JOHN CULBERT NAMED WINNER OF MLA’S SCAGLIONE PRIZE FOR FRENCH AND FRANCOPHONE STUDIES FOR *PARALYSES: LITERATURE, TRAVEL, AND ETHNOGRAPHY IN FRENCH MODERNITY*

New York, NY – 5 December 2011 – The Modern Language Association of America today announced it is awarding its nineteenth annual Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for French and Francophone Literary Studies to John Culbert, of the University of British Columbia, for his book *Paralyses: Literature, Travel, and Ethnography in French Modernity*, published by the University of Nebraska Press. The prize is awarded annually for an outstanding scholarly work in its field—a literary or linguistic study, a critical edition of an important work, or a critical biography—written by a member of the association.

The Scaglione Prize for French and Francophone Literary Studies is one of eighteen awards that will be presented on 7 January, during the association’s annual convention, to be held in Seattle. The members of the selection committee were Elisabeth Mudimbe-Boyti (Stanford Univ.), Peter T. Starr (Univ. of Southern California), chair; and Andrea Tarnowski (Dartmouth Coll.). The committee’s citation for Culbert’s book reads:

At the heart of a modernity that we typically associate with travel and speed, John Culbert’s brilliant study *Paralyses: Literature, Travel, and Ethnography in French Modernity* finds an essential paralysis—a motionless crux or time of hesitation that inhabits travel and constitutes its ineluctable other. Through careful, consistently insightful readings of Jean Paulhan, Michel Leiris, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Roland Barthes, Rachid Boudjera, and others, Culbert astutely demonstrates how paralysis inflects a wide range of modern and postmodern experiences, from the philosopher’s joust with aporia to the specific plight of the *sans-papiers*. Readers of *Paralyses* will find their understanding of modernity—specifically French modernity—altered as a result of Culbert’s perceptive and persuasive arguments.

John Culbert is currently affiliated with the University of British Columbia, where he is a lecturer in the Department of French, Italian, and Hispanic Studies. He received his MA from Johns Hopkins University and his PhD from the University of California, Berkeley. He has previously been affiliated with the University of California, Irvine; the State University of New York, New Paltz; Scripps College; and Williams College. His articles and chapters have appeared in journals such as *October*, *Mediterranean Review*, *Formules*, *Postmodern Culture*, and *Western Humanities Review*.

The Modern Language Association of America and its 30,000 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; this year’s convention in Seattle is expected to draw 8,000 attendees. More information on MLA programs is available at www.mla.org.

The Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for French and Francophone Literary Studies, awarded under the auspices of the MLA’s Committee on Honors and Awards, was presented for the first time in 1993. Recent recipients have been Margaret Cohen and Philip Watts, Timothy Hampton, Melanie C. Hawthorne, Joan DeJean, R. Howard Bloch, Jeffrey N. Peters, Karen Sullivan, Lawrence D. Kritzman, Adelaide Russo, Willa Z. Silverman, and Maurice Samuels.

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 MLA Prize for Independent Scholars; the Katherine Singer Kovacs Prize; the Morton N. Cohen Award; the MLA Prizes for a Distinguished Scholarly Edition and for a Distinguished Bibliography; 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 Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prizes for Comparative Literary 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.

The Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Endowment Fund was established and donated by Aldo Scaglione to the MLA in 1987. The fund honors the memory of his wife, Jeanne Daman Scaglione. A Roman Catholic, Jeanne Daman taught in a Jewish kindergarten in Brussels, Belgium. When deportation of Jews began in 1942, she helped find hiding places for two thousand children. She also helped rescue many Jewish men by obtaining false papers for them. Her life and contributions to humanity are commemorated in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC.

Aldo Scaglione, a member of the MLA since 1957, is Erich Maria Remarque Professor of Literature at New York University. A native of Torino, Italy, he received a doctorate in modern letters from the University of Torino. He has taught at the University of Toulouse and 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 served as chair of the Department of Italian. He has been a Fulbright fellow and a Guggenheim fellow, has held senior fellowships from the Newberry Library and the German Academic Exchange Service, and has been 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. He has been 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* (1980); *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).