

Representations of Legal Practices and the Law in the Age of Goethe

CALL FOR PAPERS

for a conference panel at the

ISECS Congress 2019
University of Edinburgh, 14th–19th July 2019

The proposed panel aims at examining the various forms in which legal practices and the law are integrated and reflected upon in German literary texts of the late 18th and early 19th century. The so-called *Goethezeit* (ca. 1770–1830) was an age marked by profound changes in the legal and penal system, with extensive debates on human rights, the commitment for a psychogenetic study of crime, the gradual abolition of torture, and the introduction of more humanitarian forms of punishment. These changes were accompanied by important paradigm shifts in legal theory (such as the passage from Natural Law to Legal Positivism), as well as by increasing skepticism towards the institution of law.

These discourses infiltrated cultural production on many levels. By analyzing a representative selection of literary texts of the late Enlightenment and early Romanticism, the panel aims at defining and assessing how law was interpreted and applied in German literature around 1800, and to what degree legal themes were functionalized to comment on (and possibly criticize) contemporary legal practices.

A list of potential topics include:

- the use of juridical terms and forensic rhetoric in literary texts;
- the depiction of trials and tribunals;
- the poetic construction of interrogation and punishment scenes;
- the “staging” of the law (e.g. in dramatic texts or the visual arts);
- the representation of legal agreements and contracts;
- the relations between law, society, and power;
- crime stories and prisoner narratives.

Although papers on famous legally trained authors (*Dichterjuristen*) such as Goethe, Schiller, and Kleist will be considered, proposals on lesser-known writers as well as on popular or lowbrow fiction (*Trivialliteratur*) are strongly encouraged.

Please send your proposal (max. 2000 characters) and a short bio by **1st January 2019** to Dr Daniele Vecchiato (King’s College London): daniele.vecchiato@kcl.ac.uk

You will be notified by 15th January 2019 if your paper has been accepted. The panel proposal will be then submitted to the ISECS committee, and a notification of acceptance is expected by 15th March 2019. Please note that the conference will be held in English.

For further information on the ISECS Congress, please visit:
<https://www.bsecs.org.uk/isecs/en>