

# Tabur

**Yearbook for European History, Society,  
Culture and Thought**

**Crime and Madness in Germany**



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## Abstracts

### Crime and Madness in Modern Germany

#### **Crime and Madness in Modern Germany: Introduction**

Crime and madness are arguably among the most fundamental concepts in the construction of identity and social order in modern society. During the last three decades, and most famously in Michel Foucault's seminal works, scholarship has observed the development of a classification of crime and insanity within the context of the ever-growing influence of the bourgeois worldview, as part of an attempt to produce a rational and productive subject, and as a symptom of the Enlightenment's dark, oppressive character. Recent works, however, challenge some of this influential theory's basic terms and dichotomies. These works seek to suggest alternative, more nuanced, multifaceted and historically grounded perspectives on the rise of discourses of social outcasts; they show how definitions of crime and madness often functioned as a conduit through which expressions of social critique, self-analysis, and fantasies were articulated. This introduction explores this recent trend in German historiography and points to its ability to shed new light on the complex encounters between law, psychiatry, politics, entertainment and social theory in the period between the end of the German monarchy and the rise of Nazism.

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#### **Forensic Psychiatry in Imperial Germany**

Historical accounts of criminal law reform in Germany before 1933 have focused chiefly on parliamentary debates that never resulted in legislation. Heated debates about the biological origins of crime or measures to sterilize criminals were never translated into code. Consequently, to assess the influence of these debates on the criminal justice system, one will have to look outside the code itself and focus

instead on forensic practices across a far broader topography of inter-professional and interdisciplinary jurisdictions. This article analyzes the cultural machinery of these forensic jurisdictions in Imperial Germany. It explores the specific interaction of psychiatrists and jurists at various levels of professional work and locates the sites at which boundary disputes arose. It argues that understanding historical developments in terms of this jurisdictional topography provides a more cogent framework of analysis for weighing the influence of biology and medicine on the criminal justice system.

Dr. Eric J. Engstrom, Institute for the History of Medicine ZHGB (Humboldt University – FU Berlin), eric.engstrom@charite.de

#### **Reinterpreting Youth Crime and Criminology in Germany 1900-1933.**

Youth crime was widely viewed as an important problem in Germany long before 1914, but after the defeat in the First World War it also became a powerful symbol of social crisis. During the Weimar Republic youth crime was considered an integral part of broader problems in the political and moral landscape. This examination of the complexities of the issue of juvenile criminality in early twentieth-century Germany aims to explore the relationship between criminological discourses on youth crime and modes of discussion in other contexts. It argues that the gulf between cultural and political debates on youth crime and empirical investigations being carried out by criminologists in Germany tended to widen as social crisis became acute.

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#### **A Regiment of Heroes, a Regiment of Criminals: Adolf Hitler's Regiment in the First World War**

This paper explores how Adolf Hitler and Nazi propagandists came to believe in an interpretation of the First World War according to which the war had spiralled out of control when German society had succumbed to irrationality and delinquency. Further it argues that the Nazi dichotomy of what constituted sane and insane political behaviour was a direct result of this interpretation of the Great War. The contention of this paper is that Hitler's own war experience in the 16th Bavarian Reserve Infantry Regiment (the List Regiment) and the mythical post-war reconfiguration of the war experience of Hitler and his comrades lie at the very heart of this story. As the paper argues, scholarship has hitherto almost uncritically accepted the National Socialist narrative of Hitler's war experience, while the archival sources on the List Regiment contradict this narrative altogether.

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## Philosophy of 'As If' as a Way of Life: Crooks and Frauds in the Weimar Republic

In the First World War and its aftermath, and particularly during the period of inflation in the early twenties and the massive unemployment at the end of the decade, Germany was overrun by criminals and imposters. This change was not characterized by a statistical rise in numbers, but rather by a normative shift in attitudes towards criminality. Crooks became celebrities, the heroes of movies and novels, and the object of popular worship. In contrast to an historiography that has traditionally examined this phenomenon through an epistemological and moral lens (and that consequently identifying this criminal turn with of the decline of the Weimar Republic and the rise of Nazism!), the paper addresses these events from a phenomenological perspective, that is as a matter of modern "know-how..." that became particularly practical during such moments of social crisis.

