

CfP for DLA Marbach's Postgraduates' and ECRs' Conference
“War and Peace. Negotiations in Literature and other Media”
(November 23-24, 2023)

The postgraduates and ECRs of the German Schiller Association (Junge DSG) invite the submission of abstracts for an interdisciplinary conference at the German Literature Archive in Marbach (DLA).

War and Peace. Negotiations in Literature and other Media

War ranks among the most dominant motifs in literature – encompassing all centuries, cultures, and genres. From Homer's epic poem the *Iliad* (8th/7th century B.C.) to recent publications such as Ronya Othmann's book of poems entitled *Die Verbrechen* (2021), we encounter war as a central scene of literature.

Following [last year's Young DSG kick-off conference](#), which was concerned with the subject of solitude, we now turn to human beings and their conflicts in society. On the one hand, war represents a state of emergency and a disruption of peaceful social coexistence. On the other hand, wars mark a tragic historical normalcy. Hardly a year went by in history without people fighting each other. Hence, there are two opposing perceptions: of war as an intrusion into the normal state of peace; and of war as a basic/default state of (human) existence. Literature, theater, audio-visual media, and games document, reflect upon, and handle these changes of socio-political realities through the tools and methods available to these arts, resulting in the construction of meaning.

Literature is a cultural archive and as such it is war's medium of expression as well as its means of communication. In literature, wars—fictional as well as factual in nature—are depicted, the causes of wars investigated, or the consequences of war put into writing. At the same time, literary texts present the antagonism of 'war and peace' time and again. As subject matter, war provides numerous crises, plot structures, motif and character configurations as well as modes of representation for works of literature. The fact that narratives of war always deal with dynamics of power and violence makes them interesting for analytical methods taken from gender and postcolonial studies. In war, literature is also used strategically. Both criticism and the approval or glorification of war are the subject of aesthetic reflections (cf. literary mobilization). Through works of literature, authors position themselves towards war just as ruling powers may instrumentalize the rhetorical potential of literature for their own purposes (for example, in the form of propaganda). War thus provides the material grounds for literature with a political intent, be it in Jünger's *Storm of Steel* or in Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

The aim of this conference is to discuss the varied functions of war in literature, and, vice versa, the real and potential functions of literature in times of war. To this end, the following questions are pivotal, although we also welcome contributions on other relevant topics:

- Are there specific means of representation put to use in narratives of war?
- Is reference made to specific concepts within the theme of war (e.g., bellicism, pacifism, social utopias or dystopias)?
- What is the relationship between literary texts and real historical wars?
- What examples exist of the use of literature in actual war situations?
- To what extent can (fictional) literature in the context of war be used for documentary purposes at all?
- Can certain developments and paradigm shifts in the literary discussion of wars be identified? What connections can be observed between real wars and their literary perception, representation, and—at times—fictionalization?

- How does the evaluation of war in literature change over time? When is war considered to be right, that is, unalterable? When is it considered wrong? And what literary devices are used to express these respective sentiments?
- What gender-, culture-, or class-specific standardizations do literary texts negotiate in relation to war?
- What is the relationship between war and peace in specific literary texts?
- Which changes/developments in the aesthetics of war representation can be identified with regard to digital media (e.g., concerning the role of social media in wars of the 21st century)?
- What is the relationship between various forms of representation of war, especially text and image, but also—gaining in importance since the 20th century—film??

The annual conference, organized with the support of the German Schiller Association (DSG) and the German Literary Archive in Marbach (DLA), is intended to give ECRs the opportunity to present their research, to get acquainted with the DLA and its museums, and to discuss relevant issues affecting ECRs beyond their immediate field of research. While the network invites scholarly dialogue, it also aims to facilitate opportunities for free and informal exchange between participants and experts about career paths and the challenges ECRs may encounter prior to, during, and after the qualification period. The conference is composed of four parts:

- 1. Panels and Talks (interdisciplinary)**
- 2. Tour of the archive and the museums in Marbach**
- 3. Evening event and public reading**
- 4. Soft skills workshop on peace and conflict mediation**

ECRs wishing to present a research paper (for 1.) should submit **abstracts** (of max. 300 words; for a 20-minute presentation) reflecting on “War in Literature and other Media” accompanied by a **short CV**. Note it is still possible to attend the conference without giving a research paper.

You do not have to be a member of the German Schiller Association or a Schiller researcher in order to submit an abstract. External submissions are welcome!

- Presentations can be given in German or English
- The **deadline** for submissions is **April 3, 2023**
- **Please submit abstracts [using this portal](#)**
- For **further inquiries and registration** (for attendees not giving a paper), please email: forschung@dla-marbach.de
- The conference is planned to take place in-person

Concept (all Junge DSG): Dilan C. Çakir, Nursan Celik, Nele Feuring, Patrick Graur, Katharina Hertfelder, Hevin Karakurt, Katharina Klanke, Felix Lempp, Marie Limbourg, Stephanie Obermeier, Anna Weber, Sven Spaltner, Anna Spener, Rebecca Sturm, Viola Völlm

More information about the work of the German Schiller Association can be found here: <https://www.dla-marbach.de/ueber-uns/traegerverein-dsg/>