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**MLA AWARDS ALDO AND JEANNE SCAGLIONE PRIZE FOR STUDIES IN
GERMANIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES TO ALYS X. GEORGE FOR *THE
NAKED TRUTH* AND TO SAMUEL J. SPINNER FOR *JEWISH PRIMITIVISM*; KIRA
THURMAN TO RECEIVE HONORABLE MENTION**

New York, NY – 7 December 2022 – The Modern Language Association of America today announced it is awarding its fifteenth Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for Studies in Germanic Languages and Literatures to Alys X. George, acting assistant professor of German studies at Stanford University, for her book *The Naked Truth: Viennese Modernism and the Body*, published by the University of Chicago Press, and to Samuel J. Spinner, assistant professor of Hebrew and Yiddish at Johns Hopkins University, for *Jewish Primitivism*, published by Stanford University Press. Kira Thurman, associate professor of history, German studies, and musicology at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, will receive an honorable mention for her book *Singing Like Germans: Black Musicians in the Land of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms*, published by Cornell University Press. The prize is awarded biennially for an outstanding scholarly work on the linguistics or literatures of the Germanic languages, including Danish, Dutch, German, Icelandic, Norwegian, Swedish, and Yiddish.

The prize is one of nineteen awards that will be presented on 6 January 2023, during the association's annual convention, to be held in San Francisco. The members of the selection committee were Bala Venkat Mani (Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison), chair; and Birgit Tautz (Bowdoin Coll.). The committee's citation for George's book reads:

The Naked Truth: Viennese Modernism and the Body offers a unique intervention in the saturated field of modernist studies. Through examinations of architecture, art, drama, and poetry, among other forms of culture, Alys X. George draws attention to the indelible mark the human body—in its gendered, classed, and sexualized manifestations—leaves on Viennese modernism. Taking on this neglected aspect of modernist studies, George presents compelling and persuasive perspectives on an urban culture around the turn of the last century. In doing so, she reveals many a naked truth about the intimate spheres that rescue, restore, and affirm the centrality of language and the interior and the invisible worlds (minds) of people. Meticulously researched and written with attention to detail, nuance, and precision, *The Naked Truth* makes the world of Viennese modernism come alive.

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

Boldly taking on a loaded and fraught category of cultural and literary analysis, Samuel J. Spinner's *Jewish Primitivism* offers an entirely new model of conducting multilingual comparative analysis. Spinner opens multiple meanings of primitivism: it formed and informed elitist and classist distinctions of the civilized and the uncivilized and found

extension in institutions, practices, ideologies of orientalism, and conceptual correlates of exoticism. Spinner also reinvigorates critical scrutiny of primitivism as a concept to tell a hitherto untold story of Jewish modernism, within and beyond the fault lines and permutations of the trilingualism of Hebrew, Yiddish, and German. He undoes and reassembles the central underpinnings of Jewish identities through language, literature, and lived culture. *Jewish Primitivism* is a model of print cultural studies that acknowledges the coexistence of the written and spoken, of print and oral, of classic and folk.

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

Kira Thurman's *Singing Like Germans: Black Musicians in the Land of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms* treats language as a set of grammar and vocabulary, as an expression and manifestation of identity, and as a collection of musical notes that ultimately form a bridge between the forcibly displaced and the marginalized. Thurman's subject, the teaching and learning of Western classical music in HBCUs, sheds light on the exchanges German (Jewish) educators and practitioners had with their African American counterparts. Thurman's concept of "hearing race" proves to be a powerful vector to transcend fossilized models of periodization and national tradition in what is considered to be the most German of the arts. Thurman exposes the difficulties in accounting for, and coming to terms with, complexities of Black diaspora and its intersecting with inherited (and reproduced) tropes of musicianship, mastery, casting, and performance.

The Modern Language Association of America and its 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 meetings on a wide variety of subjects. More information on MLA programs is available at www.mla.org.

The Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for Studies in Germanic Languages and Literatures was presented for the first time in 1993. 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. Miltenberger 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 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 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](http://www.mla.org).

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).