Romanticism's Colonial Legacies in and Beyond Europe (Frankfurt, 10-12 Oct 24)

Frankfurt am Main, Oct 10–12, 2024
Deadline: Feb 29, 2024

Dr Miguel Gaete

Romanticism's Colonial Legacies in and Beyond Europe: Critical Perspectives on Art and Visual Culture.

The study of Romanticism has been markedly imbued with a sense of heroism, an epic aura, and a novelistic ethos, ultimately culminating in a pronounced "romanticisation" of that era. However, this standpoint proves insufficient to elucidate the evolution of Romanticism and its impact beyond Europe. While some studies have critically engaged with the nationalist aspects of some variants of European Romanticism, matters pertaining to race, class, expansionism, and colonialism seemed not to belong to the Romantics' sensitivity, becoming "the monsters hidden in the attic" of Romanticism studies. Scholarship has so far neglected, for example, the role played by the Romantic generation as agents of power actively engaged in the surveying, chronicling, mapping and imaginative rendering of distant territories that either already were or were about to be colonised.
Similarly, practices such as the classification and depiction of flora, fauna, and humans carried out at and beyond the boundaries of Europe in the name of Enlightenment ideals are widely praised, despite the involvement of Romantic sciences in an extensive global inventory project that, for the most part, sought the imposition of a singular and dominant conception of knowledge as part of the Western agenda of modernity.

In light of these observations, the conference seeks to expand the critical examination of late 18th- and 19th-century art and visual culture, including intermedial perspectives. We aim to challenge canonical narratives by delving into the intricate connections with wider socio-political dimensions. These encompass racialism, class, gender, evolution, Imperialism, and colonial power. We warmly invite presentations that address facets and transformations of Romantic art and, more widely, late 18th- and 19th-centuries visual cultures in the Americas, the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, and Oceania, as well as Europe and its peripheries viewed through the lenses of intersectionality, (eco-)feminism, Marxism, postcolonial theories, Indigenous epistemologies and critical race studies.

Possible areas of focus and themes include:

• Romanticism and race
• Arts and Romantic sciences
• Concepts of 'Nature' and 'Landscape'

• Romantic ecology
• The Sublime and the (tropical) Picturesque
• Botanical and zoological illustrations
• Maps and cartographies
• Gender and sexuality
• Nationalism(s) and colonialism(s)
• Indigeneity and Europeanness
• Class and social relationships

The language of the conference is English. Please email abstracts (max. 300 words), a short biography (150 words) and a selected list of publications to Dr Miguel Gaete (miguel.gaete@york.ac.uk) by 29th February 2024. Total or partial travel expenses can be covered if needed.

Organisers:
Prof. Dr. Mechthild Fend
Dr. Miguel Gaete
Prof. Dr. Frederike Middelhoff

Keynote Speaker
Professor Luciana Martins (Birkbeck University London)

More information:
https://romantikforschung.uni-frankfurt.de/romanticisms-colonial-legacies-in-and-beyond-europe-critical-perspectives-on-art-and-visual-culture/

Reference:
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