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## Papers

### Body, Gender and Transnationalism: Art and Cultural Criticism in Changing Europe

The term *transnationalism*, dealing with all facets of immigration – refugees; foreign workers; illegal layovers and immigrants from one country to another – has been for several years one of the prominent topics on the public and political agenda of most Western countries. Among the generators of the increasing immigration phenomenon one can mention the widening economic gap between the industrial countries and the developing ones and the local and regional violent conflicts in various countries which leave countless refugees, deprived of a home. Moreover, the fall of the Iron Curtain, the geo-political changes and the facilitated passage from the Eastern Europe to the West parts, also contribute to this discourse.

Trough analyzing several visual texts, this article seeks to outdraw the influence of the above changes upon a range of women artists in post-communist countries today. These artists, react differently in their works to the process of globalization, from a critical and personal point of view. As a result, these artists create what the paper labels "A Polyphonic Project", which is a product of Central and Eastern European artists who set out, and indeed succeeded, to reclaim their voice and body as women, challenging questions of gender, nationality, politics and economy in a changing Europe.

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## On Both Sides of the Hyphen: Jewish-German-Universal Culture, Nationalism and Post-colonialism.

The "Jewish-German-Universal Hyphen-culture" is a cultural combination that rests on the unresolved tension between Jewish particularity and Universal ideas. This paper analyzes the term "Hyphen-culture" in the Jewish-German context and show the diametric opposition of this combination to the ideas of the nation-state. Nation-states find it hard to contain the deep ambiguity that resides in combining both sides of the hyphen. They therefore see the hyphen as a threat and attempt to render redundant all hyphens using the national "melting pot". The paper discusses the hyphenated opposition to the nation-state and claims that hyphenated critique should be seen as a radical branch of post-colonialism because unlike its post-colonial precursor, the critic of the hyphen culture comes from well within the national culture.

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### Antisemitism as Ethno-Religious Operation: Post-Colonialism and the Holocaust – "Black Footprint" In Aharon Appelfeld's literary corpus.

Ahron Appelfeld's literature is one of the complex and richest corpuses of Modern Hebrew literature. Yet, Appelfeld's works are commonly labeled under the somewhat narrow heading of Holocaust Literature, following Appelfeld's own experience as holocaust survivor. Conversely, in applying insights that were produced in the various fields of discourse such as post-colonialism, post-modernism and psychology, this paper rereads Appelfeld's literary corpus as a composite engagement of the oppressed with oppression. It pivotally demonstrates that what characterizes Appelfeld's works is the multifaceted tension that exists within the oppressed, between emulation of and subversion against the oppressor. This tension could be labeled, following Levinas' concept of "footprint", as a "black footprint", that is the manner in which ethno-religious oppression exists in the world.

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### Erwin Panofsky's Iconological Method: Synthesis, Value and Intuition

The paper pivotally analyses Erwin Panofsky's notion of "Iconology," as expressed in his "Iconology and Iconography: An Introduction to the Study of Renaissance Art (1939)." For Panofsky, "Iconology" is the comprehensive method of Art History. The paper examines three elements of Panofsky's Iconology: (1) Synthesis, which

is the epistemological mechanism of Iconology. (2) Symbolical Value, which is the agent carrying the meaning of the "Icon" in the iconological method, and (3) Synthetic Intuition, which is the fundamental gesture supplying the "given" of the iconological inquiry. The use of these three elements is informed by Panofsky's earlier writings, especially "Idea (1924)". Consequently, the paper discusses the platonic-neo-Kantianism of Panofsky's thought in general. Finally the paper reconsiders the scope and the limitation of Panofsky's Iconology; it suggests regarding Iconology as a starting-point for an examination of the Synthetic and Iconic nature of the Humanities, and their relation to (historical) reality.

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