

[Walking, Empire, and Nineteenth-Century Literature](#)

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Call for Papers

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July 31, 2022

Subject Fields:

Colonial and Post-Colonial History / Studies, Immigration & Migration History / Studies, Literature, Languages, Area Studies

Call for contributions to an edited collection

Walking, Empire, and Nineteenth-Century Literature

Deadline for Proposal Submissions: July 31, 2022

Editors: Dr. Vivian Kao, Associate Professor, Department of Humanities, Lawrence Technological University;

Dr. Joshua Bartlett, Assistant Professor, Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey

Walkers and walking figure prominently in the literature and literary theory of the long nineteenth century. Wordsworth, Hazlitt, Thoreau, and Leslie Stephen, for instance, explored walking's potential to unite the human and natural worlds, the individual and the community, the rich and the poor, the past and the present. In the Victorian period, walking was associated with slumming, prostitution, and the seamier side of industrial progress, and by the turn of the century with ambling, strolling, and wandering. In the twentieth century, to walk was to resist conformity (Debord), to elude detection by the surveillance state (Certeau), and to escape the rationalizing tendencies of capitalism and technologization.

But all of these examples center on British, European, and American walkers walking in Britain, Europe, and America. What about the ways in which walking manifested in imperial geographies—in spaces not characterized by agrarian idyll, fashionable arcades, and busy metropolises, but instead by the heat of the desert and the stench of the tropics, by unfamiliar flora and fauna, and through encounters with the foreign, the uncontrollable, and the inexplicable?

This edited collection will investigate representations, accounts, theorizations, and

other textual explorations of walking in imperial geographies and contexts in the long nineteenth century. We seek chapters that explore connections between walking and empire in literatures of all languages, with special interest in non-English and non-European empires and literatures.

Chapters may consider, but are not limited to, the following questions, with respect to the long nineteenth century, broadly defined:

- Which characters in which texts walked, where, with whom, and why?
- Was walking an act of individual agency, communal solidarity, or institutional punishment?
- Did the same or similar acts of walking signify differently for different individuals, communities, or populations?
- How might British, European, or American cultural histories of walking translate, confront, or fail to interpret acts of walking in British, European, or American colonial territories?
- How does walking figure in the literary traditions associated with non-Western empires (e.g. Russian, Ottoman, Chinese, Japanese)?
- How does walking relate to literary representations of East-West, transnational, or trans-regional interaction? To representations of cosmopolitanism?
- How does walking relate to notions of imperial destiny, or help those at home imagine an imperial community?
- How did walking express or interrogate notions of nostalgia, futurity, or trans-historic belonging or rejection?
- How might walking relate to other kinds of human movement, or other terms that signal mobility, such as *migration*, *transportation*, *diaspora*, or *travel*?
- How might literary representations of walking provide new ways of understanding empire's relation to the environment, to the forging of new (or reviving of old) identities, or to notions of utility, improvement, progress, and humanitarianism?
- How might walking figure in contemporary eco-criticism of the nineteenth century, or nineteenth-century understandings of ecology?

Please submit a brief chapter proposal (250-300 words) along with a brief bio (100 words or less) to Vivian Kao (vkao@ltu.edu) and Joshua Bartlett (joshua.bartlett@bilkent.edu.tr).

Final essays should be 5000-6000 words. Interested contributors are encouraged to email with questions regarding their proposals.

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