

Alan Bewell

Natural History and Translation

Linnaeus understood natural history as having a revolutionary promise in its capacity to name and thus to classify all living things, conceiving himself as a second Adam completing the project of naming begun in Eden. This flattering viewpoint was misleading in many ways, not least of all because the plants and animals that came under Linnaeus's scrutiny were not so much being named for the first time as being renamed and culturally re-encoded - that is, translated. Natural history also physically translated natures, thus making it possible for them to circulate globally as words and things. Colonial natural history is an essentially translational activity, focused upon moving natures from one place or culture to another. Bewell examines the global implications of this process, seeing natural history as a practice of possession in and through translation.

Alan Bewell is Professor and Chair of English at the University of Toronto. His primary field of interest is British Romanticism in three major areas: the relationship between literature, medicine, and science; the history of colonialism; and environmental history. He is author of *Wordsworth and the Enlightenment* and *Romanticism and Colonial Disease*, and was also editor of *Medicine and the West Indian Slave Trade*. He is currently completing a book entitled *Natures in Translation: Romanticism and Colonial Natural History* and is working on another entitled *Romantic Mobility*.

