in both scope and execution—a risk-taking historical overview of signal developments in the coevolution of the surveillant state and the self-monitoring liberal subject from the sixteenth century into the present. To the manifest timeliness of their topic David Rosen and Aaron Santesso bring the seasoning perspective of history and the subtilizing perspective of theory, including a firm resistance to the sovereignty of Foucauldian paradigms. Closely watched texts come alive in new ways; even more impressive are the juxtapositions that carry the argument forward. The authors sustain a deft expository verve that conveys an ambitious template for reading and rereading in a wide variety of genres.

David Rosen is a professor of English literature at Trinity College. He received his BA from Columbia University and his MA and PhD from Yale University. He is the author of *Power, Plain English, and the Rise of Modern Poetry*, which received the Warren-Brooks Award for Outstanding Literary Criticism. His articles have appeared in journals such as *Modern Language Quarterly, Raritan, Dickens Studies Annual*, and the *New German Review*.

Aaron Santesso is a professor in the School of Literature, Media, and Culture at Georgia Institute of Technology. He received his BA from the University of British Columbia and his MA and PhD from Queen’s University. Santesso is the author of *A Careful Longing: The Poetics and
Problems of Nostalgia and the coeditor of three collections, including *Comparative Excellence: New Essays on Shakespeare and Johnson*. His articles have appeared in journals such as *Eighteenth-Century Studies, ELH: English Literary History, Modern Philology, Modern Fiction Studies,* and *Science Fiction Studies*.

Santesso and Rosen’s collaborative work has been published in the collection *Swift’s Travels: Eighteenth-Century Satire and Its Legacy* and the journals *ELH: English Literary History* and *Law and Literature*. Their work has also appeared in *Slate* and elsewhere online. Their article entitled “Surveillance and Education” is forthcoming in the *Birkbeck Law Review*.

The committee’s citation for the honorable mention reads:

*Novelty: A History of the New* is remarkable for its intellectual sweep, taking on the philosophical problem of the new from Parmenides to postmodernism. In the process, Michael North adduces nimble readings of a diversity of textual materials. It’s not easy to say something new about this topic in a field so freighted with both received ideas and eminent discussions about what we variously call originality, creativity, and innovation. The study keeps in steady view the self-contradiction that haunts any effort to extract something from nothing, and it shows in what complex ways different thinkers have sought to resolve it. *Novelty* succeeds both because North’s theoretical ingenuity frees him to restate, in lucid, lively prose, ideas that he knows we know aren’t novel and because he is unafraid to follow his quarry into unlikely places and emerge with proof of their pertinence.

Michael North is a professor of English at the University of California, Los Angeles. He received his BA from Stanford University and his MA and PhD from the University of Connecticut. He is the author of eight books, including *The Political Aesthetic of Yeats, Eliot, and Pound; The Dialect of Modernism: Race, Language, and Twentieth-Century Literature*; and *Camera Works: Photography and the Twentieth-Century Word*, cowinner of the Modernist Studies Association Book Prize. He is the editor of *The Waste Land: A Norton Critical Edition*, and his articles have appeared in journals such as *PMLA, Modernism/Modernity,* and *Modern Language Quarterly*. North was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2012. *Novelty: A History of the New* is also the recipient of the Robert Motherwell Book Award.

The Modern Language Association of America and its 30,000 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; this year’s convention in Vancouver is expected to draw 8,000 attendees. More information on MLA programs is available at www.mla.org.

First presented in 1969, the James Russell Lowell Prize is awarded under the auspices of the MLA’s Committee on Honors and Awards. Recent winners of the prize have been Diana Fuss, Paula R. Backscheider, W. J. T. Mitchell, Martin Puchner, Laura Marcus, Isobel Armstrong, Laura Dassow Walls, Phillip H. Round, Simon Gikandi, Stephen Greenblatt, and Sianne Ngai. In recent years honorable mention has been awarded to Alan Liu, Wai Chee Dimock, Cynthia Wall, Joseph Litvak, Andrew F. Jones, and Leah Price.

Other awards sponsored by the committee are the William Riley Parker Prize; the MLA Prize for a First Book; the Howard R. Marraro Prize; the Kenneth W. Mildenberger Prize; the Mina P.
Shaughnessy Prize; the MLA Prize for Independent Scholars; the Katherine Singer Kovacs Prize; the Morton N. Cohen Award; the MLA Prizes for a Scholarly Edition and for a Bibliography, Archive, or Digital Project; 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 Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prizes for Comparative Literary Studies, for French and Francophone Studies, for Italian Studies, for Studies in Germanic Languages and Literatures, for Studies in Slavic Languages and Literatures, for a Translation of a Literary Work, and for a Translation of a Scholarly Study of Literature; and the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Publication Award for a Manuscript in Italian Literary Studies.

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