



History and Theory
A quantitative and qualitative analysis
2006-2011
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Introduction

This paper provides a quantitative and qualitative content analysis of the academic journal *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* over a six-year period. I will begin by discussing the background of the journal; its past, how it is ranked in the international scientific community its reach, its editorial staff and the editorial procedures. I will then discuss overall contribution to History and Theory and, more specifically, on the articles within the journal. This is followed up by a discussion of themes in the journal. Before the conclusion I would like to discuss one small, though important, debate waged within the journal on experience and narrative. I will then conclude.

On History and Theory

"*History and Theory* leads the way in exploring the nature of history. Prominent international thinkers contribute their reflections in the following areas: critical philosophy of history, speculative philosophy of history, historiography, history of historiography, historical methodology, critical theory, and time and culture. Related disciplines are also covered within the journal, including interactions between history and the natural and social sciences, the humanities, and psychology."¹

Thus tells the publisher's web-page for *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History*, which is based at Wesleyan University, based in Middletown, Connecticut. and is published in affiliation with Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, a publishing house based in the United States. What the website does not tell is that *History and Theory's* first ever volume was published in 1960 at Wesleyan University. In fact, the first thing one notices when visiting the website is how little information it supplies the reader. For a journal dedicated to the theory and philosophy of history, and one that has been around for half a century, it offers little information on its own history and own philosophy.

The first issue of *History and Theory* was published by Wesleyan University Press. The first editorial board consisted of Richard Vann as executive editor, Louis Mink as associate editor, Jane Parker as assistant editor, George Nadel as a regular editor, and Bruce Mazlish as consulting editor. The very first article was written by Sir Isaiah Berlin, who was

¹ <http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/journal.asp?ref=0018-2656> [last checked 07-04-2012].

also a member of the editorial commission along with among others Pieter Geyl and W.H. Walsh.²

History and Theory is widely considered to be one of the more prominent journals in the field of the philosophy of history. Its ranking, reach and reputation make it one of the primary outlets for scholars interested in history, theory and philosophy to publish their essays. I will first discuss its ranking and reach to give an indication of its impact, both in terms of scholarly reputation and actual reach.

On Ranking and Reach

How does *History and Theory* as a journal rank among other journals? There are multiple organizations that rank journals on their 'impact' and other criteria. One of these organizations is the apparently famous Thomson Reuters. It is undoubtedly due to my own incompetence (or the horrible interface of the Thomson Reuters 'Web of Knowledge' website at <http://wokinfo.com/>), but I was unable to get any information on *History and Theory*. Fortunately there are alternatives which are less of a hassle and also reflect on the academic reputation of the journal. One of these is the *European Reference Index for the Humanities* (ERIH), which is maintained by the European Science Foundation.³ ERIH lists *History and Theory* twice. Once under 'History' and once under 'Philosophy'. As a history journal, *History and Theory* is ranked as INT1, as a philosophy journal it is considered to be an INT2. Which according to the foreword to the ERIH means the following:

"International journals are themselves classified into two sub-categories based on a combination of two criteria: influence and scope:

INT1 Sub-Category: international publications with high visibility and influence among researchers in the various research domains in different countries, regularly cited all over the world.

INT2 Sub-Category: international publications with significant visibility and influence in the various research domains in different countries."⁴

² *History and Theory* 1 (1960).

³ The website of IREH does not allow for direct hot-linking to the various lists. Entering '*History and Theory*' under 'Journal Title' will show up with the result. One can search the lists here: <https://www2.esf.org/asp/ERIH/Foreword/search.asp>.

⁴ See <http://www.esf.org/research-areas/humanities/erih-european-reference-index-for-the-humanities/erih-foreword.html> [last checked 04-04-2012].

Journal-ranking.com ("Redjasper") does not include *History and Theory* in its rankings. The Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) initiative considers *History and Theory* to be an A* journal, the highest rating possible.⁵ Like ERIH, those who compiled the ERA-ranking put *History and Theory* under two categories. The journal is listed under 'Historical Studies' and 'History and Philosophy of Specific Fields'.⁶ *History and Theory* is awarded the highest score on both occasions. Ranking refers to the apparent 'impact factor' a journal has within the scholarly community, but says nothing of the journal's reach. I contacted administrative editor Julia Perkins to ask her some questions, including a question on the number of subscribers. Her reply:

"Circulation is now measured in terms of "reach" rather than subscribers. History and Theory is now available in 3,674 institutions worldwide via the licensed sales. There were 366,368 full-text downloads of individual articles in History and Theory in 2011. History and Theory is now available in 5,978 institutions in the developing world via philanthropic initiatives. We have 205 non-institutional subscribers."⁷

Although I have no other examples to compare these numbers with, they appear to me to be quite impressive.

Editorial Committee and Staff of *History and Theory*

The website of History and Theory only supplies the reader with the current editorial staff and committee. The Wiley-Blackwell Online Library does not show the colophon of each issue, but the digital copy on JSTOR does. The latest I could access on JSTOR was volume 47. I decided to take the editorial committee and staff of 2006 and compare them with the ones in 2012, as seen in table 1 below.

Table 1. Editorial Committee and Staff in 2006 and 2012.

⁵ See <http://lamp.infosys.deakin.edu.au/era/index.php?page=jdets&eraid=7211> [last checked 04-04-2012].

⁶ See respectively <http://goo.gl/Eca5q> and <http://goo.gl/181nZ> [last checked 04-04-2012].

⁷ Personal correspondence with administrative editor Julia Perkins.



<p>Editorial Committee in 2006: Frank Ankersmit, Groningen Arthur Danto, Columbia William H. Dray, Ottawa Jonathan, Gorman, Belfast Georg Iggers, Buffalo/Göttingen Reinhart Koselleck, Bielefeld William H. McNeill, Connecticut Nancy Partner, McGill John Passmore, Canberra Jörn Rüsen, Essen Joan Scott, Princeton Gabrielle Spiegel, Johns Hopkins Hayden White, Santa Cruz</p>	<p>Editorial Committee in 2012: Frank Ankersmit, Groningen David Carr, Emory Arthur Danto, Columbia Jonathan L. Gorman, Belfast Georg Iggers, Buffalo/Göttingen Dominick LaCapra, Cornell William H. McNeill, Connecticut Nancy Partner, McGill University Jörn Rüsen, Duisburg-Essen Joan Scott, Princeton Gabrielle Spiegel, Johns Hopkins Hayden White, Santa Cruz</p>
<p>Editorial Staff in 2006: Executive Editor: Brian C. Fay Senior Editor: Richard T. Vann Associate Editors: Philip Pomper and David Gary Shaw Assistant Editor: Ethan Kleinberg Administrative Editor: Julia Perkins Consulting Editors: Richard V. Buel, Richard H. Elphick, Ann-Louise Shapiro and Philip Pomper</p>	<p>Editorial Staff in 2012 Executive editor: Ethan Kleinberg Senior editors: Brian C. Fay and Richard T. Vann Associate editor: David Gary Shaw Assistant editor: Laura Stark Administrative editor: Julia Perkins Consulting editors: Richard V. Buel, Richard H. Elphick, Ann-Louise Shapiro and Philip Pomper</p>

There has been little change in the set-up of both the Editorial Committee and the Editorial Staff since 2006. Some left the Committee, and some of the staff changed position. The editorial committee primarily serves as the ‘seal of approval’ by the scholarly community. The members of the Committee are all luminaries in the field of the philosophy of history. They are, also, all at the end of their careers, with all of the members being in their 60s, 70s, 80s, and in the case of William H. McNeill; 90s.

