Call for Papers for the Conference "Beyond Europe: The Project of Provincializing"

Announcement published by Nick Sprenger on Friday, November 19, 2021
Type: Call for Papers
Date: February 25, 2022
Location: New Jersey, United States

Call for Papers

“Beyond Europe: The Project of Provincializing”

February 25, 2022 at Rutgers University-New Brunswick

The Nation and Empire Graduate Working Group at Rutgers University cordially invites paper and panel submissions for the conference “Beyond Europe: The Project of Provincializing.”

Two decades have passed since the publication of Dipesh Chakrabarty’s influential Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference. In it, Chakrabarty insisted that European imperialism and knowledge production created comprehensive historical narratives predicated on the universal applicability of Western political modernity. Recent scholarship has elaborated upon this critique. Methodologies such as global and new imperial history challenge the primacy of metropolitan European perspectives. Scholars of Europe have likewise taken up the torch by rethinking the margins of “Europe” and “Europeanness.” Moving beyond Britain and France as the referents for Europe, they have looked to Central and Eastern Europe to redraw the boundaries of inclusion. Those who study empire and colonialism have described how Europe was in fact made by its peripheries, defined by relationships of domination and hierarchies of difference. Other scholars have sought to provincialize Europe entirely, exploring how history unfolded outside of Europe not in delayed or derivative typologies, but as a highly contingent process deeply shaped by local contexts. In each of these fields, the project of provincializing has forced scholars to reassess where, how, and by whom history is made.
This conference engages with the legacy of Chakrabarty’s book, but also considers how his contributions have been reworked, disputed, and otherwise reformulated in the last two decades. We ask what the formulation “Provincializing Europe” means as an intellectual, methodological, and political project in 2021. We seek to understand how scholars nuance and deconstruct “Europe” as a historical category. How have Ireland, Algeria, the Hapsburg Empire, the Soviet Union, etc. changed how we think about Europe and European history? We ask how provincializing Europe means writing histories of non-Europe, including global, south-south, and non-national histories. Ultimately, we ask for examples of how one might write history from a perspective that is beyond Europe.

The Nation and Empire Working Group invites scholars across the humanities to consider these, and other related, questions. We particularly encourage completed panels, workshops, or roundtables pertaining to the theme of the conference to apply, and especially welcome submissions from graduate students. Themes relevant to this conference include, but are by no means limited to, those that:

- Expand the meanings or boundaries of Europe/Europeanness
- Consider how histories of Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe decenter “Europe” by moving past Britain and France
- Evaluate the ways that marginal, local, or peripheral histories provincialize Europe
- Demonstrate how methodologies such as global or microhistory can provincialize Europe
- Challenge universal narratives and emphasize local contexts/developments, such as in histories of capitalism or nationalism
- Deconstruct or contest the inevitability of the nation state, especially by proposing alternative historical forms/possibilities

Individual paper submission must include an abstract of up to 300 words with a working title, as well as a one-page curriculum vitae with current contact information. Panel submissions must include (1) panel title and 100 word summary, (2) each participant’s name, role (presenter, chair, moderator), institutional affiliation, and contact information (3) a 300-word abstract for each paper (or summary of each presenter’s contribution where the session is not structured around formal individual papers) and (4) a 1-page CV for each participant.

ALL application materials must be sent in a single pdf or Word document to
We are especially pleased to announce that Ananya Chakravarti (Georgetown University, Department of History) will be our keynote speaker. Professor Chakravarti works on the intersection of global and local historical methods in early modern South Asia, colonial Brazil, and the Portuguese empire, with particular focus on the history of religion and the history of emotions.

As of this announcement, we are planning a hybrid conference—in person for those able and willing to present in person, with an online option for those who would prefer that choice. Please note that for all in person gatherings at Rutgers, masks are required. Due to the ongoing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, Rutgers University may change their current policy about in person gatherings. In the event of a policy change by Rutgers, we are prepared to move this conference fully online. Therefore, though we hope to be in person/hybrid, and ask that you remain flexible due to the uncertainties of the pandemic, we are prepared to operate this conference no matter the external circumstances.

Please direct any questions to nicholas.sprenger@rutgers.edu.

Contact Info:

For any more information about this event, contact the coordinator of this event, Nick Sprenger (PhD Student, Rutgers University-New Brunswick)

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