

**JURY-REPORT CONCERNING THE ICHTH INTERNATIONAL DISSERTATION PRIZE  
FOR THE HISTORY AND THEORY OF HISTORIOGRAPHY, 2018**

After a very long process of selection and of deliberation the jury of the ICHTH-Dissertation prize 2018 has finally come to a decision. The process was quite complicated and time consuming because we received a remarkable number of dissertations, of which a considerable number was of high quality. The full list of 30 accepted submissions is as follows (one submission was rejected because it did not meet the criteria of selection).

01. Ian Douglas Wilson, *Kingship Remembered and Imagined: Monarchy in the Hebrew Bible and Postmonarchic Discourse in Ancient Judah*. (University of Alberta, Canada).
02. George Tomlinson, *Marx and the Concept of Historical Time*. (Kingston University, United Kingdom).
03. Marnie Binder, *An Envisioned Pragmatic Dialogue in José Ortega y Gasset's Historicism: Possible Conversations with John Dewey, William James, and Ferdinand Schiller*. (University of Alcalá, Spain).
04. Franz-Dieter Hensel Riveros, *A Tale of the Two Americas: Crafting Continental Distinctions in America's Nation-Building Era*. (University of Texas at Austin, USA).
05. Jia Pengtao, *On Imagination in Historical Narratives*. (East China Normal University, China).
06. Alla Kurzenkova, *The Scandinavian runes as historical source*. (Bogdan Khmel'nitsky National University of Cherkassy, Ukraine).
07. Travis E. Ross, *History, Inc.—Hubert Howe Bancroft's History Company and the Problem of Selling the Past*. (University of Utah, USA).
08. Yufei Zhou, *Karl August Wittfogel and East Asia. Intermediaries, Translations and Networks (1926-1945)*. (Osaka University, Japan).
09. Tyson Retz, *'The History and Function of Empathy in Historical Studies: Re-enactment and Hermeneutics'*. (University of Melbourne, Australia).
10. Ritwik Bhattacharyya, *Homo Ahistoricus: Disavowal of History in Colonial South Asian Writing*. (Princeton University, USA).
11. Jonas Alshkog, *The Practical and the Historical Past: Four Essays on the Philosophy of History*. (Åbo Akademi University, Finland).
12. Ciaran McDonough, *Investigating Irish Antiquarianism: a Comparative Study between Catholic and Protestant Antiquarian Cultures, 1830-1886*. (National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland).
13. Leon ter Schure, *Bergson and History. Transforming the Modern Regime of Historicity*. (Groningen University, Netherlands).
14. Camille Creyghton, *La survivance de Michelet. Historiographie et politique en France depuis 1870*. (Amsterdam University, Netherlands).
15. Carlos Rivera Santana, *Archaeology of colonisation: A critical voyage from the Caribbean to Australia*. (University of Queensland, Australia).
16. Yu Pei Yun, *Study on Jörn Rüsen's Theory of History* (Capital Normal University, China).
17. Li Junshu, *Marshall G. S. Hodgson's Thought of Doing World History* (Capital Normal University, China).
18. David Černín, *History of Philosophy Through the Prism of Philosophy of Historiography – the Past of Philosophy as Philosophical Problem*". (University of Ostrava, Czech Republic).

19. Xiao Xiaodan, *European Urban Environmental History: Since the 1980s* (Sichuan University, China).
20. Changyin Li, *New Epoch of Chinese Historiography: Restudy of the Movement of Ku-shi-pien*. (Shandong University, China).
21. Tullio Viola, *Philosophy and History: The Legacy of Peirce's Realism* (Humboldt University Berlin, Germany).
22. Ivan Kutsyi, "East" and "West" in the Ukrainian historiography (end of the XVIIIth – beginning of the XXth century): genesis of the civilizational identity. (Cherkasy Bohdan Khmelnytsky National University, Ukraine).
23. Sari Nauman, *The Force of Words: Political Oaths in Sweden, 1520–1718*. (University of Gothenburg, Sweden).
24. Ville Erkkilä, *The Conceptual Change of Conscience: Franz Wieacker and German Legal Historiography*. (University of Helsinki, Finland).
25. Wang Weijia, *A study of Wu Hans` historiography* (Nankai University, China)
26. Bai Yue, *Lamprecht's Compilation Of Cultural Historical Works And Theoretical Construction*. (Beijing Normal University, China).
27. Alexander Maar, *Cause, Chance, Determinism and Counterfactuals in History*. (University of Auckland, New Zealand)
28. Pedro Martins, *History, Nation and Politics: the Middle Ages in Modern Portugal (1890-1947)*. (New University of Lisbon, Portugal).
29. Huangrui Chen, *Comparative and Explanation: A Study on the Theory and Methodology of Economic History Differences Between China and US*. (Renmin University, China)
30. Vitalii Borymskyi, *Polish-Ukrainian Alliance of 1920 in Ukrainian and Polish historiography*. (Bohdan Khmelnytsky National University of Cherkasy, Ukraine).

