

Post45

July 21, 2024

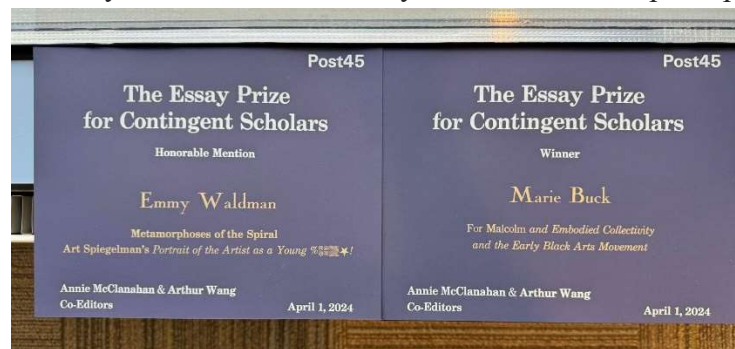
Dr. Rose Harris-Birtill
Director of Editorial, Open Library of Humanities
Birkbeck, University of London

To Rose Harris-Birtill and the Open Library of Humanities Team:

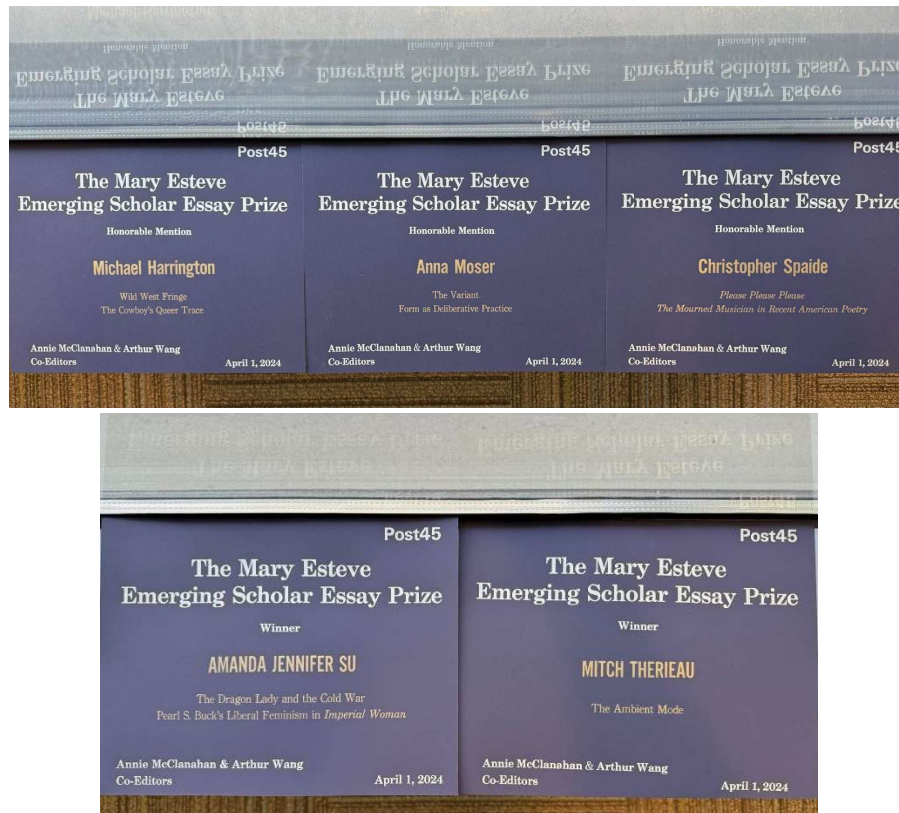
We write with gratitude to report on the outcomes of our 2023 OLH Open Access Award, which funded the [Post45](#) journal's inaugural prize competition for emerging and contingent scholars of post-1945 American literary and cultural studies. Our aims for the program were to elevate *Post45*'s profile and reputation as a leading independent, diamond-open access, online-only humanities journal; to encourage and celebrate the work of emerging and contingent scholars; and to boost the quality, diversity, and volume of our submissions following COVID stagnation.

Timeline

- **September 5, 2023:** [Call for Submissions](#) circulated on Post45.org and social media, and sent to Post45 email subscribers and departments of English, American Studies, and African American Studies. The call acknowledged support from OLH and featured the benefits of the journal's open access and online format.
- **January 15, 2024:** Submission deadline. Received 80 submissions: 65 by emerging scholars (ES) and 15 by contingent scholars (CS).
- **January-February 2024:** Editors (Arthur and Annie) selected 22 finalists (18 ES, 4 CS)
- **March 20, 2024:** Prize committee selected three winners (2 ES, 1 CS), four honorable mentions (3 ES, 1 CS), and three finalists (3 ES) to advance to peer review.
- **April 1, 2024:** Post45 announced winners and honorable mentions via [website](#), [social media](#), and email. Winners received \$500 each and all honorees received books from the [Post45 series](#), courtesy of Stanford University Press, and a letterpress printed certificate.



