

## **Narratives and Narrativity in the Study of Violence**

**Two workshops at Goethe University Frankfurt (Main) in November (3-4) and December (8-9) 2022**

The interdisciplinary research initiative on "Power and Abuse" at Goethe University brings together researchers from a range of social sciences and humanities, such as education, history, theology, philosophy, and law. It bundles research on phenomena of power abuse and violence against children, adolescents and adults. For Fall/Winter 2022, it focuses on research into violence and narrativity.

The narrative of experiences of violence as well as the interpretation of those narratives take on a central role not only in the scientific but also in the social view on abuse of power and violence in social relations of proximity, dependency and vulnerability. Yet there is a very intimate side to the telling of violent experiences. It is by no means self-evident that survivors talk about violence and experienced abuse of power. A basic condition for this also seems to be that a person can trust that he or she will be listened to and believed. Only in this way can narratives also set the process of acknowledgement, investigation and redress in motion. The concept of witnessing becomes (especially) important in this context.

Also, there is the question of narratives from different perspectives. In addition to the perspective of those affected, it must also be clarified how the perspective of the perpetrators and the so-called "third parties," the bystanders, can be given validity. The two workshops on narratives and narrativity follow on from these complex phenomena. The starting point for both workshops is the question of potential and limits of narrative for acknowledgement, investigation and redress of violence, violent relations, and the abuse of power.

We invite researchers from the social sciences and humanities who study violence and abuse of power from a narrative-theoretical perspective and who are interested in interdisciplinary discussions.

### **Workshop I: The Role of Narrativity in the Study of Violence (Nov. 3-4, 2022).**

In this workshop, social science research on violence is a starting point for discussion. What roles have narratives played so far in empirical and systematic research and what are the limitations of such an approach?

Keynotes: NN

Papers may be submitted on questions such as:

- What are the (inter)disciplinary research approaches to narrativity as a key category and the thematization of violence?
- What is the significance of concepts such as witnessing and biography/autobiography?
- What is the significance of narrative in social science research on violence? What are the limits of narrative research, what is it indispensable for?
- What ethical questions arise in research?

## **Workshop II: Factual and Fictional Narratives of Violence – Conceptual and Ethical Issues in an Interdisciplinary Perspective (Dec. 8-9, 2022)**

The second workshop will focus more on literary, philosophical, and ethical issues. Narratives of abuse and violence can employ quite different literary forms and modes of storytelling. They may be oral or written, they may be told for a variety of motives, and they may be addressed to very different readers and listeners. It is often difficult to put the experiences of violence into words at all. How do the narratives deal with expressing something that is actually unspeakable? What roles do factual and fictional narratives have? Finally, the function of reading, of the readers, and of the reading public as a whole must be considered: What do narratives of violence impose on readers, what reactions – emotional or moral, for example – do they call for? And what about the public, social, or political reception of narratives of violence? Do/Can narratives of violence change society? Do they even make that claim?

Contributions on the following topics would also be welcome:

- What are the linguistic characteristics of narratives of abuse and violence, for example, what are their narrative strategies for dealing with problematic memories? How do they cope with the fact that some things have to be told although unspeakable?
- To what extent are these narratives not only reports of the past, but also of later experiences related to that past? How do they deal, for example, with the fact that earlier attempts at narration have not received attention or have not been believed?
- What is the epistemic, aesthetic, and ethical character of these narratives?

Keynotes: Hille Haker, Loyola University Chicago; NN

### **Invitation to apply**

The two workshops will focus on interdisciplinary discussion of research questions. Early Career researchers in particular are invited to present their research for discussion.

Proposals for papers from a variety of disciplines, including literary studies, social sciences, psychology, history, philosophy, religious studies, and theology, are welcome. Presentation proposals should be no more than 800 words and should include a clear title, research question and argument, and details of methodological or theoretical assumptions.

Presentations are allotted 30 minutes, and discussions 15 minutes.

### **How to apply:**

Applications for presentations will be accepted until **August 30, 2022**.

Paper proposals should indicate whether they are submitted for Workshop 1 or Workshop 2. It is also possible to propose a paper suitable for both workshops and leave the assignment to the organizers.

Proposals should include a descriptive title and be a maximum of 800 words in length (not including bibliography)

Proposals should be clearly related to narrativity in the context of research on violence against children and adolescents, and should be oriented to the thematic areas listed above.

**The application must be prepared for an anonymous review process:**

- Document 1: Last name, first name, email address, institutional address, abstract title, thematic field(s) of your paper. Academic status information (ECR, advanced or established scholar). Proposal for workshop 1 or workshop 2. Alternatively: proposal for both workshops and assignment in the review process.
- Document 2: Your proposal incl. bibliography (max. 10 references). This document must not have any reference to your identity! Please use Times New Roman 12 pt for text, literature and keywords and Arial (bold) 16 pt for the title.

Please send the two documents as Word files to [Narrativity-workshops@dlist.server.uni-frankfurt.de](mailto:Narrativity-workshops@dlist.server.uni-frankfurt.de), with "Narrativity Workshops 2022" in the subject line.

All submissions will be subject to blind peer review.

Any further questions about thematic matters, as well as any technical or organizational questions, should be directed to Dr. Anna Puzio ([puzio@em.uni-frankfurt.de](mailto:puzio@em.uni-frankfurt.de))

Authors of selected presentations will be notified shortly after the deadline.

The costs of their conference participation (including one overnight hotel stay) will be covered by the organizers. Travel expenses are to be covered by the participants themselves.

The workshops will take place at Goethe University Frankfurt (Germany).

**Workshop organizers:**

**Sabine Andresen**

(professor of education and childhood studies, Goethe University Frankfurt)

**Christof Mandry**

(professor of moral theology and social ethics, Goethe University Frankfurt)

**Website:** <https://tinygu.de/Narrativity-Workshops>

**Contact:**

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