



Title: SKANDALÖSES ERZÄHLEN: PANIZZA–BERNHARD–WALSER

Authors: Ketterl, Anja

Advisors: Baer, Hester

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Abstract: My dissertation Scandalous Narration: Panizza–Bernhard–Walser analyzes the relationship between German-language literature and literary scandal in the twentieth century. I argue that the scandalous as a mode of representation challenges binary constellations and hierarchical imbalances that define the construction of norms and deviation from them. Taking a poetological perspective, I address the relationship between representation and the scandalous in narrative texts by Oskar Panizza, Thomas Bernhard and Robert Walser. As a key element in both German cultural history and in the Western tradition more broadly, the scandal is considered a deviation from defined norms. More precisely, scholarship in literary and cultural studies conceives of the literary scandal as literature’s deliberate transgression of received norms in order to argue for the scandal’s effectiveness as a critical tool. I suggest that this understanding reinforces the binary of normativity and non-normativity that it purports to overcome. Drawing on poststructuralist theory’s conception of the scandal as a paradoxical stumbling block, I argue that scandalous narratives, that is, narratives produced through a technique of paradoxical stumbling, reveal the precarious status of the dichotomy of the normative vs. non-normative. A close reading of Oskar Panizza’s novella Ein scandalöser Fall (1893) sets up a discussion of the scandalous by analyzing the poetological implications of the ‘hermaphroditic’ body within the realm of literature, religion, and sexual pathology around 1900. In my chapter on Panizza, I show how the structural undecidability of a scandalous narration destabilizes the uneven power

relations between the deviant body and representatives of both clerical and medical discourses. The scandalous dimension of deviant language is further discussed in my chapter on Thomas Bernhard within the broader framework of (anti-) psychiatric discourse. Here, I analyze the scandalous dimension of Bernhard's exhausting narration with close attention to his novel *Das Kalkwerk* (1970), further considering the poetological effect of this technique in his novella *Gehen* (1971). On the basis of Robert Walser's famous 'Prosastück' *Der Spaziergang* (1917), my final chapter illustrates how Walser's use of both the zeugma as a figure of speech and a specific framing technique produces a scandalous poetics that challenges the opposition of deviant authorship and the idea of the great canonical work.