Disease and Health in the Age of the Anthropocene, 1800-2000

The modern era was characterized by the idea that humans could rule over nature with an iron fist. Projects to transform nature were broad and ambitious: to transform deserts into gardens, reverse the flow of rivers, drain wetlands, transfer plants and domestic animals from one continent to another, and even burn fossil fuel to heat the climate. The idea that humans could rule over nature, and pollute it, without being affected by nature in turn, rested on the idea that society and environment were separate and independent and that humans were outside nature. This was the myth of the modern era. But was it possible to conquer nature, as so many in the modern era believed? In recent years, a more ecological understanding of the impact of human interventions in the environment has been developed, unsettling this modern myth. This literature sees human life and culture as entangled in the environment and dependent on it.

For their MA research, students are invited to join an exciting and dynamic area of historical research dedicated to studying the unintended consequences of environmental interventions on human and animal health and disease. This is a very open and new field and there are many new topics ripe for research. Some possible areas of study include:

- The historical relationship between the environment and specific diseases in either the pre-bacteriological, bacteriological, or ecological age, and in local, regional, national, international or global context, focusing on diseases (diseases to study include but are not limited to bubonic plague, typhoid, tuberculosis, whooping cough, measles, malaria, hookworm, diphtheria, cholera, smallpox, lead poisoning, asthma, diabetes, or cancer).
- The historical production of environmental knowledge in specific disciplines of medicine (in fields such as toxicology, oncology, public health, tropical medicine, or medical climatology) and/or the environmental impacts of this knowledge;
- Popular movements to study the impact of industrial and agricultural emissions and waste on health and disease ("people's epidemiology.")
- The historical precedents of the current turn to "planetary health."
- Climate (change) and health as historically conceptualized and studied.
- Environmentalist movements in relation to human health and disease;
- The health consequences of nuclear disasters and routine nuclear testing
- Diverse epistemological frameworks for understanding the nature-society-health relationship (such as indigenous, decolonial, and within biomedicine).

- Ideas about the body and mind in relation to environment.
- Probiotic approaches to health and disease and microbe studies.

Making use of Norwegian-language primary sources is encouraged, however supervision will take place in English. Interested students are invited to get in touch to discuss their research interests. Drop me an email!