



COMPARATIVE
LITERATURE
STUDIES

2022 A. OWEN ALDRIDGE PRIZE CITATION

The 2022 A. Owen Aldridge Prize for the Best Essay by a Comparative Literature Graduate Student is awarded to Laurel O’Coynne, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of Oregon, for her essay entitled: “Toward Weaving/Reading Hemispheric Land and Literature.”

The “weaving” in the title of O’Coynne’s essay refers to the “matter-energy interweaving” that is found in a number of Indigenous cosmologies of the Americas. This idea of interweaving supports a vision of the continuity of oral tradition in the face of colonial erasure, and a sense of ecological wholeness in the face of exploitation and pollution of the land. The author deploys interweaving to expand the notion of *métissage* beyond its usual biopolitical valences. O’Coynne then explores interwovenness by comparing Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/La frontera* (1987) with Gisèle Pineau’s *L’Exil selon Julia* (1996) and Leslie Marmon Silko’s *Ceremony* (1977). She contrasts the linear filiations of Anzaldúan *mestizaje* with the narrative webs of Pineau and Silko that unsettle finitude, and that thereby offer clues for a discourse of comparison otherwise than through settler-colonial narration.

In the words of one of the senior scholars who judged this year’s competition, “using the threads of decolonial, ecocritical, and feminist criticism, the essay deftly weaves intricate and illuminating readings of hemispheric American literary texts and cultural practices.” Combining as it does an eloquently stated alternative vision of hemispheric American history and realities with painstaking analysis of literary texts in three languages, “Toward Weaving/Reading Hemispheric Land and Literature” is truly a most worthy recipient of the 2022 Aldridge Prize.

Tom Beebee

Thomas O. Beebee
Editor

