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**MLA'S MATEI CALINESCU PRIZE AWARDED TO LISA SIRAGANIAN FOR  
*MODERNISM AND THE MEANING OF CORPORATE PERSONS*; DANIEL VACA  
RECEIVES HONORABLE MENTION FOR *EVANGELICALS INCORPORATED***

New York, NY – 6 December 2021 – The Modern Language Association of America today announced its sixth annual Matei Calinescu Prize for a distinguished work of scholarship in twentieth- or twentieth-first-century literature and thought. The winner is Lisa Siraganian, associate professor of comparative thought and literature and J. R. Herbert Boone Chair in Humanities at Johns Hopkins University, for *Modernism and the Meaning of Corporate Persons*, published by Oxford University Press. Daniel Vaca, Robert Gale Noyes Assistant Professor of Humanities at Brown University, will receive an honorable mention for *Evangelicals Incorporated: Books and the Business of Religion in America*, published by Harvard University Press.

The Matei Calinescu Prize was established in 2016 in honor of Matei Calinescu, a Romanian poet and scholar who taught at Indiana University, Bloomington. The 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 members of the selection committee were Emily Apter (New York Univ.), chair; Darryl Dickson-Carr (Southern Methodist Univ.); Paula M. L. Moya (Stanford Univ.); Rajagopalan Radhakrishnan (Univ. of California, Irvine); and Jamie H. Trnka (Xavier Univ.). The committee's citation for the winning book reads:

At a time of reckoning with crucial issues of racial justice in their relation to the legal and ontological foundations of personhood, Lisa Siraganian's *Modernism and the Meaning of Corporate Persons* stands out as a game-changing work. Siraganian's professional grounding in case law, brilliantly brought to bear on texts of literary modernism, advances the field of law and literature and the humanities more generally. Her critical parsing of the jurisprudential contradictions arising from the concept of corporate personhood also reveals the tacit complicity of personhood with modernist notions of will, intention, and belief. Siraganian eloquently tracks how legal abstractions have been instrumental in the justification of slavery and unequal protection under the law. The consequences are major, affecting matters of free speech and political representation. The book is a stellar example of critical legal thinking in dialogue with literary theory.

The committee's citation for the honorable mention reads:

*Evangelicals Incorporated* uncovers a new archive for the history of religion in the United States: the flourishing for-profit business of evangelical publishing. From suburban Christian strip-mall bookstores to powerful New York publishing houses, evangelical booksellers frame commercial consumption as a form of religious practice. In

this sophisticated, well-researched, and compelling monograph, Daniel Vaca argues that the movement we refer to as evangelical Christianity is thoroughly enmeshed with consumer culture. For-profit Christian media companies have not corrupted some imagined Protestant purity; rather, they are essential to its expression as a religion that relies on consumer engagement to develop religious ideas and identities. As we make sense of the deep rifts and strange bedfellows of American politics, we can glean from Vaca's book an essential contribution to understanding evangelicalism in ways that test the limits of what constitutes a literary field.

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).

The prize is presented 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 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 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](#).