

Call for papers for
Genre & Histoire
N° 22 (Fall 2018)

**The nature of gender, the gender of nature:
Environmental battles in Europe since the end of the 18th century**

Although environmental history and gender history have both revitalized historical studies, they have for a long time followed different paths, that only crossed at the end of the 1980s, particularly in the work of Carolyn Merchant¹. Two decades later, the assessment made by Nancy Unger is mitigated²: even though researches combining the two approaches have been more numerous, gender still remains quite marginal to the historiography of environmental history; when it is taken into consideration, the approach is often essentialist, the limits of which have been demonstrated by Melissa Leach and Cathy Green in a seminal article³. Moreover, this dual approach is mostly due to an Anglo-Saxon, or even American, historiography, whereas European studies remain relatively scarce, at least in history – they tend on the contrary to multiply in sociology, psychology or philosophy⁴. *Genesis* has been one of the first journals to publish a special issue in 2013 on “Women and men in environmental history”, dealing with the role of women in nature preservation, with a gender representation of the land, with the role of settler’s wives in colonial territories, and finally with women as victims of environmental catastrophes⁵. This call for papers wishes to follow the paths opened by this journal, while slightly narrowing its focus.

We would like to invite papers dealing with environmental battles in Europe since the end of the 18th century. The last two centuries have indeed witnessed a re-defining of gender roles and relations, due to feminist demands and to an upheaval of traditional structures triggered by industrialisation and urbanisation, but also a profound transformation in the way people relate to an environment that has become a matter of concern, and needs to be protected.

Some of the issues that could be dealt with are:

- Women’s roles: can we assess the role played by women, famous or unknown, in environmental battles? Have they justified their action by gender motives? Could environmental struggles be used as a tool for women’s emancipation? To what extent are women nowadays involved in European Green Parties, the environmental movement, animal rights organizations, but also alternative communities and activism (anti-globalisation movements, “Zones to Defend” (ZAD), etc.)?

- Environmental housewives? : the distribution of roles within the family shows that most women do assume a more important domestic workload than men, while

¹ Carolyn Merchant : *The death of nature : women, ecology and the scientific revolution*, London, Wilson House, 1980 ; « Gender and Environmental History », *The Journal of American History*, vol. 76, 1990, p. 1117-1121.

² Nancy C. Unger, « Women and Gender. Useful Categories of Analysis in Environmental History », dans Andrew C. Isenberg, *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental History*, Oxford, OUP, 2014.

³ Melissa Leach et Cathy Green, « Gender and Environmental History : from representations of women and nature to gender analysis of ecology and politics », *Environment and History*, vol. 3, n° 3, Octobre 1997, p. 343-370.

⁴ See for instance: Anne-Lise Gandon, *Les représentations sociales du développement durable : des enjeux de sexe et de genre*, thèse de doctorat soutenue à l'Université Lyon 2, École doctorale Sciences de l'éducation, psychologie, information et communication, 2011 ; conference « Care, Genre et environnement », Université Lyon 3, from the 7th to the 11th of September 2015, organised by Hélène Guétat-Bernard, Pauline Texier-Teixeira, Pascale Moity Maïzi and Catherine Larrère ; Catherine Larrère, « L'écoféminisme : féminisme écologique ou écologie féministe », *Tracés*, n° 22, 2012/1 ; Jules Falquet, Sandra Laugier, Pascale Molinier, *Genre et environnement. Nouvelles menaces, nouvelles analyses au Nord et au Sud*, numéro des *Cahiers du Genre*, n° 59, 2015/2.

⁵ Stefania Barca et Laura Guidi, *Ecotorie. Donne et uomini nella storia dell'ambiente*, numéro de *Genesis*, n° XII/2, 2013.

some sociological studies demonstrate that they are more aware of landscape's protection and recycling than most of the population. Has this specific, traditional gendered relation induced women to take part in environmental education, the cleanliness of towns and the managing of natural resources, or was it used as an excuse to limit women's action to certain activities?

- Forging alliances: are minority groups especially involved in environmental struggles? What part, for example, have lesbians played in the fight for animal rights, or in the defense of vegetarianism and veganism? To what extent did the counter-culture of the 1970s and 1980s (hippies, punks, squatters...) take into account the demands for civil rights, feminism, LGBT rights, as well as the protection of the environment? Is it possible to establish a link between speciesism, ableism, sexism and racism? What are the gendered patterns of environmental inequalities in the current debate on environmental justice?

- Pioneers of ecofeminism? : have European women claimed, like some of their American sisters, that they have a particular legitimacy in the environmental struggle, making men responsible for the brutalization of nature? What role did ecofeminism play in Europe since 1974, when Françoise d'Eaubonne created this concept that links women's oppression and the destruction of nature?

- A « sentimental » struggle? : do environmental struggles participate in the redefinition of gender and women's roles? The epithet « sentimental » has been linked to both women and nature activists as a way to disqualify environmental struggles. Women have therefore been dismissed as unable to work in the public sphere, while men involved in feminist battles have been supposed to have lost all virile characteristics. What about these stereotypical representations in the time of ZAD and ecoterrorism?

- Does nature have a gender? : more generally, is the commitment of female and male environmental activists based on a gendered concept of nature ? Is nature the place where the virility of men, weakened by their urban and industrial environment, could be rebuilt, or does it offer the possibility of a sympathetic and "feminized" relation to the beauties of the world? To what extent could the presence of more women in scientific research negate the gender bias of industrial and energy policies or medical research, which have a direct impact on environmental policies?

Proposals for paper (CV + abstract no longer than 1000 words), in English or in French, should be submitted to Charles-François Mathis (cfmathis@hotmail.com) and Florence Tamagne (ftamagne@gmail.com) by 15 January 2017. Response to authors by 15 February 2017.

Selected papers, in English or in French, should be sent by 30 June 2017. They will be reviewed by experts before final acceptance.