Except for age the Editorial Committee reflects the journal's audience, but it is not a mirror image. The board, like the journal, is dominated by US-based scholars, but with a significant contribution coming from Europe. This is not wholly unsurprising. History as an

academic discipline is arguably 'western'.⁸ It traces its roots back to Leopold von Ranke and the German historicists. Modern philosophy of history has a similar European ancestry, tracing back to the likes of Vico, Kant and Hegel. The philosophy of history can be considered a typically western field of interest, and the presence of European and US-based scholars is therefore not surprising. With regards to gender; three of the twelve members are female, more than the female contribution to articles, as we will see.

The editorial staff works, with the exception of Ann-Louise Shapiro, at Wesleyan University. Julia Perkins, as the administrative editor, is responsible for 'administrative, editorial, and production aspects of the journal'.⁹ Ethan Kleinberg is the current executive editor, having succeeded Brian Fay in January of 2012.¹⁰

Editorial Procedures

There is no description of the editorial process on the journal's website, nor on the publisher's website. The journal is open to submissions from anyone as long as they fit within at least one of the categories mentioned above. If a submission is to be considered it has to adhere to the style sheet based on the *Chicago Manual of Style*. The only mention of editorial policy on the website serves as a disclaimer and a warning:

"*History and Theory* accepts no responsibility, and contributors themselves must bear full responsibility, for opinions expressed in contributions published in the journal. Nevertheless, because the journal publishes no letters to the editor, nor any other exchanges in which comments on individuals may be rebutted by them, we have a responsibility not to publish injurious comments."¹¹

There is no description of the peer-review process or any other procedures between submission of a manuscript and the publication as a paper. I therefore contacted the administrative editor Julia Perkins with some questions on editorial procedures. She e-mailed me that 88% of all submissions to *History and Theory* are rejected. Those articles that do get

⁸ As is actually argued in *History and Theory* 46:2, which *Fora* articles consider 'Chinese and Western Historical Thinking'. See *History and Theory* 46 (2007) 180-232.

⁹ <http://www.historyandtheory.org/staff/perkins.html> [last checked 05-04-2012].

¹⁰ As announced by Brian Fay on the discussion network: <http://goo.gl/cwPGM> [last checked 09-04-2012].

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

selected are then peer reviewed. Peer reviews for *History and Theory* are not blind. Accepted articles are often revised extensively for grammar and style.

Sections

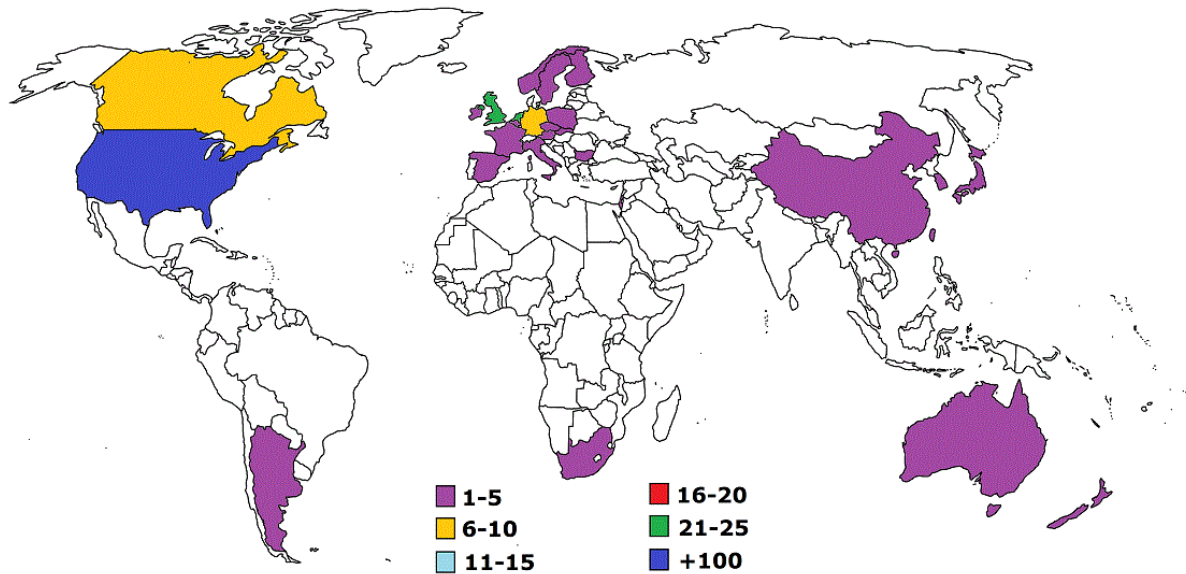
History and Theory is generally divided into three sections: articles, review essays and 'books in summary'. Review essays are essentially book reviews and 'books in summary' is a section for scholars to summarize and promote their own work. These sections appear in almost every issue. Occasionally papers from a conference or symposium are published under a section called 'Forum'. These forum articles are generally shorter than regular articles. *History and Theory* is interesting in the sense that it does not appear to adhere to a word- or page limit. Articles range from 12 to 30 pages in length, while review essays range from 4 to 15 pages. Occasionally the journal will publish so-called 'review articles'. These are extended essays in which the author reviews multiple books on the same subject.

During the last six years *History and Theory* underwent some changes in the format, introducing new sections to the journal. The journal introduced interviews, an annual *History and Theory* Lecture (which started in 2010) and a 'Retrospective'. Two *History and Theory* Lectures were held between 2007 and 2011. The inaugural lecture was by the Italian scholar Carlo Ginzburg. The second by Dominick LaCapra in 2011. The 'Retrospective' is a retrospective review of an influential book in the field, and it explores how it shifted paradigms and changed thinking within the discipline.

