

Veranstalterin:	<b>Rebekka Rohleder, M. A.</b>
Thema:	<b>“A man speaking to men”: Romanticism and Authorship [AA-A2, ENG-6, AA-W]</b>
Art der Veranstaltung:	<b>Seminar Ib</b>
Veranstaltungsnummer:	<b>53-544</b>
Zeit:	<b>2st., Mo, 12-14:00</b>
Raum:	<b>Phil 1269</b>
Beginn:	<b>17.10.2011</b>

### **Kommentar zur Veranstaltung:**

“What is a poet?” William Wordsworth famously asks in his programmatic 1802 preface to his and Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s *Lyrical Ballads*, and goes on to answer his own question with the formula that a poet is simply “a man speaking to men” – although, as he takes some pains to explain, a man who is in many ways singled out as different from other men by, among other things, a “more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness”, “a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul”. By the end of his long list of qualities which make a poet, the equality suggested by the initial formula has all but disappeared. The poet is singled out from other men by his creative abilities.

“Qu’est-ce qu’ un auteur?”: “What is an Author?” Michel Foucault asks in 1969, in an influential essay in which he argues that the idea of the creative literary author who is endowed with an unlimited authority over his own text must be historicized. The concept of ‘the author’ (like the concept of ‘literature’) is not a natural given: it depends on certain presuppositions which are, historically, relatively recent.

In fact, Romanticism, that is, the period in which Wordsworth tries to define the poet, as quoted above, is often singled out as the period which marks the beginning of the modern conception of authorship. Here, the literary author emerges as the original genius who is creative and who is supposed to be endowed with absolute authority over the meanings created in his text.

In this class, we will approach this Romantic theory of authorship both from a contemporary theoretical perspective and in the forms it takes in Romantic literary and poetological texts. We will look at the authorial self-presentation of selected Romantic writers in order to culturally situate the idea of the author, e.g. in terms of gender (“a man speaking to men”) and of the relationship (which is also a legal one) of the author to his work. We will explore the functioning of the Romantic idea of authorship as well as its internal contradictions. Additionally, historicizing ‘the author’ will also throw light on how and why the term is problematic for contemporary literary studies.

The usual conditions for getting a “Schein” apply: regular and active participation, a short presentation, and a term paper (10 pages).

Texts will be provided in a reader at the beginning of the semester.

<b>Sprechstunde während der Vorlesungszeit:</b>	<b>nach Vereinbarung per E-mail</b>
<b>Sprechstunden während der Semesterferien:</b>	<b>nach Vereinbarung per E-mail</b>