



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

**MLA'S SCAGLIONE PRIZE FOR COMPARATIVE LITERARY STUDIES AWARDED
TO NOÉMIE NDIAYE FOR *SCRIPTS OF BLACKNESS*; MACKENZIE COOLEY AND
EDWARD TYERMAN RECEIVE HONORABLE MENTIONS**

New York, NY – 6 December 2023 – The Modern Language Association of America today announced it is awarding its thirty-first annual Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for Comparative Literary Studies to Noémie Ndiaye, associate professor of English at the University of Chicago, for her book *Scripts of Blackness: Early Modern Performance Culture and the Making of Race*, published by the University of Pennsylvania Press. Mackenzie Cooley, assistant professor of history at Hamilton College, is receiving an honorable mention for *The Perfection of Nature: Animals, Breeding, and Race in the Renaissance*, published by the University of Chicago Press. Edward Tyerman, associate professor of Slavic at the University of California, Berkeley, is receiving an honorable mention for *Internationalist Aesthetics: China and Early Soviet Culture*, published by Columbia University Press. The prize is awarded annually for an outstanding scholarly work that is written by a member of the association and that involves at least two literatures.

The prize is one of twenty-two awards that will be presented on 5 January 2024 during the association's annual convention, to be held in Philadelphia. The members of the selection committee were Lingchei Letty Chen (Washington Univ. in St. Louis); Tom McEnaney (Univ. of California, Berkeley); and Melissa E. Sanchez (Univ. of Pennsylvania), chair. The committee's citation for Ndiaye's book reads:

Noémie Ndiaye's *Scripts of Blackness: Early Modern Performance Culture and the Making of Race* works across national borders, institutional disciplines, languages, contemporary theory, and early modern cultural products to examine different forms of racialization. Demonstrating that, even within a single national tradition, a much wider set of materials is available than scholars usually explore, Ndiaye moves across a multitude of studies to consider how early modern authors racialized characters through distinct embodied performances and representations. Ndiaye debunks any naturalized or universalizing understanding of race as real, while illuminating the ongoing material effects of the concept. In considering visual and acoustic records together with textual analysis, *Scripts of Blackness* raises the bar of scholarly responsibility for all engaged in early modern studies of race—monolingual as well as comparative and transnational.

The committee's citation for Cooley's book reads:

As beautifully written as it is conceptually and theoretically ambitious, Mackenzie Cooley's *The Perfection of Nature: Animals, Breeding, and Race in the Renaissance* is a true renaissance book. This stunning work of scholarship addresses materials from multiple languages and national contexts to reveal the conceptual limitations imposed by the divisions between theoretical schools and methods, on the one hand, and modern

divisions among literature, science, political theory, philosophy, and history, on the other. Uncovering how the subject of animal breeding was not ancillary to early modern scholarship and notions of the human, *The Perfection of Nature* brings together critical race studies, animal studies, and posthumanist studies—and reaches beyond these areas through the depth and breadth of its synthesis of classical philosophy, medieval scholasticism, and early modern political theory, philosophy, and medicine and science.

The committee's citation for Tyerman's book reads:

Edward Tyerman's *Internationalist Aesthetics: China and Early Soviet Culture* provides timely insight into the long history of mutual influences of China and Russia on each other. The implications of this work for comparative literary studies cannot be overstated. *Internationalist Aesthetics* decenters Western Europe from comparative conversations on modernist art and literature to instead illuminate the understudied Sinophone and Slavic materials that helped shape modernity. Tyerman also compels us to rethink the linguistic range expected of comparativists, and with it the limitations imposed by the North American and Western European training that dominate the field. Considering aesthetics as a deliberate endeavor to forge internationalist movements, as Tyerman does here to trace the impact of Chinese culture and journalism on the early Soviet cultural imagination, can inform future research in a wide range of other contexts.

The Modern Language Association of America and its over 20,000 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 750 scholarly and professional development sessions. More information on MLA programs is available at www.mla.org.

The Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for Comparative Literary Studies, awarded under the auspices of the MLA's Committee on Honors and Awards, was presented for the first time in 1992. Other awards sponsored by the committee are the William Riley Parker Prize; 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 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, Languages, and Cultures; the Matei Calinescu Prize; the MLA Prize for an Edited Collection; the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prizes 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, for African Studies, for East Asian Studies, for Middle Eastern Studies, and for South Asian Studies; 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](#).

The Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Endowment Fund was established and donated by Aldo Scaglione to the Modern Language Association in 1987. The fund honors the memory of Scaglione's late wife, Jeanne Daman Scaglione. A Roman Catholic, Jeanne Daman was headmistress of a Jewish kindergarten in Brussels, Belgium. When arrests and deportations of Jews began in 1942, she worked with Belgian and Jewish resistance units, helping to find hiding

places for two thousand children throughout Belgium. She also helped rescue many Jewish men about to be deported as slave laborers by obtaining false papers for them. Jeanne Scaglione's life and contributions to humanity are commemorated in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC.

Aldo Scaglione, a member of the Modern Language Association from 1957 until his death in 2013, was Erich Maria Remarque Professor of Literature at New York University. A native of Turin, Italy, he received a doctorate in modern letters from the University of Turin. He taught at the University of Toulouse and at the University of Chicago. From 1952 to 1968 he taught at the University of California, Berkeley, and from 1968 to 1987 he was W. R. Kenan Professor of Italian and Comparative Literature at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. In 1987 he came to New York University as professor of Italian and then chair of the Department of Italian. Scaglione was a Fulbright Fellow and a Guggenheim Fellow, held senior fellowships from the Newberry Library and the German Academic Exchange Service, and was a visiting professor at Yale University, the City University of New York, and the Humanities Research Institute of the University of Wisconsin, Madison. In 1975 he was named Cavaliere dell'Ordine al Merito della Repubblica Italiana. Scaglione was president of the American Boccaccio Association and was a member of the MLA Executive Council from 1981 to 1984. His published books include *Nature and Love in the Late Middle Ages* (1963), *Ars Grammatica* (1970), *The Classical Theory of Composition* (1972), *The Theory of German Word Order* (1981), *The Liberal Arts and the Jesuit College System* (1986), *Knights at Court: Courtliness, Chivalry, and Courtesy from Ottonian Germany to the Italian Renaissance* (1991), and *Essays on the Arts of Discourse: Linguistics, Rhetoric, Poetics* (1998).