

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP

SCIENCE AS CULTURAL HEGEMONY:
GRAMSCIAN CONCEPTS FOR THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE

23-24 January, 2014

Centre d'Història de la Ciència (CEHIC)

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB)-Institut d'Estudis Catalans (IEC)

Barcelona

CALL FOR PAPERS

In spite of the longstanding perception of modern science as value-free knowledge of the external world, the boundaries between a supposed ideology-free history of ideas and an ideology-loaded social history of science have been progressively blurred in the last decades. As a result, criticisms of the autonomy and neutrality of modern science have permeated more or less explicitly recent historiography of science. Within such a framework, the profiles, responsibilities and commitments of academics, and especially of those involved in the natural sciences, have been dramatically realigned.

As some recent scholarship has shown, of particular significance in discussing these issues are the reflections of the political thinker Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937). In his *Prison Notebooks* of the 1920s and the 1930s, he provided scholars with an effective vocabulary to critically grasp new interactions between science and society. Key notions such as “cultural hegemony,” and the role of the “intellectuals” (scientists, experts, popularizers, educators), when raised within the context of historiography of science, may help to articulate new approaches for understanding the relationship between science and social control.

The workshop aims at examining and assessing the ways in which hegemonic values and science have been continuously intertwined. It may provide the opportunity to bring to surface the manner in which science—through its practices, conceptions, justifications, transmission, circulation and employment—mirrored power relations in the past.

Contributions focused on specific case studies, and historiographical papers are equally welcome.

The workshop will be organized around the following themes:

1. The ways in which power relations and ideology have been historically reflected in scientific practices and in the circulation of knowledge through hegemonic values.
2. The rhetoric of “neutral objectivity of science” and its relation in social control and in governance as technocracy.
3. The relation between science and popular culture and the forms of interaction between experts and laymen.
4. The collective responsibility of intellectuals and the possibilities for building up a critical discourse in the natural sciences.
5. The struggle for academic hegemony in history of science, science teaching, science popularization, and geography of science (especially the center-periphery relations).

We specifically urge the participation of young scholars.

The workshop language will be English.

It is intended to publish a volume with papers, which will be further elaborated as a result of the discussions during the workshop.

Please send a title and an abstract proposal of no more than 400 words to Agustí Nieto-Galan [agusti.nieto@uab.cat] before 01 May 2013.

Papers accepted by the Scientific Committee will be announced by 15 June 2013, including the first draft programme of the workshop (with specific sections and commentators).

Draft texts (3000 words) of the accepted papers need to be sent to the Scientific Committee no later than 15 September 2013. The papers will be circulated among all participants by 15 October 2013.

Speakers will have to cover their trip and accommodation expenses in Barcelona. Those attending the workshop but not giving a paper will have to cover a registration fee (50€). (registration will open on June 15, via webpage)

Scientific Committee:

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For further information, please contact any of the members of the Scientific Committee