

Mediating and Materialising Time: Scientific Temporalities 1750-1950

Stockholm University, Department of Culture and Aesthetics
June 8-9, 2017

Room 144
Manne Siegbahnhusen
Frescativägen 22

The modern natural sciences have produced an enormous expansion of timescales accessible to human understanding. Simultaneously, 18th and 19th history writing differentiated between nature's rhythm and historical changes and such layering of time has remained influential. However, clear-cut separations between nature's time and historical time are under reinterpretation, leaving this temporal organization in flux. Debated phenomena like the anthropocene are pushing us to rethink the links between nature's deep time and the shorter rhythm of human culture.

The aim of this workshop is to explore *scientific temporalities* in the period 1750-1950. In an era that has been labeled "the modern regime of historicity", how did different scientific fields conceptualize and mediate time? Contributions to the workshop include historical studies of geology, mineralogy, physics, archeology, ethnology and history. They explore sites, technologies and fields of knowledge where timescales were imagined and imaged. A central theme for the workshop is how visions of time at the intersection of nature and culture were shaped and circulated. Are there scientific temporalities producing relations between times of nature and times of culture, which do not map onto the modern regime of historicity?

In current media studies, it has been argued that media are part of our ecosystem and provide infrastructures, indeed conditions for our very existence (Peters, 2015). Can such claims inform new ways of understanding temporality as a mediated phenomenon? Moreover, building on shifts towards materiality in the humanities, how can we understand time as a material phenomenon? How did academic disciplines use materiality in their efforts to understand time?

The meeting brings together scholars from history of science, media history and cultural history. The time seems ripe to take these overlapping fields and turn them on the issue of scientific temporalities. Building on these research fields, the meeting aims to understand how scientific knowledge created multiple timescales, from "deep history" of the earth to ideas and methods in human historiography.

The meeting takes place at the Department for Culture and Aesthetics, Stockholm University 8-9 June 2017. It is arranged in conjunction with a series of lectures and workshops on media studies arranged at the same department 2-9 June under the heading "Media as infrastructures of being: Meaning, environment and history". The events in Stockholm will be arranged as part of a visit by media scholar John Durham Peters.

Program

Thursday 8 June

9.00-9.15 Introduction.

9.15-10.00 Helge Jordheim, "Diagrams of time in the 18th century: columns, branches, streams and layers."

10.00-10.45 Julia Nordblad, "Temporality and political representation in French revolutionary forest politics".

10.45-11.00 Coffee break.

11.00-11.45 Stine Alling Jacobsen, "Hollow figures: negotiating temporality in geological diagrams from Ivigtut, Greenland."

11.45-12.30 Emma Hagström Molin, "Instable objects of knowledge: Beda Dudik's archive research in Sweden and Italy 1851-53."

12.30-14.00: Lunch

14.00-14.45 John Durham Peters, "Time and Eternity in the Media Theology of Joseph Smith"

14.45-15.30 Ingrid Berg, "Creating an exceptional past: archaeology, temporal regimes and hierarchies of material visualization at Greek heritage sites, 1850-1950."

15.30-15.45 Coffee break

15.45-16.30 Bergsveinn Thorsson, "Science on the march: Modern museums making progress towards the end of eternity."

18.30 Workshop dinner at restaurant Rival.

Friday 9 June

9.00-9.45 Adam Wickberg Månsson, "Times of Nature, Times of Culture: Notions of Temporality in Alexander von Humboldt's *Journey to Equinoctial Regions* (1799-1804)".

9.45-10.30 Gustav Holmberg, "Time balls, radio signals and public clocks: Astronomy and the distribution of synchronized high-precision time 1852-1914."

10.30-11.00 Coffee break.

11.00-11.45 Lise Camilla Ruud, "Oil on display: Connecting pasts and futures in Norwegian museums."

11.45-12.30 Staffan Bergwik, "Layers of Time: Nature's Archive in Early Twentieth Century Visual Culture".

12.30-13.30 Lunch.

13.30-14.30 Concluding discussion.

Participants

Stine Alling, Department of cultural studies and oriental languages, University of Oslo.

Ingrid Berg, Department for archeology and classical languages, Stockholm University.

Staffan Bergwik, Department of culture and aesthetics, Stockholm University.

Anders Ekström, Department for history of science and ideas, Uppsala University.

Emma Hagström Molin, Department for history of science and ideas, Uppsala University.

Gustav Holmberg, Department of literature, history of ideas and religion, Gothenburg University.

Adam Wickberg Månsson, Department for culture and aesthetics, Stockholm University.

Julia Nordblad, Department for history of science and ideas, Uppsala University.

Helge Jordheim, Department of cultural studies and oriental languages, University of Oslo.

John Durham Peters, English and Film & Media Studies, Yale University.

Lise Camille Ruud, Department of cultural studies and oriental languages, University of Oslo.

Bergsveinn Thorsson, Department of cultural studies and oriental languages, University of Oslo.