Geographical Dispersion of Authors

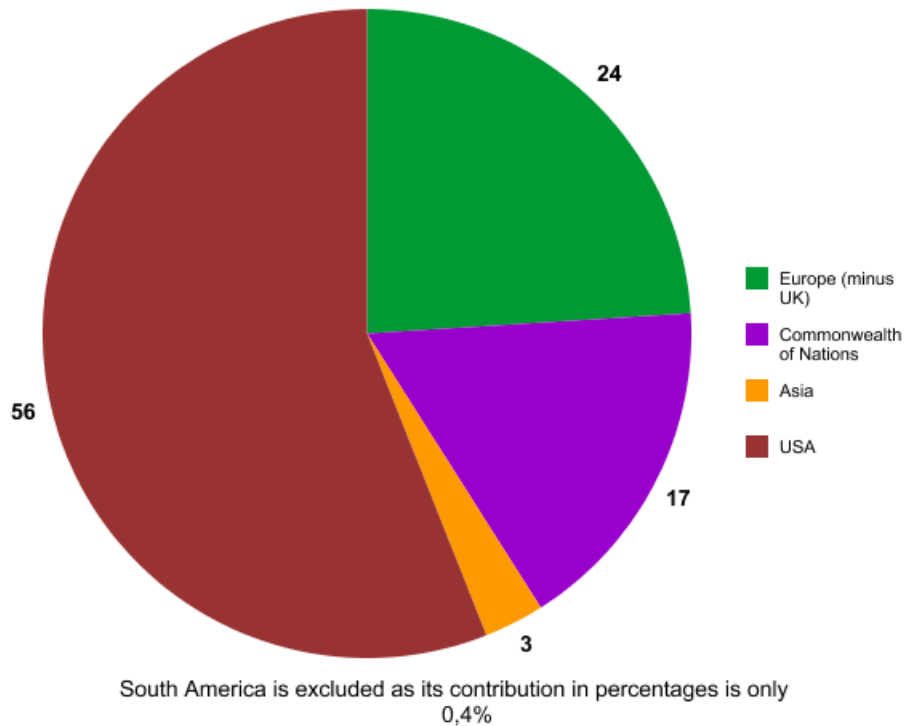
A total of 243 authors worked on a total of 232 articles, review essays and review articles, interviews and lectures. The 'books in summary' have been excluded. Some scholars published multiple articles or essays during these years. Each contribution is counted as 1. For example, New Zealand is coloured purple in map 1, meaning that scholars from New Zealand contributed between one and five articles or reviews. In fact, the three articles from New Zealand were all written by Branko Mitrović

Map 1. Contribution to *History and Theory* per Country.



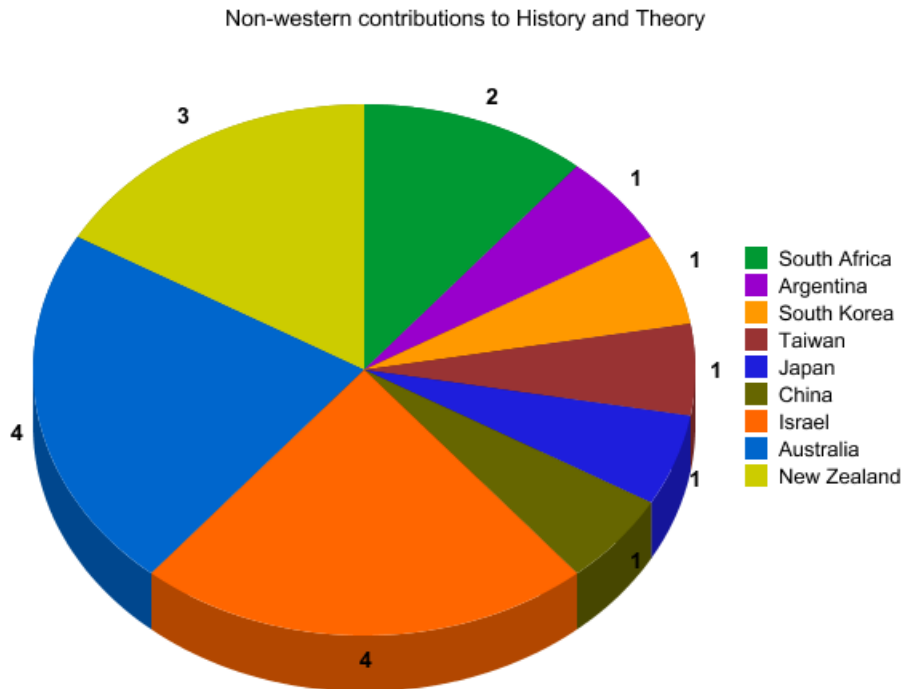
Map 1 shows the geographical dispersion of contributions to *History and Theory*. It quite literally illustrates that *History and Theory* is a predominantly western affair. This map shows the totality of all contributions to the journal (excluding, as noted, the books in summary). Note that the location of the author is determined by the institution he or she associates with. This means that Map 1 does *not* refer to nationality. Although it is unlikely that a division based on nationality would differentiate much from the institutional dispersion (American predominance would certainly still prevail), a map based on nationality of contributors would likely show some difference. Due to time restraints, I opted for institutional dispersion. The image should be interpreted as the institutional dispersion of contributors to *History and Theory*.

Chart 1. Contribution to *History and Theory* as Divided by Region.



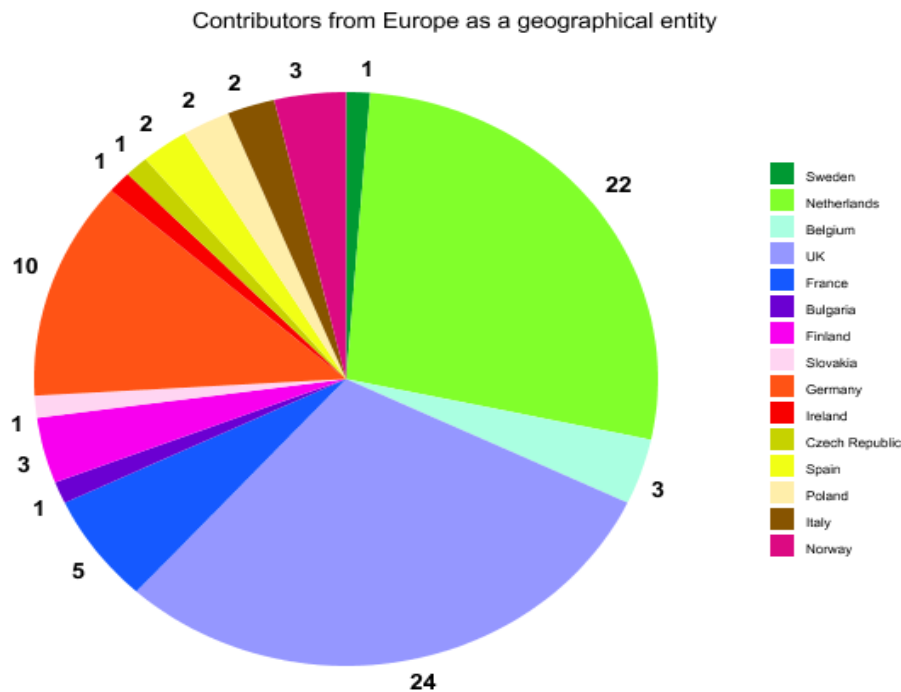
Map 1 shows the geographical spread of authors who contribute to *History and Theory*, but it does not really succeed in visually conveying the dominance of US-based scholars to the journal. Chart 1 shows that 56% of all contributions sent to *History and Theory* originated from US institutions. The pie chart also demonstrates that the philosophy and theory of history is a predominantly western affair. If we limit 'The West' to Europe and North-America, than there were only **eighteen** (7,4%) "non-western" contributions to *History and Theory*. If we break this down along cultural lines, this apparent non-western contribution decreases even further.

