

Decolonising Archives, Rethinking Canons : Writing Intellectual Histories of Global Entanglements

Intellectual history and political thought in recent times has taken a ‘global’ turn, in an attempt to move beyond the dominance of ‘nation’ and ‘modern’ in historical analysis. The most significant intellectual contribution of these works have been to question the ‘globality’ of intellectual history traditions, and in turn urge scholars to introduce spaces beyond the Anglophone world, within the realm of intellectual history, as fertile grounds of ideations. This has also brought to light the need to nuance several methodological tendencies in the historiography of intellectual history, which we intend to provide a platform for, in this conference.

These new interventions in the field of intellectual history has unveiled questions on the role of linguistic geo-politics in the writing of intellectual history. How can we write intellectual histories and histories of political thought from non-Anglophone life worlds? In what ways can we reimagine the ‘archive’ in an attempt to decolonise the discipline of intellectual history? Do we rely entirely on English sources for larger intelligibility, or should we attempt to rewrite the vocabularies of intellectual history writing using vernacular registers? What role would canonical ideas play in these vernacular intellectual histories? How do we prevent intellectual history from becoming an exclusively elite exercise and incorporate the voices and presence of actors from the margins of history?

Our larger aim in this conference is hinged on two primary concerns. One is of bringing to the fore works in intellectual history and political thought, framed by both context specificity and vernacular sources. The second important goal is to question the equivocal process of canonization and bring together scholars working on non-canonical intellectual traditions, texts, and figures. Therefore, we welcome submissions which will question the ways in which the postcolonial afterlives of the empire, have shaped practices of intellectual history writing.

We welcome abstracts for individual presentation of not more than 350 words and panel proposals of not more than 1200 words, which may focus on the following themes, but not limited to:

- Resituating and decolonising the archive in the intellectual histories of the non-Anglophone world: textual, ethnographic, and oral histories?
- Juxtaposing political thought with political action in the writing of intellectual histories.
- Ideas and historical actors in context: Positionality informing choice of sources and canon formation?
- Deconstructing the vernacular: Politics of language, translation, and linguistic communities
- Rethinking the region, redefining the ‘global’—debating categories like trans-national, trans-cultural, global, colonial, and global south.
- ‘Trans-temporality as a method for intellectual histories of ‘modernity’ and ‘Empire’
- Reincorporating contested borders and contact zones as fertile grounds of intellection.
- Intersectional histories of identity and the politics of history writing: class, caste, race, ethnicity, and gender.

- Reconceptualising analytical categories in historiography: political, social, economic, and cultural.

Submissions should be sent to cantabconference@gmail.com no later than the **5th of February, 2021**.

The two-day conference will be hosted online, tentatively on the 26-27 March, 2021, between 9-6 PM GMT. We would like to thank the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the Faculty of History, University of Cambridge, for its generous support of this venture.