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**YOMAIRA C. FIGUEROA-VÁSQUEZ TO RECEIVE MLA PRIZE IN UNITED STATES  
LATINA AND LATINO AND CHICANA AND CHICANO LITERARY AND CULTURAL  
STUDIES; CATHERINE S. RAMÍREZ AND SIMÓN VENTURA TRUJILLO TO  
RECEIVE HONORABLE MENTIONS**

New York, NY – 6 December 2021 – The Modern Language Association of America today announced it is awarding its fourteenth MLA Prize in United States Latina and Latino and Chicana and Chicano Literary and Cultural Studies to Yomaira C. Figueroa-Vásquez, associate professor of global diaspora studies at Michigan State University, for her book *Decolonizing Diasporas: Radical Mappings of Afro-Atlantic Literature*, published by Northwestern University Press. Catherine S. Ramírez, professor of Latin American and Latino studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz, is receiving an honorable mention for *Assimilation: An Alternative History*, published by the University of California Press, and Simón Ventura Trujillo, assistant professor of English at New York University, is receiving an honorable mention for *Land Uprising: Native Story Power and the Insurgent Horizons of Latinx Indigeneity*, published by the University of Arizona Press.

The MLA Prize in United States Latina and Latino and Chicana and Chicano Literary and Cultural Studies 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 Ylce Irizarry (Univ. of South Florida); Lawrence M. La Fountain-Stokes (Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor), chair; and Julie Minich (Univ. of Texas, Austin). The committee's citation for Figueroa-Vásquez's book reads:

Yomaira C. Figueroa-Vásquez's *Decolonizing Diasporas: Radical Mappings of Afro-Atlantic Literature* propels Afro-Latinidad studies in a new direction by placing Equatorial Guinean and Afro-Puerto Rican, Afro-Dominican, and Afro-Cuban cultural production in extended conversation. Figueroa-Vásquez invites readers to examine the preoccupations, aesthetics, and intersections of what she calls peripheralized Afro-Atlantic subjects—those who are situated at the extremes of marginality. *Decolonizing Diasporas* illuminates history, language, and geography in much-needed remapping of the Afro-Atlantic's diasporic and exile poetics. The narratives, music, and photography Figueroa-Vásquez engages help expose the historic and continuing structures of antiblackness, productively troubling static expressions of ethnic belonging.

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

Catherine S. Ramírez's *Assimilation: An Alternative History* is a masterful cultural and intellectual history of assimilation as it pertains to marginalized racial and ethnic groups in the United States, offering a forceful critique of social science models that elide racist exclusion. The book is expansive in scope, focusing on literary and cultural representations of Indigenous peoples, African Americans, Puerto Ricans, Japanese Americans, and undocumented immigrants through studies of racialization within the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, the relationship and tensions between Blacks and new

immigrants, portrayals of so-called model minorities and DREAMERS, and analysis of cultural productions by Undocuqueers and Oaxacalifornixs. Accessible and full of provocative ideas, *Assimilation: An Alternative History* illustrates how sociological approaches can enhance our understanding of cultural forms and complicate “the paradox of assimilation,” placing Latinx studies in productive dialogue with broader ethnic studies.

The committee’s citation for Trujillo’s book reads:

*In Land Uprising: Native Story Power and the Insurgent Horizons of Latinx Indigeneity*, Simón Ventura Trujillo both broadens the parameters and reassesses the foundations of Latinx literary and cultural studies. Placing Latinx and Indigenous writers, activists, and scholars into conversation, he critically foregrounds the significance of Latinx indigeneity—a term he carefully distinguishes from *Indigenous peoples* and from the appropriative *indigenismos*—in ongoing struggles for land and self-determination. *Land Uprising* displays impressive breadth and nuance, offers a crucial intervention into the conversation between Latinx and Indigenous studies, and engages seriously with gender, foregrounding the voices and perspectives of feminist scholars in reexamining historical events often remembered through masculine heroes and masculinist ideologies.

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 MLA Prize in United States Latina and Latino and Chicana and Chicano Literary and Cultural Studies was established in 2002 and is awarded under the auspices of the 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 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, 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](#).