Chart 2. Non-western Contributions to History and Theory.



The "non-westerness" of the eighteen contributors is highly questionable if we interpret West/not-West in cultural terms. Of the eighteen contributions, nine were written by scholars from Commonwealth of Nations member states (South Africa, Australia and New Zealand), the contributor from China was based in Hong Kong, which up to 1997 was part of the United Kingdom, and to this day holds a special status within the People's Republic of China. Israel is geographically located in the Middle-East and is therefore grouped under 'Asia' in chart 1. However, Israel is often considered to be a western nation.. The same question can be posed for Argentina or Japan. Assuming that modern philosophy of history is very much a western game, one might even wonder if analysing contributors in terms of 'western' and 'non-western' is relevant. Nevertheless, the above charts demonstrate that *History and Theory* is dominated by US- and Europe based scholars.

Chart 3. Contributors From Europe As a Geographical Entity



Map 1 shows the geographical (institutional) spread of contributors. Chart 3 shows the European contribution *including* the United Kingdom. A total of 81 scholars from Europe were published in *History and Theory*. The Netherlands and the United Kingdom dominate the European contributions. If we consider the impact of German and French historians, philosophers and social scientists on the various aspects of modern historical thinking (ranging from Kant to Rousseau, and from Elias to Foucault respectively) it is remarkable that Germany and France only represent 15 out of the 81 European contributions. This is a 'negative' surprise, a 'positive' surprise is the Dutch contribution. While the Netherlands have a tradition in the more philosophical and theoretical aspects of history (Pieter Geyl and Johan Huizinga spring to mind), I have no clear explanation to offer other than the possibility that the Dutch universities are, apparently, good at philosophizing history.

Above it was noted that there were more female members in the Editorial Committee than their overall contribution to the journal as a whole. A quarter of the editorial committee is female, compared to only 16% of all contributors to *History and Theory* as a whole. Out of the 243 only 39 were written by a female author.

Scholars and Articles

The above discussion referred to the total amount of contributions to *History and Theory* in the six years between 2006 and 2011. Of the 232 pieces that appeared in *History and Theory*, 94 are review essays and review articles. From here on I will focus exclusively on articles and the two *History and Theory* Lectures. Review essays, review articles, the books in summary, interviews and the retrospective will be ignored. This leaves us with a population of 138 articles, written by 148 scholars.

Below is a breakdown of these 148 scholars by country and gender. Of these scholars only 28 were female. Female contributors constitute 19% of the total. The percentages listed below have been rounded off. Combined totals may be slightly more or slightly less than 100.

Table 2. Institutional and Gender Origins per Volume.

Volume 45.

Based:	Publications:	Percentage:	Female contributors:
The Netherlands	4	17	3
France	2	9	
United States of America	10	44	
United Kingdom	5	22	Percentage of total:
Poland	1	4	13
Australia	1	4	

Volume 46.

Based:	Publications:	Percentage:	Female contributors:
The Netherlands	1	4	6
United States of America	11	44	
United Kingdom	2	8	
Poland	1	4	
Canada	1	4	
Germany	2	8	
Israel	2	8	Percentage of total
New Zealand	1	4	24
Sweden	1	4	
Taiwan	1	4	
Japan	1	4	
Australia	1	4	

Volume 47.

Based:	Publications:	Percentage:	Female contributors:
United States of America	10	50	4
United Kingdom	1	5	
Canada	1	5	
Germany	1	5	Percentage of total:
Belgium	3	15	20
Norway	3	15	
Bulgaria	1	5	

Volume 48.

Based:	Publications:	Percentage:	Female contributors:
The Netherlands	3	11	10
United States of America	18	64	
United Kingdom	3	11	
Germany	1	4	Percentage of total:
Israel	1	4	36
New Zealand	1	4	
South Africa	1	4	

Volume 49.

Based:	Publications:	Percentage:	Female contributors:
The Netherlands	4	18	2
France	1	5	
United States of America	7	32	
United Kingdom	1	5	
Australia	1	5	
Germany	2	9	Percentage of total:
Argentina	1	5	9
Czech Republic	1	5	
Italy	1	5	
P.R. of China	1	5	
Finland	2	9	



Volume 50.

Based:	Publications:	Percentage:	Female contributors:
The Netherlands	8	27	3
France	1	3	
United States of America	11	37	
United Kingdom	3	10	
Canada	4	13	Percentage of total:
New Zealand	1	3	10
Slovakia	1	3	
Finland	1	3	

Earlier it was shown that US-based scholars account for more than half of the entire journal. If we look exclusively at articles it becomes apparent that American scholars still lead the pack and dominate the journal, although they have lost the absolute majority. Only in volumes 47 and 48 do US-based scholars account for half or more than half of the articles. In all other cases they are still clearly the largest minority.

Chart 4. US, UK and Dutch Dominance in History and Theory.

