

Winner of the 2008 Graduate Prize

Rebecca Hughes, “‘Changing Africa’: Representations of Africans in British Missionary Propaganda, 1919-1939.”

The Graduate Prize Committee chose as its first-place winner Rebecca Hughes from the Department of History at the University of Washington for “‘Changing Africa’: Representations of Africans in British Missionary Propaganda, 1919-1939.” Hughes illuminated how early twentieth-century British missionaries situated Africans, not so much in an inferior position, but rather a historical one. Missionaries described Africans as living in "Biblical times" to explain their "primitive" status, but also their potential for redemption and civilization. The committee was struck by Hughes's imaginative engagement with the sources and mastery of a vast literature on the colonial project and religious discourse. As an honorable mention, the Committee also recognized Naomi Lloyd from the Centre for Women's and Gender Studies at the University of British Columbia for “Making and Unmaking Empire in Turn-of-the-Century Female Homoeroticism: The Case of Constance Maynard.” In this evocative essay analyzing the spiritual and erotic relationship between English educator Constance Maynard and Anglo-Irish Marion Wakefield, Lloyd provided a compelling cultural analysis of an unpublished gem of a source. Her analysis of the personal as imperial is ambitious and rich in its promise.