



CALL FOR PAPERS

Narration in and of Histories of Science and Knowledge: Latin American and Caribbean Perspectives

Fall 2024
University of Maryland, College Park

The Red de Ciencias y Saberes en Latinoamérica y el Caribe (RECSLAC) invites papers for a workshop on Narration in and of Science and Knowledge. The meeting will take place at the University of Maryland, College Park in Fall 2024. We envision workshoping a set of papers that can later be published in an edited volume or special issue of a journal.

We will bring together 8-10 scholars interested in science and knowledge—broadly understood to encompass the natural, physical, and social sciences and (his)stories of medicine, environment, technology, and engineering as well as popular narratives on the natural worlds. Papers may explore:

- The narrative strategies of historians working on science and knowledge
- A broad range of popular and elite narratives regarding science itself
- The narratives embedded in the sources and archives historians use.

We welcome histories and historical reflections that probe how Latin American and Caribbean knowledges have been shaped by science outside its geographical borders. We also welcome papers examining how science outside the region has understood itself in relation to Latin America.

What kind of narratives have those outside the region developed in relation to Latin America and the Caribbean, and how have those narratives shaped our own work—both the topics we choose and how we write about them? Do particular narratives, or narratives from particular places, underscore certain topics to the exclusion of others? How have the pretensions of the Anglo-European world to providing universal explanations shaped narratives regarding Latin American and Caribbean. When and how might narrative strategies entrench or mitigate the association of the non-Anglo-European world—including Latin America and the Caribbean—with the particular? Specifically, how do prevailing narratives around processes like development, capitalism, commerce, democracy, efficiency—and around relationships with the animal, vegetal, and physical worlds—shape our sources, our own writing, and our interactions within and outside of academia?

Drawing from the “archival turn,” we welcome contributions regarding the narrative strategies deployed in the sources historians use, including scientific writing. How do the disciplinary norms of different forms of science and knowledge shape the narratives embedded in primary source materials and how have those strategies and norms shaped our own efforts to narrate science? What other influences shape scientific writing and other forms of communication regarding science? How do encounters with the material world—specific things and places—shape narratives?



We are concerned as well with the audiences for scholarly and popular narratives about science and knowledge. How do scholars' and popular communicators' perceptions of their audiences shape their narratives? To what extent does writing for popular audiences demand simplification? And how do the narratives deployed in academic historical writing differ from the narratives we use in the classroom?

Finally, how do narratives work to establish their claims to truth? In what ways can they challenge or undermine other forms of establishing truth? Specifically, what role do notions of discovery or creativity play in our romance with science and scientists? Where and how do notions of difference and exoticism enter into scientific writing and histories of science?

Those interested in participating should send a current CV and a 300 word abstract to hstem-lac@umd.edu by December 15, 2023. Please email any questions to this email.