

**Romantic Rhine Travels:  
Exotic landscape, cultural character, national perspectives**

*Workshop to be held in Autumn 2010 at the  
Study Platform on Interlocking Nationalisms*

This workshop is the initial meeting of what is proposed as a thematic research group on “The Rhine as a cultural space in romantic nationalism” - a more extensive outline on which is available from [info@spinnet.eu](mailto:info@spinnet.eu)

In the decades around 1800, the Rhine Valley became an increasingly prominent feature in travels and travel accounts. As the mode of travel itself underwent a change from the educational Grand Tour to the romantic pilgrimage-quest for emotional authenticity, the Rhine valley became more than merely a passage between the Alps and the North Sea, or between Berlin and Paris: travellers began to find in its picturesque landscape, medieval ruins and quaint towns a *lieu de mémoire*: a hidden valley perpetuating a true, medieval-Gothic cultural continuum and harmonious unity between settlement and landscape.

At the same time, the Rhine’s geopolitical importance in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars and the post-Napoleonic restoration invested it with the fateful ambivalence of being seen either as Germany’s borderland or Germany’s artery. Access to, and control over, the Rhine was claimed by all its contiguous states.

The testimonies of generations of travellers from different countries and from different ideological persuasions, from Byron to Schlegel and from Arndt to Victor Hugo, offers a multinational body of evidence on the new investment of the Rhine with both cultural and political meanings. A supranational-comparative analysis of these travel accounts is proposed for this workshops, which will combine some 10 selected papers over a 1-2 day period at the SPIN offices in Amsterdam. The workshop will aim to extend both the inventory of the available primary sources and the methodology of assessing their importance and function.

Paper proposals are herewith invited. A brief outline should be submitted to the SPIN office before the end of March. Upon selection, the entire text (12-15 pp.) is to be submitted by 31 August, so that a full reading dossier can be distributed to all participants in time for the Autumn workshop. The workshop sessions will involve a ten-minute précis of each paper presented by the autor followed by 30 mins. Publication of the proceedings is envisaged.