We have looked in these dissertations for theoretical and methodological novelty and other forms of originality. Given the high average quality it was far from easy to rank them. Nevertheless, as a jury we had to do so and we did. For our final decision we also asked external experts for their review of (one of the last two) competitors and with their help we made our final decision. **The ultimate winner is Ritwik Bhattacharyya (nr.10), with his dissertation *Homo Ahistoricus: Disavowal of History in Colonial South Asian Writing***. This dissertation was accepted by Princeton University in February 2016. The advisors were Benjamin Conisbee Baer, Partha Chatterjee, and Gyan Prakash.

We also want to list ***Alexander Maar's (nr.27) Cause, Chance, Determinism and Counterfactuals in History*** for a **honourful mention** because his dissertation also made a big impression on the jury.

Ritwik Bhattacharyya's dissertation battles the conventional notion that Indians do not have a sense of history, shared by most historians around the world until recent years. He argues that between Kant and Hegel, the western discourse identifies historicity with historical narration; possessing written history became tantamount to having history. Ritwik's research extends the works by scholars like Sanjay Subrahmanyam and Romila Thapar who have contested the received notion by arguing that it came from the colonialist claim that was based on their identification of historical knowledge with its Western forms. That is, if freed from prejudice, one can find several examples of historical consciousness in precolonial India.

The dissertation throws fresh light on the debate by examining literary writings in Bengal India. In unfolding his dissertation, Ritwik examines the career of history as a form of knowledge in Bengal under British colonial rule. He notes that Bengali intellectuals faced a dual challenge. On the one hand, written history, which was identified with having history, was a sign of political autonomy and sovereignty. On the other hand, historical discourse was experienced as an externality, as an aspect of colonial domination. It was at the site of this challenge that nationalist thought arose to produce a discourse that both accepted history while also transgressing its codes. He argues strongly that Bengali intellectuals did not simply accept or reject modern historiography and that their conflicted response expressed history's performative role in the subject formation.

Bhattacharyya's key term for the writing is "disavowal"; the economy of *yes-but-no* elaborated in the psychic arena by Freud, by which he addresses the ways how Bengali intellectuals trained in rational sciences wrestled with the problem of what to do with colonial epistemological modes that—while pretending to scientificity—constructed them, as Indians, as beyond the purview of historical reality. A key question examined here is one of complicity with an epistemology and genre of writing that claims universality but that is applied in an ethnocentric (and thus non-universal) way to subjects perceived as ethnically or racially different. What did it mean to be cast in the subject-position of the "without-history" (and thus lacking in a key aspect of subjectivity) when this was philosophically and epistemologically comprehensible through the structures of European education? A key part of his argument is that at the beginning of the twentieth century a central current of historical writing in Bengal became necessarily fictionalized because the space in which it could be "empirical" had been both philosophically and politically excluded from what colonial epistemologies considered to be a viable historicity.

Via Trouillot and Heidegger, Ritwik discusses in the end that why the notion about India having no history persisted for so long is because a distinction exists between historicity and historiography in the modern West. Colonialism turned this distinction into an opposition and deployed it as an instrument for domination. Ritwik radically contends that one should undo the misappropriation of historicity by historiography and seize history from disciplinary historians. As such, this dissertation is a serious, as well as challenging, contribution to the current development of historiography, one that attempts to pluralize the field of history and points to new dimensions in historical theory and research.

Also on behalf of my fellow jury members Edward Wang and Estevão de Rezende Martins,



Chris Lorenz  
Chair of the ICHTH-Book Prize Jury