

**MLA AWARDS WILLIAM RILEY PARKER PRIZE FOR ARTICLE IN *PMLA* TO
TORAL JATIN GAJARAWALA**

New York, NY – 5 December 2011– The Modern Language Association of America today announced the winner of its forty-eighth annual William Riley Parker Prize for an outstanding article published in *PMLA*, the association’s journal of literary scholarship. The author of this year’s winning essay is Toral Jatin Gajjarawala, of New York University. Her article, “Some Time between Revisionist and Revolutionary: Unreading History in Dalit Literature,” appeared in the May 2011 issue of *PMLA*.

The William Riley Parker Prize is one of eighteen awards that will be presented on 7 January 2012, during the association’s annual convention, to be held in Seattle. The members of the selection committee were David L. Eng (Univ. of Pennsylvania); Elaine Freedgood (New York Univ.), chair; Rolf Goebel (Univ. of Alabama, Huntsville); Eleanor Kaufman (Univ. of California, Los Angeles); and Julia Reinhard Lupton (Univ. of California, Irvine). The committee’s citation for the winning article reads:

Toral Jatin Gajjarawala’s “Some Time between Revisionist and Revolutionary: Unreading History in Dalit Literature” suggests the ethnocentric poverty of historicism, even when it tries to attend to the most local details. Instead of attempting to recuperate or legitimate Dalit fictional autobiography within the terms of Western realism or the European bildungsroman tradition, this essay advises us to unread history and seek the terms of Dalit subjectivity and historical consciousness instead. Unreading (or abandoning our

own terms in search of those the text may offer) works very specifically with Dalit texts in this essay but has great theoretical implications for other large and small literatures as well. This is a major contribution to the historicist and postcolonial study of narrative.

Toral Jatin Gajarawala is an assistant professor of English and comparative literature at New York University. She received her PhD from the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of California, Berkeley. Her articles have appeared in journals such as *Comparative Literature Studies* and *Ellipsis*. Her first book, *Untouchable Fictions: Literary Realism and the Crisis of Caste*, is forthcoming with Fordham University Press. Her research focuses on the “small” side of postcolonial studies: the local, the subaltern, the vernacular. She is currently at work on a project that considers global paradigms of indigeneity in literary movements.

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 Seattle is expected to draw 8,000 attendees. 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. Recent winners have been Rita Felski, Ian Baucom, Geoffrey Sanborn, Anne Mallory, Rolf J. Goebel, Bill Brown, Lorraine Piroux, Pauline Yu, Nergis Ertürk, Enrique García Santo-Tomás, and Paul Benzon.

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. 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 Distinguished Scholarly Edition and for a Distinguished Bibliography; 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 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, for a Translation of a Scholarly Study of Literature; and the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Publication Award for a Manuscript in Italian Literary Studies.

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 in 1968 he was Distinguished Professor and chair of the Department of English at Indiana University, Bloomington.