

CfP: Literary Scandals as Forms of Cultural Transgression

We are pleased to announce this CfP for the upcoming Conference on *Literary Scandals as Forms of Cultural Transgression*, to be held on November 9-10, 2023, which aims to explore the intriguing realm of literary scandals and their impact on society. The event is hosted by the International Graduate Center for the Study of Culture (GCSC), Justus-Liebig University, Giessen, and organized in collaboration with the International PhD Programme in Literary and Cultural Studies (IPP) and the Department of English.

Literary scandals possess the profound ability to impact and challenge mindsets, leaving an indelible mark on literature, cultural consciousness, and societal progression. Such scandals have the potential to disrupt the status quo, unveil societal taboos, and ignite critical conversations. By pushing the boundaries of acceptability and confronting deeply ingrained norms, they compel readers and scholars to reevaluate established notions of morality, identity, and artistic expression. Literary scandals can jolt individuals out of complacency, forcing them to confront uncomfortable truths and question long-held beliefs. Through their disruptive nature, scandals serve as catalysts for introspection, provoking intense intellectual engagement and prompting the exploration of complex ethical and social dilemmas within and beyond the literary realm.

We use a rather wide definition of the term 'scandal' that enables us to include shocking excesses of, say, pedophilia, violence, or misogyny (as in *Lolita* or *American Psycho*) but also literary works such as *The Satanic Verses* (which was a religious scandal for some), *Fifty Shades of Grey* (which is read by many women to navigate their relationships in the twenty-first century) or *Gender Queer* (a coming-of-age-memoir of a non-binary person which is banned in many states in the US).

We invite submissions from researchers and professionals from diverse disciplines and perspectives that shed light on the concept of literary scandals, their historical and contemporary manifestations, and their significance in shaping literary landscapes. Although the examples mentioned above come from the twentieth and twentieth-first centuries, we also welcome submissions that deal with instances from previous periods, as introducing a diachronic dimension sheds light on how norms and values are mutable and change through time.

Potential topics for paper submissions include, but are not limited to:

- Coming to terms with key concepts of scandal(ization) as a process, namely the idea that books are not scandalous *per se* but acquire said status by a process of socialization, which may include critical commentary, mass media, social media, and other forms of social interaction.

- Exploring the history and the impact of literary scandals on social, cultural, and political contexts.
- Analyses of scandals surrounding renowned literary works, authors, or movements.
- The intersection of scandals, censorship, and freedom of expression in literature.
- The determination of the moral implications of literary strategies.
- Gender, sexuality, and identity issues in literary scandals.
- Ethical considerations and controversies in the publishing industry.
- The role of media and public opinion in shaping literary scandals.
- Comparative studies of literary scandals across different cultures and time periods.
- Exploring the diachronic dimension of scandals and how norms and values are subject to change.

Interested participants are invited to submit a 350-word abstract outlining their proposed paper and a 150-word biography. The abstract should provide a clear overview of the research objectives, methodology, and expected contributions to the field.

Please send your submissions via email to ipp@ggk.uni-giessen.de no later than September 15, 2023. Accepted presenters will be notified by October 1, 2023 and will be expected to deliver a 20-minute presentation at the conference. As a conference that is intended to comprise 8-10 papers in total, we are happy to announce that all travel and accommodation costs will be covered by our institution, should you be accepted.

We look forward to your valuable contributions and an engaging exchange of ideas. For any inquiries or further information, please feel free to contact us at ipp@ggk.uni-giessen.de.

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