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CHRISTOPHER J. PEXA TO RECEIVE MLA PRIZE FOR STUDIES IN NATIVE AMERICAN LITERATURES, CULTURES, AND LANGUAGES FOR *TRANSLATED NATION*; KIRBY BROWN TO RECEIVE HONORABLE MENTION FOR *STOKING THE FIRE*

New York, NY – 14 December 2020 – The Modern Language Association of America today announced it is awarding its fourth MLA Prize for Studies in Native American Literatures, Cultures, and Languages to Christopher J. Pexa, assistant professor of English and American Indian studies at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, for his book *Translated Nation: Rewriting the Dakhóta Oyáte*, published by the University of Minnesota Press. Kirby Brown, associate professor of Native American literatures at the University of Oregon, is receiving an honorable mention for *Stoking the Fire: Nationhood in Cherokee Writing, 1907–1970*, published by the University of Oklahoma Press. The prize is awarded for an outstanding scholarly study of Native American literature, culture, or languages written by a member of the association.

The MLA Prize for Studies in Native American Literatures, Cultures, or Languages 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 were Eric Gary Anderson (George Mason Univ.), chair; Deanna Reder (Simon Fraser Univ.) and Cheryl L. Suzack (Univ. of Toronto). The committee’s citation for the winning book reads:

Christopher J. Pexa’s *Translated Nation: Rewriting the Dakhóta Oyáte* examines Dakhóta literature that emerged between the 1876 Battle of Little Bighorn and the antipipeline protests at Standing Rock 140 years later. Pexa takes as the basis for his thinking about Indigenous sovereignty and the Dakhóta canon the ethics of the *thiíošpaye*, the idea of extended family or kinship, and grounds his readings of both canonical texts and lesser-known archives (prisoners’ letters, interviews with elders) in *thiíošpaye* philosophy. Part literary criticism, part ethnohistory, part language activism (in its pathbreaking reliance on Dakhóta words and phrases to express Dakhóta concepts), and part loving fieldwork centered on the voices and stories of his own grandmothers, Pexa’s work convincingly recovers a sturdy though strategically inaccessible Dakhóta resurgence and compels readers to think more deeply about other tribal peoples’ creative decolonizing work.

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

Kirby Brown’s *Stoking the Fire: Nationhood in Cherokee Writing, 1907–1970* illuminates the intellectual, political, and cultural contributions of Cherokee writers during the dark age of Cherokee history that followed the Removal period, when writers, scholars, and activists turned to social and political relations to further diverse understandings of Cherokee nationhood. Drawing from biographies, literary texts, critical writings, speeches, congressional testimonies, and tribal archives and exhibiting

a meticulous attention to documenting research and to finding coherences through literary investigation, *Stoking the Fire* establishes a nuanced, historically complex reading of writers' interventions, shifting scholarly debates from mainstream approaches that focus on the assimilation of tribal peoples to accounts that theorize the tribal homelands from which Cherokee authors drew inspiration.

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 Studies in Native American Literatures, Cultures, and Languages was established in 2014 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 in United States Latina and Latino and Chicana and Chicano Literary and Cultural Studies; 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 prizewinners can be found on the [MLA website](#).