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- **April 1, 2024 (continued):** The editors also responded to 17 other submissions with personalized feedback, encouraging the authors to submit revised articles for review and potential publication.
- **Late 2024:** *Post45* will publish seven honorees in a special prize issue. We have already received readers' reports for all seven articles.

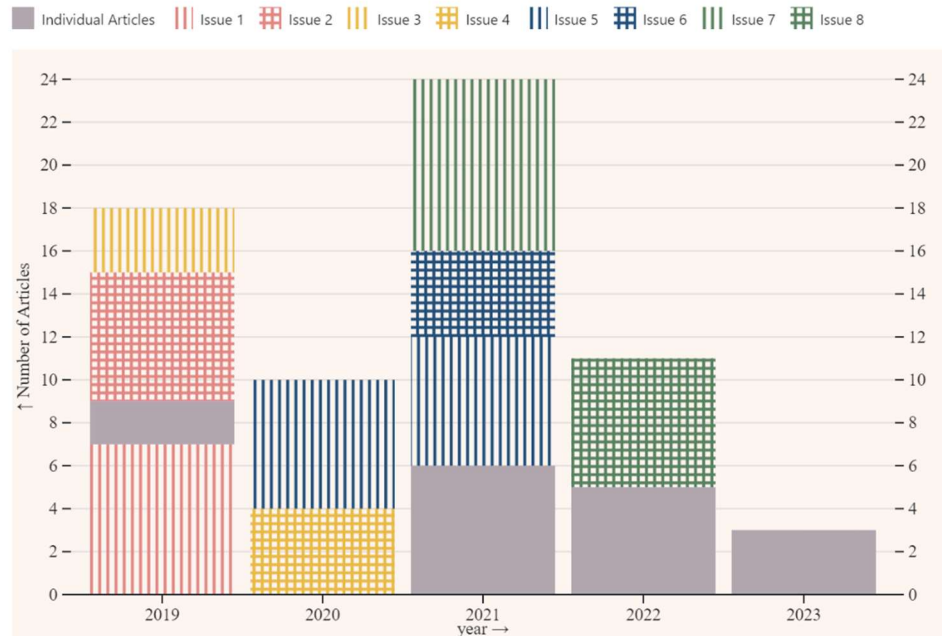
Outcomes

Quality of Prize Submissions

The most compelling sign of the program's success was the number of strong submissions we received for the prize. While we initially planned to award two article prizes (one in each category), we ended up selecting three winners, four honorable mentions, and three additional articles to advance directly to peer review. We provided feedback on 17 other submissions that were promising but not yet ready for peer review. From those 17, we've already received three revisions.

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Reversal of Decline in Submissions Received



Articles published in Post45 between 2019 and 2023

Prior to receiving the OLH Award and launching our prize competition, we'd seen a sharp decline in submissions during COVID. In 2019, *Post45* began publishing themed special issues while still accepting individual article submissions. Although publications 2020-2022 look steady (the apparent jump in publication count in 2021 is misleading, as issue 5 was published in two parts between December 2020 and January 2021), most of these special issues were submitted pre-pandemic. Among individual articles (not received as part of special issues), submissions were steady from 2020 to 2022 (~28/year) before dropping over 70% in 2023 to just eight submissions.

The 80 prize submissions we received in 2024 is an increase to 10x or 1000% the previous year's count. We've also received 13 individual article submissions in 2024 outside of the prize competition, bringing our individual article submission count for 2024 to 93, matching the total number of submissions we received in the previous four years combined (92 submissions 2020-2023). The increase in non-prize submissions is encouraging; due to the high volume of prize submissions, we expected to see a lower number of non-prize submissions. The increase might indicate that the prize competition has increased awareness and interest in the journal, despite reduced conference attendance by editors and board members over the past few years. The three revisions of non-winning entries we've received also suggest that the prize competition may

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have stimulated sustained interest in the journal and its mission beyond the attractions of an award and monetary prize.

Future

We hope to make the prize competition a recurring program (annual or biannual) and will evaluate how to fund the program sustainably. As an independent, diamond open-access publication, we lack the usual sources of financial support: article processing charges, subscription fees, scholarly organization dues, and the backing of a university or commercial press.

This award represents an important step in *Post45*'s entry into the humanities open access publishing community. Although *Post45* has been an open access publication since its launch in 2011, we are now making substantial progress in implementing current OA best practices, following criteria for Open Access Scholarly Publishing Association membership, the Directory of Open Access Journals Seal, and the Committee on Publication Ethics.

We're grateful for OLH's support and hope to find further opportunities for collaboration in the future!

Warmly,
Arthur Wang and Annie McClanahan
Co-Editors

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