

Press Release  
September 26, 2019

The members of the Trollope Prize committee at the University of Kansas are pleased to announce the winners of the 2019 Trollope Prize.

The winner of the undergraduate prize is Nyssa R. Fahy, a student at Penn State Brandywine. Fahy will receive a \$1000 award, and the award-winning essay will be published by *The Fortnightly Review*, the twenty-first-century online edition of Trollope's nineteenth-century periodical. Fahy's faculty sponsor was Professor Elizabeth Coggin Womack. The award-winning essay was Fahy's final project for English 200, "Introduction to Critical Reading."

The judges praised Ms. Fahy's essay, "A Less Beaten Path: Hybridity and Naturalism in Anthony Trollope's West Indian Short Fiction," for its ambitious and rich discussion of three short stories set around Caribbean basin and dealing with questions of race and colonialism. Like many thoughtful readings of Trollope, this one starts by pushing off from Henry James, whose criticism established a number of twentieth-century orthodoxies, including the view that Trollope's fiction never strayed beyond English subjects. By contrast, Fahy, like many recent scholars, emphasizes Trollope's global engagement and takes seriously his interest in the semi-peripheries of nineteenth-century global development. The paper draws both from historical scholarship on Victorian ideas of race and race-mixing, and from theorists interested in colonialism's persistent race-logic. Departing from views of Trollope as a naïve realist or unthinking traditionalist, Fahy argues for a view of the writer as an "acute and honest observer" of a violent world. Judges were unanimous in selecting this sharp and sophisticated essay for the prize, praising its deft handling of a complex range of materials.

The winner of the graduate prize is Deirdre Mikolajcik, a recent PhD in English from the University of Kentucky. Mikolajcik will receive a \$2000 award and her essay will also be published online by *The Fortnightly Review*.

The judges had this to say about Deirdre Mikolajcik's essay: "Abstract Wealth and Community in *The Way We Live Now*" offers an original discussion of Trollope's treatment of the challenges posed to individuals and relationships by the investment economy of late nineteenth-century Britain. Ms. Mikolajcik argues that an economy permeated by values associated with the stock market (if not yet dominated by actual speculation) was experienced as simultaneously abstract and opaque. Whereas the ownership of great estates had once countered the emergent destabilizing effects of abstraction, Trollope's novel shows that this counter was increasingly ineffective in a world dominated by stock market swindlers like Melmotte. In Mikolajcik's account, only sections of the domestic sphere and all-male associations like the Beargarden offer any relief from the pernicious effects of the speculative economy. The essay's argument is effective and offers insights about both the world Trollope's novel describes and Trollope's recognition that new sources of danger—a challenge to the traditional gender hierarchy—lay just beyond the novel's horizon.

The Trollope committee together with the judging panel congratulate these winners on their impressive scholarly accomplishments.

The judges for this year's competition were Mary Poovey, Emeritus Professor of English at New York University and author, most recently, of *Finance in America: An Unfinished Story* (with Kevin Brine), *Genres of the Credit Economy* and *A History of the Modern Fact*; Gordon Bigelow, Professor of English at Rhodes College and author of *Fiction, Famine, and the Rise of Economics in Victorian Britain and Ireland*; and Dorice Williams Elliott, a Conger-Gabel Teaching Professor and Associate Professor of English at the University of Kansas and author of *The Angel out of the House* and *Transported to Botany Bay: Class, Nation, and the Literary Figure of the Australian Convict*.

The Trollope Prize is administered by the English department at the University of Kansas. It is awarded annually to the best undergraduate and graduate essays in English on the works of Anthony Trollope. The Prize was established to focus attention on Trollope's work and career, to promote the study of Trollope in college classrooms and to encourage student engagement with both Trollope's work and Victorian literary history through intensive research and writing. Please see our website (<http://trollopeprize.ku.edu>) for more information on the Prize.