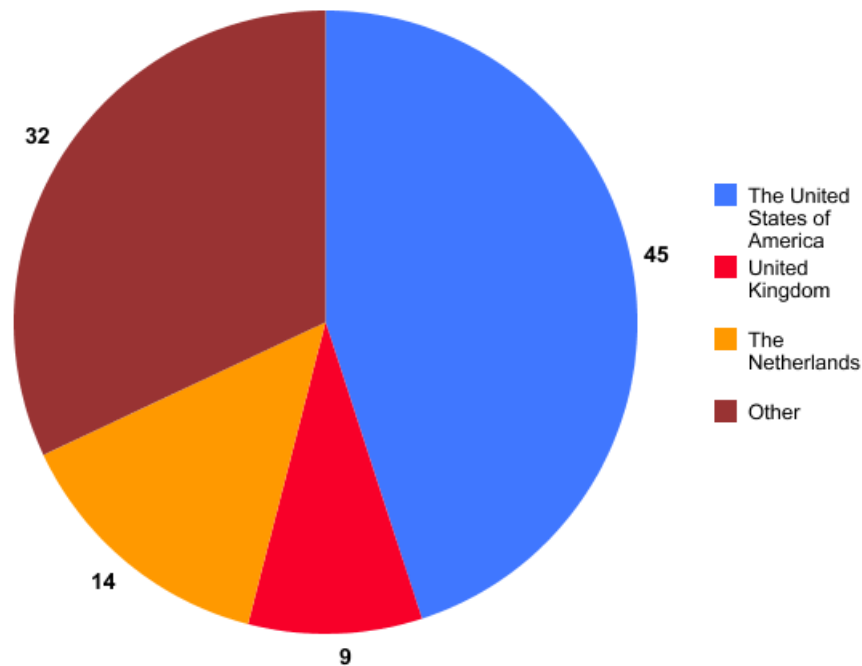


Chart 5 shows the percentage of contributions by scholars based in the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and the rest. These three countries were the most visible in the journal as a whole, and they also dominate the "core business" of *History and Theory*: the articles. 45% of the articles published in the six years were written by American scholars. Scholars from the United Kingdom and the Netherlands make up a combined total of almost a quarter of the whole.

Chart 5. Institutional Dispersion of Authors in Percentages.

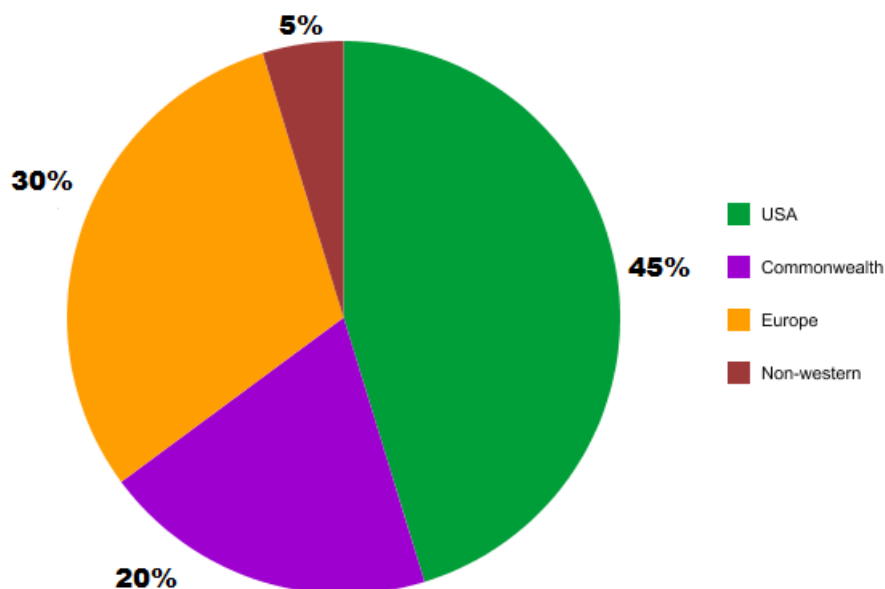


Chart 5 shows a different breakdown of the 148 authors. The scholars originated from 24 different countries, across four continents. The contribution of non-western scholars (here defined as scholars from Taiwan, Japan, Argentina, China and Israel) now constitute five percent of the total authors contributing articles to *History and Theory*.

Some final remarks on universities. The 67 American contributions were written by scholars from 38 different universities. The British contributions stem from nine different universities. The Dutch papers were written in three universities. What is particularly interesting is how two universities in particular stand out. The University of Groningen and Wesleyan University take the lead in publications in the journal. During the six year period, Groningen scholars had thirteen articles published. Scholars from Wesleyan meanwhile

published nine articles. The University of Groningen was the most visible institution during these years. The remarkable visibility of the University of Groningen can be explained by the fact that it hosted a conference, which papers were published in Volume 45, and that the Theme Issue to Volume 50 was very much Groningen's initiative. The presence of Wesleyan University might be explained by a bias of the editors for scholars working at their home university. It is not unlikely that the direct colleagues of the editors know their (the editors') preferences best, and are thus able to submit articles that are more likely to be part of the 12% of articles which are not rejected. The most prominent scholar in terms of most articles published in the journal is Groningen-based Eelco Runia, who published five articles.

Thinking History. Themes and Topics in *History and Theory*

In this section I will discuss the 138 articles in *History and Theory* thematically. I will begin by discussing my methodology and the problems I encountered.

I approached the data inductively. I did have some conception of the categories and themes I was likely to encounter, but I did not formulate categories *a priori*. I read the abstracts and the articles, and wrote down keywords that best summarized the articles. Starting from Volume 48 *History and Theory* introduced keywords to the abstracts. From volume 48 on I therefore generally followed the keywords provided by the authors. To eliminate triviality, I limited myself to a maximum three keywords per article. If an article appeared to treat more than three themes, I made an arbitrary decision on which three keywords were most relevant. While far from perfect, I feel this approach is justified. The authors themselves supply the keywords, they are not attributed to the articles by the editors.¹² There is an arbitrary element to the authors' keywords as well. Sometimes they are clear, concise and fundamental. Other times they refer to specific concepts used in the article. I limited myself to three keywords per article because too many would make any analysis meaningless through overload, while too few would eliminate the subtlety which characterizes philosophical debate. The following analysis is not perfect, but it is, I think, a good approximation and indication of what *History and Theory* is about. However, this subtlety has as a consequence that the articles are nigh impossible to reduce to a few exclusive themes. Yet for the practical purposes of this analysis, this had to be done. Judged

¹² <http://www.historyandtheory.org/submissions.html> [last visited 10-05-2012].

on a case by case basis this has produced categories that might appear odd, conflicting or even redundant when compared to each other. Many of the themes I used are not mutually exclusive.

Table 3. Themes and topics in History and Theory 2006-2011.

Methodology and explanation/epistemology.

These two themes need to be discussed together, even though they are distinct. These proved the most problematic. The latter concerns itself primarily with the natures of historical knowledge and historical explanation, while the former is primarily concerned with concepts in, and approaches to historical inquiry. These categories combined deal with questions, ideas and problems of historical inquiry and the historical method.

Biography.

Any article that focuses on one or more individuals, and puts their ideas, accomplishments and lives at its centre. There might be some overlap with intellectual history when it concerns scholars. Biography, and that is where it becomes distinct from intellectual history, also covers individual historical actors used as case-studies by scholars.

