



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

**MLA PRIZE FOR INDEPENDENT SCHOLARS AWARDED TO KEVIN A. MORRISON
FOR *VICTORIAN LIBERALISM AND MATERIAL CULTURE*; ABIGAIL G. H.
MANZELLA TO RECEIVE HONORABLE MENTION FOR *MIGRATING FICTIONS***

New York, NY – 14 December 2020 – The Modern Language Association of America today announced the winner of its thirty-third Modern Language Association Prize for Independent Scholars. Receiving the award is Kevin A. Morrison, of Henan University, China, for his book *Victorian Liberalism and Material Culture: Synergies of Thought and Place*, published by Edinburgh University Press. Abigail G. H. Manzella, of Columbia, Missouri, is receiving an honorable mention for her book *Migrating Fictions: Gender, Race, and Citizenship in U.S. Internal Displacements*. The prize honors distinguished published research in the fields of modern languages and literatures, including English, and recognizes achievements and contributions of independent scholars.

The MLA Prize for Independent Scholars is one of eighteen awards that will be presented on 9 January 2021, during the association's annual convention, to be held online. The members of the selection committee, appointed by the association's Committee on Honors and Awards, were Alicia Arrizón (Univ. of California, Riverside), chair; Samantha Pinto (Georgetown Univ.); Aaron Santesso (Georgia Inst. of Tech.); and Nancy Warren (Texas A&M Univ., College Station). The citation for Morrison's book reads:

Victorian Liberalism and Material Culture is a groundbreaking interdisciplinary book, linking Victorian literature and culture and the history of architecture and design and based on extensive research in British and American archives. Kevin A. Morrison innovatively intersects material culture and political theory in understanding nineteenth-century liberalism. Within historical accounts of liberalism, he seeks to reposition "the human body as corporeal being, rather than merely an abstraction or representation, and bodily practices as an aspect of the quotidian production of knowledge." Examining the work of John Stuart Mill, Matthew Arnold, John Morley, and Robert Browning, Morrison elucidates how all similarly approached the interconnection of individual freedom and agency in their work and how their engagements with liberalism were a reflection of the physical spaces in which they wrote.

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

Abigail G. H. Manzella's *Migrating Fictions: Gender, Race, and Citizenship in U.S. Internal Displacements* analyzes the intersections of race, gender, and citizenship in the context of displacement in the United States during the Great Migration, the Dust Bowl, the Japanese American internment, and the migrant labor of the Southwest. By examining these historical events in the works of Zora Neale Hurston, Sanora Babb, Julie Otsuka, Helena Maria Viramontes, and Jesmyn Ward, Manzella's literary analysis demonstrates

that representation can reveal, create, and counter tactics of displacement against the disempowered. Manzella reads their works as essential in the retelling of narratives that display a history of what she calls spatial colonization. In response to this, her theorization of a third space represents an alternative location for social justice that acknowledges the uncertainties of internally displaced subjectivities.

The Modern Language Association of America and its 24,000 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.

The MLA Prize for Independent Scholars, awarded under the auspices of the MLA's Committee on Honors and Awards, was first presented in 1983. 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. Mildenberger Prize; the Mina P. Shaughnessy Prize; 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 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, 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](#).