Call for Papers

The intersectional ghosts of natural history: gender, class, race, and empire

20–21 April 2020, Department of History, University of Basel

The history of science is haunted by many 'ghosts', such as women's contributions to natural history, the involvement of the global South in the production of scientific knowledge, and the role of knowledge production in colonial dispossession. These kinds of ghosts, writes Banu Subramaniam, are 'a haunting reminder of an ignored past', and it is our duty as historians to render them visible by 'confront[ing] the past, or [else] the dead never go away, history never sleeps, the truth can never be erased, forgotten, or foreclosed'.[1]
This workshop addresses the intersectionality of several such 'ghosts' in the history of natural history:

> Gender – studies on women in science have often ignored women naturalists, and there is much more work to be undertaken in examining the complexities of their marginalisation or acceptance within scientific communities, and to exploring the challenges they faced. At the same time, we also need more research into masculinity in natural history and how it was constructed in its different disciplines.
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> Empire – despite some wonderful recent research there is still a tendency to view modern science as having emerged from the global North (and more specifically, from the Western world) before being disseminated to the global South.
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> Race – while there is a growing body of inspiring research on scientific racism, there is much need for more focus on the construction of racial identities in disciplines not focusing on humans and on the construction of whiteness, self- and otherness.
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> Class – there is still a lack of studies which explore the complex role of class in natural history and in naturalists' lives.

By exploring the impact of so-called peripheral people and places on scientific disciplines we aim to offer a valuable corrective to the hitherto dominant Eurocentric, androcentric, and classist approaches in our field. This workshop hence lies at the intersection of colonial studies, the social and cultural history of science/natural history and gender history, and is an analysis of the intertwined relationship between natural history, gender, race, class and (settler) colonialism. Areas for consideration include analyses of gender, class, race or Empire in:

- Knowledge production
- Science and technology
- Scientists' biographies

[1] Subramaniam, Banu. 2014. *Ghost Stories for Darwin: The Science of Variation and the Politics of Diversity*. Urbana/Chicago/Springfield: University of Illinois Press), 23.

- Biodiversity, conservation and heritage
- Natural history museums, botanical gardens and zoos
- Land and natural resources
- Environmental history

The workshop invites PhD-students and interested scholars (history and other disciplines) to discuss work in progress. Participants are asked to contribute pre-circulated material to provide a common ground for our discussion – this can be a chapter or manuscript article (max. 20 pages).

Inquiries, abstracts (c. 200 words, by January 31) and pre-circulated material (March 31) to: tanja.hammel@unibas.ch or ljg54@cam.ac.uk

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