

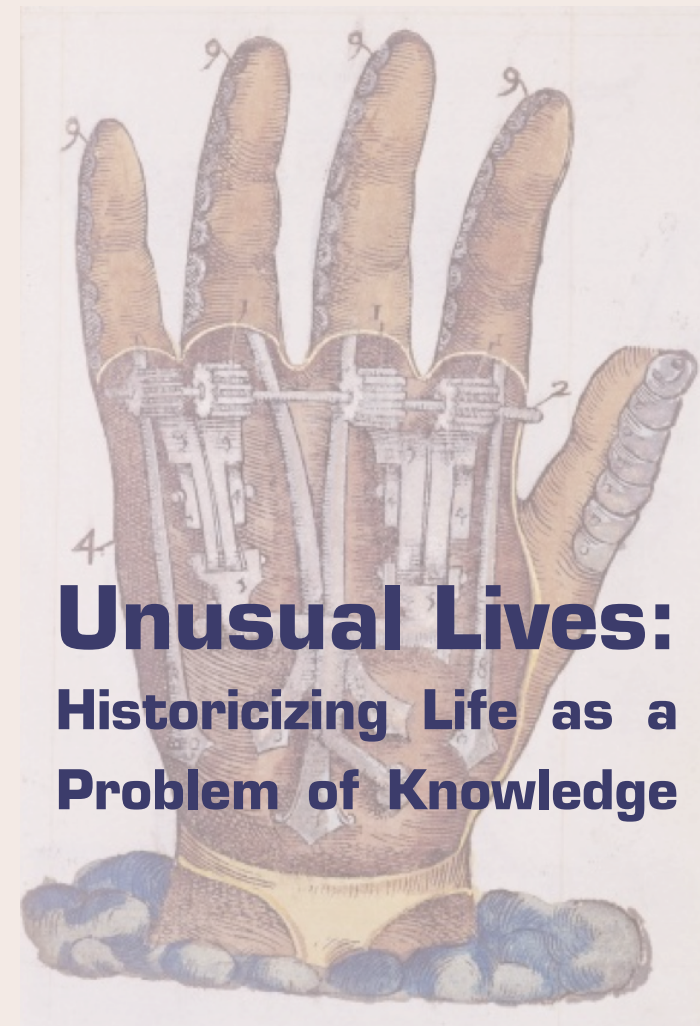


Illustrations: Front Cover: Artificial hand.

From: Ambroise Paré, *Instrumenta chirurgiae et icones anathomicae*, 1564, Wellcome Library, London.

Back Cover: *The Work of Tobias*. From: Tobias Cohn, *The House of the Body in: Ma'aseh Toviyah*, 1707, Wellcome Library, London.

Inside: Karl Ernst von Baer, Romanes, G. J. after Haeckel, E. - „Über Entwicklungsgeschichte der Thiere“ Bd. I-II. Königsberg, 1828, 1837.



Unusual Lives: Historicizing Life as a Problem of Knowledge

Workshop at MPIWG

14–15 November 2014

Organization:

**Teri Chettiar, Rohan Deb Roy,
and Michael Stanley-Baker**

Boltzmannstrasse 22 D-14195 Berlin

Telefon (+4930) 22667-0

Telefax (+4930) 22667-299

www.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de

Friday, 14 November

- 09:30–09:45 Introduction**
Rohan Deb Roy (MPIWG)
- 09:45–10:45 Materializing Life**
Jenny Bangham (MPIWG):
Living and Dead Materials in Studies of Racial Difference
Victoria Lee (MPIWG): *Screening for Gifts: Japanese Microbial Gardens and Their Uses*
- 10:45–11:15 Coffee Break**
- 11:15–12:45 Materializing Life** (cont.)
Sophia Roosth (Harvard): *Analysis: Synthesis. Synthetic Life as Materialized Theory*
Comment: Lara Keuck (MPIWG)
- 13:00–14:00 Lunch**
- 14:00–15:00 Reframing the Boundaries of Life**
Jutta Müller-Tamm (Freie Universität Berlin):
Life and Repetition: Metempsychosis as Biological Concept in the Early 19th Century
Isabel Gabel (Columbia University):
Raymond Aron, Maurice Caullery, and the Philosophy of History
- 15:00–15:30 Coffee Break**
- 15:30–17:00 Reframing the Boundaries of Life** (cont.)
Claudia Stein/Roger Cooter (Warwick University):
History and the Politics of "Life"
Comment: Sean Dyde (MPIWG)

Saturday, 15 November

- 09:30–10:30 Living Subjects**
David Armstrong (King's College, London):
Mental Life
Teri Chettiar (Humboldt Universität):
Cultivating Social Life in Mid-Twentieth Century Health Experiments
- 10:30–11:00 Coffee Break**
- 11:00–12:30 Living Subjects** (cont.)
Shigehisa Kuriyama (Harvard):
The Origins of Relaxation
Comment: Nina Lerman (MPIWG)
- 12:30–13:30 Lunch**
- 13:30–14:30 Transforming Life: Exchanges and Intersections**
Anna Andreeva (Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg): *Explaining Conception, Pregnancy, and Childbirth to Women: Buddhist and Medical Knowledge in Sansei Ruijusho 產生類聚抄 (c. 1318)*
Michael Stanley-Baker (MPIWG): *Plural Lives: Conversations about Practices of Life in Early Medieval China*
- 14:30–15:00 Coffee Break**
- 15:00–16:30 Transforming Life: Exchanges and Intersections** (cont.)
Hugh Raffles (New School for Social Research):
All Life is Here
Comment: Sonam Kachru (University of Chicago)

- 16:30–17:30 Final Roundtable Discussion**
Dagmar Schäfer (MPIWG),
Angela Creager (Princeton)

Unusual Lives: Historicizing Life as a Problem of Knowledge

What are the boundaries that distinguish the living from the non-living? How is life itself—and the properties that are perceived as shared by all living things—best understood, manipulated, and used? Life seems to be one of the most enduring self-evident categories—it appears obvious and timeless. And yet, the distinctly contingent features of life (nonhuman as well as human) have increasingly come to draw the attention of anthropologists, sociologists, historians of science, and critical theorists. Scholarly engagement with the politics of life has become fundamental to debates concerning global issues ranging from copyrights to climate change, from artificial intelligence to animal rights, from abortion to euthanasia. This workshop simultaneously draws upon and speaks to these discussions, and in doing so situates the theme of “life” as a central problematic within the history of knowledge. Thus, rather than internalizing conceptions about life as a priori and given, this workshop inquires into the multiple and varied histories of efforts to understand, delimit, and master life. It focuses on the surprises, exclusions, and conflicts generated by the diverse historical processes which have shaped life as a readymade phenomenon at distinct moments in time and space.