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Presidential Undergraduate Prize, 2025

Committee:

Jap-Nanak Kaur Makkar (University of Kentucky), Term: 2022-2025

Corinne Scheiner (Colorado College), Term: 2023-2026

Rodrigo Martini (University of Georgia), Term: 2024-2027

Winner: “Tangier, in and against the Nation-State: Postcolonial Bureaucracy in Recent Tangérois Fiction,” by Bobby Yalam

The committee was impressed with Yalam’s linguistic skill, theoretical framing and clear presentation. The thesis focused on Mohamed Mgharbi’s *A Tanger dans le bec de pie* (2018) and Tahar Ben Jelloun’s *Le miel et l’amertume* (2021). While these novels are both in French, Yalam develops methods of reading that exhibit translinguistic sensitivity. Among these is his innovative method of interpreting a “textual glitch”—which he defines as any linguistic departure from standard French that transliterates Moroccan Arabic and English—as an act of language that stands for the text’s resistance. According to Yalam, “[s]uch glitches demonstrate at a formal level the thorn that rural populations of Northern Morocco pose in the side of the national bureaucracy.” Because of Yalam’s ability to weave together literary form, postcolonial theory and social life, the committee is pleased to award him the prize.