Presence/representation.

This theme deals with (the problems of metaphorical) representation in historical writing and/or the metonymical presence of history in historical writing.

Intellectual history.

An umbrella category that includes and covers not only intellectual history, but also the history of ideas and the history of philosophy. In short: any article concerning ideas is covered by this.

Non-western history.

Topics that are explicitly non-western. In the case of *History and Theory* all articles on South-East Asia. It also covers Orientalism and related discussions on East-West dichotomies.

Time/temporality;

Covers all subjects related to time. Examples include the perception of time, concepts of 'past' and 'present', but also historical distance between historians and their objects when discussed in temporal terms.

Cultural history.

The history of cultures, cultural identity, gender history, etc.

Film/photography.

The use of film and photography in historical practice/historical narratives/etc.

Historical experience.

This category concerns topics like Ankersmit's sublime historical experience, but also the historical experience and/or perception of history by historical actors.

Historiography.

Overview/discussions of historical debates, history of historical writing/inquiry.

Narratives/narrativism.

Concerns both the metahistorical narrative and (grand) historical narratives. Covers both the workings of the historian's narrative, as well as the particular story being told through that narrative.

History and religion.

On the relationship between history/historical writing and religion/religious experience/theology.

The Holocaust.

Articles that have the extermination of the Jews and other minorities by the Nazis at its centre.

Objectivity/subjectivity.

Covers the objectivity/subjectivity of history and, more specific, the non-temporal relationship between the subject (the historian) and its object (the past).

Memory/commemoration.

Covers collective/individual/cultural memory and commemoration of the past.

The Modernisms.

Concerns the pre-, post- and modern, the nature of these 'modernisms', etc.

Political history and thought.

Topics on history of politics, ideology, political thought, etc.

Other.

Distinct themes or topics that were only discussed a few times.

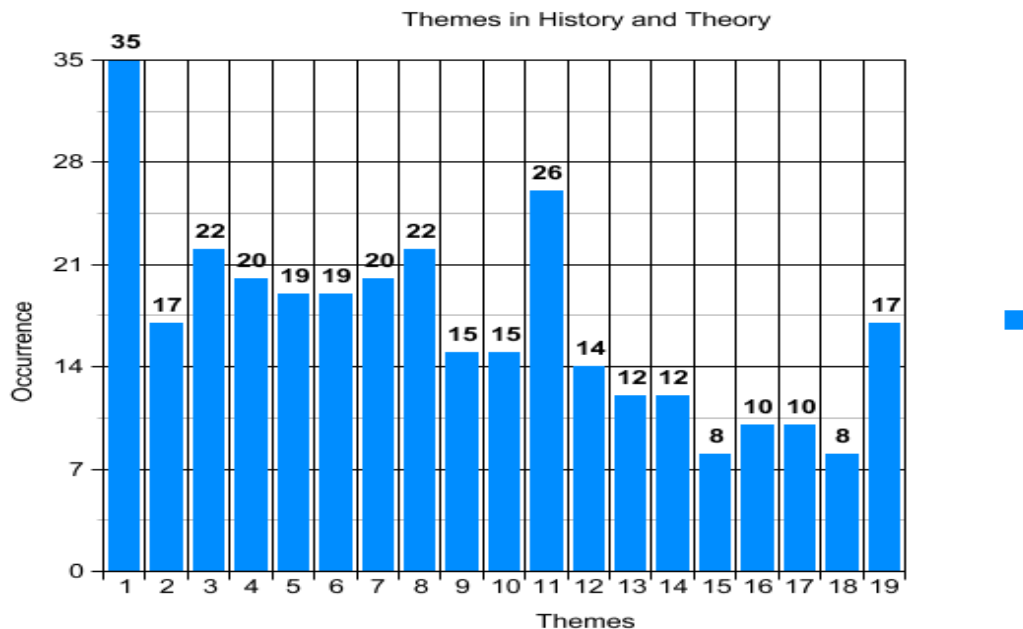


Chart 6. Themes in History and Theory.

1. Methodology	6. Non-western history.	11. Historiography	16. Memory/commemoration.
2. Biography	7. Time/temporality.	12. Narratives/narrativism.	17. The Modernisms
3. Presence/representation	8. Cultural history	13. History and religion.	18. Political thought.
4. Epistemology	9. Film/photography.	14. Holocaust	19. Other.
5. Intellectual history.	10. Experience	15. Objectivity/subjectivity.	

The bulk of the articles is concerned with questions on the nature of historical knowledge, methodology to acquire such historical knowledge, ways to represent the past and problems on the nature and perception of time. The 'Other' category includes among other things articles on related disciplines like archaeology and the ethical dimensions of historical practice. One such example would be Antoon de Baets' article 'The Impact of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on the Study of History'.¹³

What I did find striking is the limited interest in memory and commemoration, and the exceptional interest in film and photography. *History and Theory's* contributors contribute little to the 'memory boom' in cultural history; the emphasis on and the study of collective, cultural and individual memory. This may have to do with the existence of the journal *History and Memory*, but for a topic that receives so much attention from cultural historians and philosophers of history it is remarkably absent. The interest in film and photography is exceptional, but closer inspection reveals that the attention for film and photography is incidental. Of the fifteen articles concerned with photography, fourteen were published in volume 48. The fourth issue of that volume was dedicated to the subject, "skewering" the data. The one other article on photography was published in volume 47. Below is a breakdown of themes per year (that is, per volume).

Table 4. Breakdown of Themes Per Volume.

Theme.	45	46	47	48	49	50	Total:
Memory/commemoration	1	1	3	5	-	-	10
Time/temporality	6	2	-	1	1	10	20
Methodology	8	11	4	1	4	7	35
Intellectual history	2	4	3	2	3	5	19
Non-western history	2	11	-	1	3	2	19
Modernisms	4	1	2	1	1	1	10
Presence/representation	8	4	1	7	-	2	22
Historical experience	2	5	-	3	4	1	15
Historiography	1	9	4	3	7	2	26
Objectivity/subjectivity	1	1	1	-	1	4	8
Holocaust	-	-	1	8	2	1	12

¹³Antoon de Baets, 'The Impact of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on the Study of History' in *History and Theory*, 48 (2009), 20–43.



