MLA’S MATEI CALINESCU PRIZE AWARDED TO JED RASULA FOR *HISTORY OF A SHIVER*; ALEX WOLOCH TO RECEIVE HONORABLE MENTION FOR *ORWELL*

New York, NY – 5 December 2017 – The Modern Language Association of America today announced its second annual Matei Calinescu Prize for a distinguished work of scholarship in twentieth- or twentieth-first-century literature and thought. The winner is Jed Rasula, of the University of Georgia, for his book *History of a Shiver: The Sublime Impudence of Modernism*, published by Oxford University Press. Alex Woloch, of Stanford University, has received honorable mention for his book *Or Orwell: Writing and Democratic Socialism*, published by Harvard University Press.

The Matei Calinescu Prize was established in 2016 in honor of Matei Calinescu, a Romanian poet and scholar who taught at Indiana University, Bloomington. The prize is one of eighteen awards that will be presented on 6 January 2018, during the association’s annual convention, to be held in New York City. The members of the selection committee were Claudia Breger (Indiana Univ., Bloomington), chair; Odile Marie Cazenave (Boston Univ.); Amy J. Elias (Univ. of Tennessee, Knoxville); Eric Hayot (Penn State Univ., University Park); and Ricardo L. Ortiz (Georgetown Univ.). The committee’s citation for the winning book reads:

Breathtaking and beautifully written, Jed Rasula’s *History of a Shiver: The Sublime Impudence of Modernism* is a masterpiece of modernist criticism. Drawing on a vast archive of texts, paintings, scripts, scores, and historical anecdotes, Rasula traces the genealogies of modernism across the arts. One could imagine that the book is about music—and the references to composers Romantic, symbolist, Wagnerian would suggest as much—but it is just as much about the ways in which the modernist story vibrates, like all culture, consistently through and across the categories we derive to delimit it. The species modernism, Rasula writes, cannot “be generated from a single tissue sample.” The rich skein of texts and moments he explores serve as an exquisite demonstration of that argument; the modernism that emerges from his work is, like the work itself, a scintillating, dappled dream coat.

Jed Rasula is the Helen S. Lanier Distinguished Professor at the University of Georgia, where he is head of the Department of English. He was previously affiliated with Queen’s University. He received his PhD from the University of California, Santa Cruz. Rasula’s involvement in the poetry community goes back to the 1970s, as editor of *Wch Way* and author of *Tabula Rasula*. Subsequent poetry titles are *Hot Wax; or, Psyche’s Drip* and *Giacometti’s Dog*. He has coedited two large anthologies: *Imagining Language*, with Steve McCaffery, and *Burning City: Poems of Metropolitan Modernity*, with Tim Conley. Scholarly monographs are *The American Poetry Wax Museum: Reality Effects, 1940–1990*, *This Compost: Ecological Imperatives in American Poetry*,...

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

Alex Woloch’s Or Orwell: Writing and Democratic Socialism is an impressive reminder of how much one can do in a study of a single author, to the degree that this is a study about a single author. Through its provocative prologue on Reagan and theory; its careful, layered reflections on the politics of reading and writing; and its defiant embrace of elaborate close readings in an age of anti-humanities furor, Woloch’s book presents an exemplary way of engaging ongoing debates about the work of literary scholars. Entwining aesthetics and politics, reflexivity and engagement, the book models both a mode of reading and a way of orienting ourselves in the world.

Alex Woloch is a professor of English and the Richard W. Lyman Professor of the Humanities at Stanford University. He is serving as chair of the English department. He teaches and writes about literary criticism, narrative theory, the history of the novel, and nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature. Woloch received his PhD in comparative literature from Yale University and his BA from Columbia University. In addition to the Orwell study, he is the author of The One vs. the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel and editor, with Peter Brooks, of Whose Freud? The Place of Psychoanalysis in Contemporary Culture. His current book project, provisionally entitled “Partial Representation,” will consider the complicated relation between realism and form in a variety of media, genre, texts, and theoretical traditions.

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; this year’s convention in New York City is expected to draw 7,000 attendees. More information on MLA programs is available at www.mla.org.

The prize is presented under the auspices of the MLA’s Committee on Honors and Awards. The previous winner of the prize is Paul K. Saint-Amour; Rebecca L. Walkowitz received an honorable mention.

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 Scholarly Edition and for a Bibliography, Archive or Digital Project; 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 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.