

American and British Walk Poetry from the Romantic Period to the Present

STUDENT CONFERENCE

Date: July 3rd 2020

Place: University of Göttingen, Seminar für Englische Philologie

Thoreau, in modelling himself on the British Romantics, discovers the self through what he calls “the art of walking”. The movement of the subject in nature invites instances of self-reflection vis-à-vis physical landmarks. A destination provides poets with a chance to reflect on their starting points. The art of walking thus has personal implications, but political and territorial ones as well. The question of who divides the landscape into units allotted to specific political or private actors is implicit in even the most idyllic walks. Which part of the land is walkable, which parts are divided along racial, economic or industrial lines? Which spaces belong to the private, which to the public, and who belongs where? This student conference will explore these and related questions. We encourage papers that explore, for instance, the historical and economic forces that led to the emergence of the flâneur figure, and its gendered implications. Is there a link between metrical and human feet? Do other forms of transportation produce other forms of poetry? Can the association of walking and nature be translated into contemporary urban poetry? Can walking be linked to other forms of movement, e.g. trade, migration, or the movement of capital?

Topics may include but are not limited to:

- Walking and
 - rhyme, meter and form
 - nature
 - the city
 - the self
 - gender
 - metaphor
 - Romanticism or modernity
 - British and American nature poetics
 - Romantic and Transcendentalist conceptions of self-discovery in nature
 - Representations of differently coded spaces (e.g. city vs. country, “wild” nature vs. enclosures, “wild” nature vs. industrialized spaces)
 - Implications of race, colonization, trade and (forced or voluntary) mobility in perceiving place
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Please send 100-200 word proposals to Johanna Siebelmann (johanna.siebelmann@stud.uni-goettingen.de) by May 15th.