



COMPARATIVE LITERATURE STUDIES

2021 A. OWEN ALDRIDGE PRIZE CITATION

The 2021 A. Owen Aldridge Prize for the Best Essay by a Comparative Literature Graduate Student is awarded to Lital Abazon, PhD candidate in the Department of Comparative Literature at Yale University, for her essay entitled: “A Nonpeaceful Coexistence’: The Plight of 1960’s Bilingual Literary Journals in Morocco and Israel.”

Abazon’s article compares the journal *Souffles-Anfas* (Morocco, 1966-1971) with *Eked Poetry Quarterly* (Israel, 1960-1971), two literary enterprises preoccupied with the fate of bilingualism under their respective budding national independences. *Souffles* has gotten plenty of scholarly notice and is often referred to as a completely bilingual project – an approach the article convincingly contests -- whereas *Eked* has received surprisingly little academic attention. Both journals used bilingual literature to uphold a political ambiguity and to distance themselves from the confines state-politics. *Souffles* undertook this openly and self-reflexively, publishing in both Arabic and French, while *Eked* operated in a more latent fashion, allowing undisclosed languages other than Hebrew to cause syntactic disruptions, and later publishing translations. Each journal questioned, in its own unique way, the ultimate pairing of sovereignty and monolingualism.

One might say that this article raises comparative literature to the second power. Each journal is bilingual and thus in itself presents a comparative project, which is then raised to the second power by the comparison between their relative bilingualisms. In the words of one of the scholars who judged this year’s essays, Abazon’s is “an excellent essay with a very strong and interesting argument, demonstrating a solid understanding of both literary fields. The author has done significant work and has a fashioned a well-constructed case on bilingualism and instability.”

Dealing as it does with literature in three languages -- Arabic, French, and Hebrew – and skillfully balancing ideological analysis with publishing history and close reading, “The Plight of 1960’s Bilingual Literary Journals in Morocco and Israel” is a most worthy recipient of the 2021 Aldridge Prize.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Beebee".

Thomas O. Beebee
Editor-in-Chief

Department of
Comparative Literature

The Pennsylvania State
University
442 Burrowes Building
University Park, Pa 16802

(t) 814.863.1336
(f) 814.863.8882
(e) cl-studies@psu.edu
www.cl-studies.la.psu.edu

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