Film/photography	-	-	1	14	-	-	15
Cultural History	4	3	2	7	3	3	22
Biography	2	3	2	3	4	3	17
Epistemology	1	1	9	2	2	5	20
History and religion	7	-	3	-	1	-	12
Narratives/narrativism	1	-	3	2	4	4	14

There are some constants. Articles concerning methodology, intellectual history, 'modernisms', historiography, cultural history, biography and epistemology return in every volume. Some themes peak in specific volumes. This can be explained by the Theme Issue and *fora*. Volume 45's theme issue is dedicated to the relationship between religion and history, while the third issue is a theme issue in all but name; containing papers based on the "Presence" conference held at the University of Groningen in 2005. All of these papers discuss "presence" and representation in history. The peaks for volume 46 are due to the theme issue on revisionism and a *forum* on Chinese and historical thought. This accounts for the high number of articles concerning historiography, non-western history and methodology. Volume 47 includes two *fora* dedicated to historical explanation and the nature of historical knowledge itself. The theme issue to volume 48 is dedicated to photography, which explains the amazing "score" for photography. The theme issue for volume 50 is dedicated to historical distance, resulting in articles discussing the nature of time, objectivity and narratives. This explains the peak in articles dealing with time and temporality, and objectivity and subjectivity. Volume 49 is remarkable in the sense that it is otherwise unremarkable, because it has no Forum articles. Its Theme Issue is titled 'The Next Fifty Years', in commemoration of *History and Theory's* 50th anniversary, but it does not appear to have any specific aim or direction.

I contacted Administrative Editor Julia Perkins to ask her about *History and Theory's* mission statement, aim or goal. She replied with the information contained within the quote that opens the first chapter, but with some clarification on the limits of those categories. Using this, I returned to my notes to group the articles into 138 different categories. There were some problems with this. I did not have the time to redo all my previous work, so I used the keywords in chart 6 to decide to which category each article was best suited. My 'rules of thumb' were as follows. If two keywords fit the 'historical methodology' category, and the third 'time and culture', I picked the former. If based on the keywords no single category was

an absolute match, I used the method of elimination to settle on the most suitable one. Again, this does not result in a 'true' representation of the journal's content, but it does serve as an indication by approximation as to which categories *History and Theory* focuses on. I did combine 'historiography' and 'history of historiography' into the single category 'historiography'.

Table 5. *Fields of Study.*

Critical philosophy of history:	cause, explanation, inter-pretation, objectivity.
Speculative philosophy of history:	comparative and global history.
Historiography:	theoretical dimensions of historians' debates.
History of historiography:	theory and practice of past historians and philosophers of history.
Historical methodology:	examination of texts and other evidence, narrativism, stylistics.
Critical theory:	Marxism, deconstruction, gender theory, psychoanalysis.
Time and culture:	conceptions of humanity-in-time
Related disciplines:	interactions between history and the natural and social sciences, the humanities, and psychology.

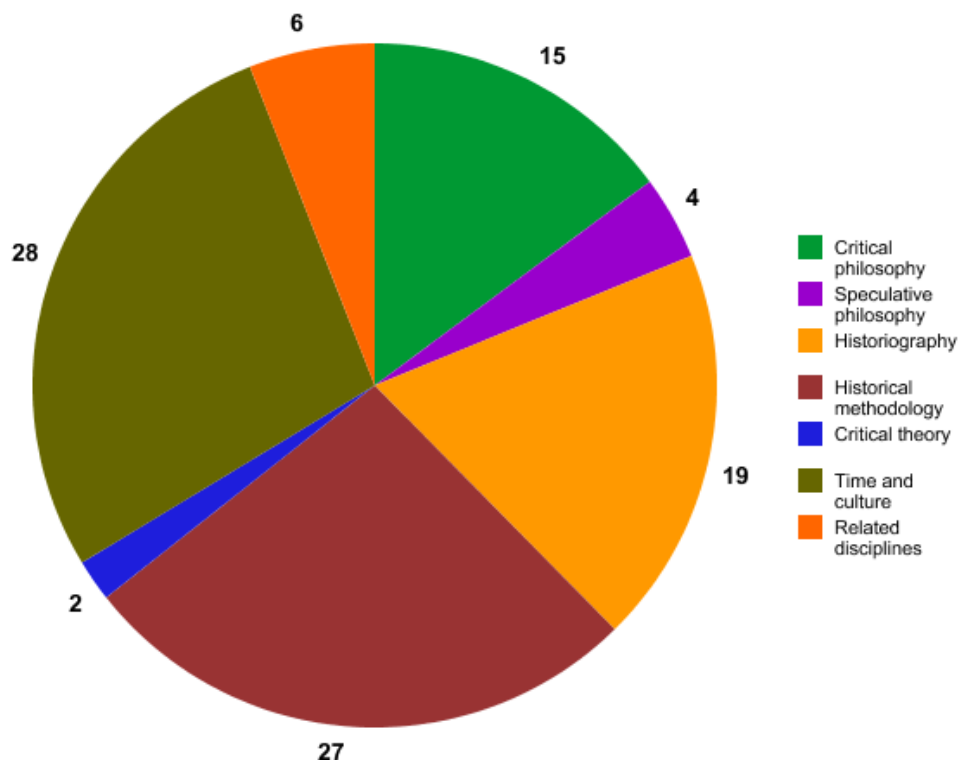


Chart 7. *Fields of Study Discussed in History and Theory's Articles in Percentages.*

Chart 6 and 7 might be confusing due to overlapping terminology. The only theme as given in Chart 6 which proved problematic in itself was 'presence/representation', as 'presence' was more of a fit under 'time and culture' and 'representation' was placed under 'historical methodology'. Chart 7 suggests that speculative history and critical theory are on their way out as fields of study for philosophers of history. The remaining categories do not show, to my interpretation, a great difference with what was uncovered by chart 6.

Experience Versus Narrative

Debate presupposes at least two things. The primary presupposition is disagreement between two or more individuals over a certain issue. The second presupposition, perhaps self-evident but no less important, is that the disagreement over the issue is actually discussed by and between the opposing perspectives. This is the way I understand 'debate', and this is how I approached the six volumes of *History and Theory*. The result was that no "real" debates happened to be going on. Authors might criticize a certain perspective on a philosophical or historical issue. Often they use this divergence of opinion as a diving board to propose their own view on the same or a related issue. However, this is not 'really' a debate. Criticism implies disagreement, but it takes two to make a quarrel. Nevertheless, taking disagreement as an indicator of (implied) debate, there is one debate worthy of closer examination. This disagreement is broad and transcends a singular issue or topic. It is not a disagreement on, for example, the applicability of the Covering Law Model in historical inquiry, but a challenge to the foundation on which modern philosophy of history is based.

Eelco Runia opens his 2006 article '*Presence*' with a critique of what he perceives to be the modern condition of the philosophy of history. Runia describes how up to the 1960s 'speculative philosophy' of history in a Hegelian mould (reflection on the past and its meaning) and 'critical philosophy' of history (how historians ought to write their histories) more or less stood side by side.¹⁴ By the 1970s speculative philosophy of history had been discredited by the Covering Law Model and the idea that 'true' knowledge has to be falsifiable. The publication of Hayden White's *Metahistory* was:

"...the major landmark in a process in which philosophy of history was emptied of reflection on what had actually happened in the past, from the search for 'laws' and patterns, from questions about how history comes about, from - in short - all brands of metahistory. So, in fact if not in

¹⁴ Eelco Runia, 'Presence' in *History and Theory* 46 (2006) 1-29, there: 1-2.

intent, *Metahistory* did away with the last vestiges of metahistory and inaugurated the heyday of 'metahistoriography.'¹⁵

Throughout his call for a new philosophy of history, Runia argues that history itself is not purged of meaning and speculation, but that the discipline limits itself. He points at how the world outside the philosophy of history casually uses master narratives like 'clashes of civilizations'. Runia proceeds to argue that meaning, although 'barred from the front door [of the philosophy of history], is already coming in through the back door' under the guise of 'trauma'.¹⁶ Trauma and memory-related projects such as Pierre Nora's *Lieux de Mémoires*, Runia argues, are not just about meaning. They also include experience, or what Runia describes as 'being in touch' with reality, or 'presence'.¹⁷ Runia begins by arguing for an ontological shift. History is not 'irremediably gone', but 'an ongoing process'.¹⁸ The past is present in its absence. Runia considers the rhetorical trope of the metonymy as an apt way to understand the phenomenon. He uses the Berlin Holocaust Memorial as an example of presence over meaning. The memorial, Runia writes, does not transfer meaning (the concrete slabs themselves mean and represent nothing), but it transfers presence. It substitutes space for time by transferring the absence of the past into the present.

Another scholar, Frank Ankersmit, launched a similar criticism at 'theory' in the philosophy of history in his 2005 work *Sublime Historical Experience*. In his advertisement for his book in History and Theory's 'books in summary' section, in the same issue in which Runia's article on presence was published, Ankersmit rejects 'all that has come to be known as "theory" in the last three to four decades.'¹⁹ He instead argues in favour of 'the abandonment of the rationalism of "theory" for the romanticism of experience.'²⁰ Ankersmit's position is remarkable in that he is also closely associated with the "theory" he now rejects. His 1983 work *Narrative Logic. A Semantic Analysis of the Historian's Language* is often placed in the tradition of Whitean narrativism, even though the extent of Ankersmit's relation to postmodernist thought has been contested, not in the least by Ankersmit himself.²¹

¹⁵ Runia, Presence, 3.

¹⁶ Runia, 4,

¹⁷ Runia, 5.

¹⁸ Runia, 8.

¹⁹ Ankersmit, 147.

²⁰ Ankersmit, *ibidem*.

²¹ Adam Timmins review of Peter Icke's *Frank Ankersmit's Lost Historical Cause. A Journey from Language to Experience* (London 2011) discusses this in greater detail. For the review see:

The only person to pick up the glove and directly respond to the challenge posed by Runia and Ankersmit within the context of *History and Theory* is Jonas Grethlein. However, his essay is not a response to, nor a rebuttal of the position held by “experientialists” such as Runia and Ankersmit. Grethlein does not argue against one or the other position, but against the opposition in which the challenge is cast.²² Grethlein reasoning rests on two crucial pillars. Narratives, he writes, 'refer to experiences, while on the other, experiences are fixed in the form of narratives.' The second intrinsic relationship between experience and narrative is that the latter inevitably leads to the former through 'reception experience'.²³ When observing a narrative (watching a play or a movie, reading a book), the observer experiences the plot. Grethlein acknowledges that this holds true when the narrative is observed in the presence, but is more problematic in historiography. Historical writing always connects events with later events, thereby creating the illusion of inevitability that does not correspond with the open-endedness of human experience.²⁴ Presentness in the past - that is: the experience of actors in the past, as opposed to the historical events to which they contributed – can be achieved by focusing on their motives and by continually hinting at other possible outcomes.²⁵ Grethlein concludes that narrative is not necessarily in opposition to experience, but he warns the “New Romanticists” that the focus on experience ought not to lead to a slacking of methodological standards in those cases where the evidence is not sufficient to support the experience of past individuals.²⁶

Grethlein raises a valid epistemological issue. If experience is ultimately a personal affair, then how are you to find or measure it? Nevertheless, I can personally support scholars like Runia and Ankersmit for trying to move away from the issues of language, narrative and truth, but if experience is only in the eye of the beholder one has to wonder: does it make a difference for history as a discipline to be all too concerned with it?

<http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/1245>. From the review it seems that Icke's book is an actual response to Ankersmit's propagation of experience. However, I have not read the book myself and it sadly falls outside the scope of debate in *History and Theory*.

²² Jonas Grethlein, 'Experientiality and “Narrative Reference,” With Thanks to Thucydides' in *History and Theory* 49 (2010) 315-335, there 315.

²³ Grethlein, *Experientiality*, 320.

²⁴ Grethlein, 324.

²⁵ Grethlein, 330-333.

²⁶ Grethlein, 335.

Conclusions

I was shocked to find *History and Theory* to be such an American affair, even though I knew it was an American-based journal. I had expected a larger contribution from the United Kingdom and continental Europe (especially from France and Germany). On review, I do not think that in this case the peer-review system steers the journals towards a conservative policy regarding publication. On the surface it might look like it. Many of the topics discussed in *History and Theory* are indeed the usual suspects of the philosophy of history, and the same towering figures (Danto, Foucault, Collingwood and Ankersmit among others) keep popping up throughout. It seems that the linguistic turn and historical epistemology cast deep shadows. However, I applaud the attempts by the journal to move the discipline away from these issues by paying attention to topics such as photography, non-western historiography and historical distance.

One criticism is the fact that *History and Theory* meets the stereotypical view of history being a thing of white men. While I feel there is no "acceptable" male-female gender ratio, and that quality should be the decisive factor, there is a but. I am of the opinion that there is room for improvement on this front. Regarding the western-centric contributors, I feel this comes with the subject matter.

The Dutch dominance is remarkable, if only because it revealed a blind spot in my own thinking, being so accustomed to theoretical scholars like Frank Ankersmit, Eelco Runia, Antoon de Baets and Rik Peters here at Groningen University. Nevertheless, I cannot explain why Groningen is the most prominent university in the '*History and Theory* community'. Perhaps, as I suggested above, the Dutch are just good at theory.

I conclude that *History and Theory* is an interesting journal, although not without its shortcomings. Its major shortcoming, as perhaps intrinsic to the philosophy of history itself, is that it has so little connection to the 'common practice' of historical writing. *History and Theory* is, I feel, ultimately a journal where philosophers can talk history, and less a place where historians philosophize their discipline. I would suggest the journal to move in such a direction.

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