

beurteilen“ – mit fatalen ethischen und intellektuellen Konsequenzen.<sup>1</sup> Dieses Frage- und Urteilsverbot ist in der deutschen Nachkriegszeit weithin diskursbestimmend gewesen, sowohl für den innerfamiliären als auch für den wissenschaftlichen Diskurs; seine Funktion ist der Schutz der Täter vor unangenehmen Nachfragen; wer mit seinem Tun im Reinen ist, muss sich das Urteil der Nachgeborenen nicht verbitten. Mit diesem Urteilsverbot ringt Fenske, indem er die gängigen apologetischen Figuren („die damalige Zeit habe keine andere Wahl gelassen“; „Spätergeborene könnten nicht mitreden“) ablehnt und stattdessen an biblische Kategorien moralischen Urteilens erinnert. Dennoch scheint er am Ende seiner Argumentation zu kapitulieren, wenn er das Urteil an spätere Generationen delegiert: „Wieweit Menschen dieser Generation der biblischen Basis gerecht werden, mögen kommende Generationen beurteilen.“ (7) Die Kapitulation vor der Notwendigkeit zu klaren, kritischen Urteilen ist durch das ganze Buch hindurch immer wieder zu spüren. Und es hat sehr den Anschein, als habe die Furcht vor der „Selbstgerechtigkeit“ und vor dem Urteilen eine wirkliche Analyse des gesammelten Materials verhindert.

*Norbert Reck*

**Ulrike Weckel, Edgar Wolfrum (Hgg.) „Bestien“ und „Befehlsempfänger“. Frauen und Männer in NS-Prozessen nach 1945, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2003, 271 p., EUR 22,90, ISBN 978-3-525-36272-3**

This anthology consists of eleven essays examining the gender implications of the judicial prosecution of Nazi perpetrators as reported in radio, print and television media. It introduces the reader to a representative cross section of those scholars

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<sup>1</sup> Vgl. hierzu meinen Aufsatz: „Wer nicht dabeigewesen ist, kann es nicht beurteilen“. Diskurse über Nationalsozialismus, Holocaust und Schuld in der Perspektive verschiedener theologischer Generationen, in: *Münchener Theologische Zeitschrift* 56 (2005/4), 342–354.

who are currently working in this field and provides an excellent overview of the major issues. Three threads weave through the essays and connect the different contributions: (1) the analytic interest in gender, (2) the historical presentation and examination of particular legal proceedings and different trial programs, (3) the critical scrutiny of popular media reporting about the defendants in the international press as well as East and West German radio, newspaper, film and fiction.

The book is divided into three sections: the first examines different journalists' commentaries on the spectacular deconstruction of German ideals of masculinity in Allied Nuremberg trials; the second looks at three different trials programs involving female perpetrators: the prosecution of female Ravensbrück-guards by Soviet and later GDR authorities (1947-1954), the denazification program in American internment camps, and the British trial against Swiss Nazi agent and Ravensbrück-Blockälteste Carmen Mory in 1947. In the concluding section, four comparative essays discuss the broader legal and historical questions, two of which go beyond the framework set out by the title: Greve's essay on the West German application of the legal category of "accessory" pays little attention to gender, while Richter's gender analysis of political trials against enemies of the state during the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich extends the book's scope into the pre-1945 era.

German masculinity was profoundly challenged by the stunning self-immolation of Germany's former Herrenmenschen whose boastful omnipotence had, practically overnight, turned into sniveling impotence. Their "blamable mediocrity, pathological insignificance, dilettante banality," (35) as Erika Mann put it, negated their very manhood. Their eagerness to defend their innocence by emphasizing their submissiveness and complete surrender to the will of superiors became a spectacle of quintessentially "unmanly" behavior. As the defendants stripped themselves of power and agency American commentator Rebecca West referred to the trial as a "peep show" (53), in which the audience watched men turn

themselves into female strippers. Could such “miserable figures” (46) and “small, weak cowards” (65) still be recognized as men? While all German men faced threats to their masculinity as a result of Germany’s military defeat, the defense strategies of male perpetrators obliged them to shed all masculine character traits as they denounced their own independence, autonomy and individual agency.

For female defendants, defense strategies that invoked gender conventions of passivity, submissiveness and naivité proved treacherous and double-edged. Often, this strategy worked in their favor, as the excellent historical analysis of Eschebach and Meyer demonstrate for the Ravensbrück trials and American internment camps. But sometimes it backfired. When female perpetrators were perceived as having broken gender conventions because they “pursued a career, used power and physical violence, wore a uniform and were armed, hence whenever they diverged from female role behavior, denazification courts upgraded their level of involvement (Beastungsgruppe) and issued harsher penalties than for men.” (Meyer 131) Women, whose violence could be proven beyond doubt, crossed the gender divide and were sanctioned as “masculine” women. Though numerically, few women were prosecuted, their court cases were given greater press coverage and, often resulted in higher convictions (see Horn’s chapter on the Majdanek trial, 222-249).

While male perpetrators like Eichmann disappeared into the non-distinct invisibility of “everyman,” argues v. Braun, female defendants became highly distinctive, visible and often sexualized. Male perpetrator astonished observers for being such normal, “banal” and ordinary “family men,” while women’s ambition and lack of restraint turned them into “beasts” (Eschebach) and “demonic beings” (Ludi). Male perpetrators’ violence was seen in the context of their professional careers as soldiers, policemen, bureaucrats and “willing executioners,” but for women it was explained with reference to vaguely sexualized base instincts and vile desires. Hence, women who contravened the passive, subordinate and benign

nature of femininity turned monstrous and seemingly charged with an alarming erotic power to attract and/or repulse.

It seems a truism to affirm that gender is a fundamental category of contemporary culture. How men and women participated in the genocide and concentration camp was as much shaped by gender conventions as their subsequent prosecution and punishment, their public portrayal and social reintegration. Nevertheless, until very recently (this book was published in 2003!) scant scholarly attention had been paid to matters of gender in the study of Holocaust and its aftermath. This book is a welcome shift that should inspire historians, legal scholars, cultural critics, theological and ethical thinkers to insert questions of gender perception and identity into all analysis of human behavior.

*Katharina von Kellenbach*

**Bernd U. Schipper, Georg Plasger (Hg.), *Apokalyptik und kein Ende?* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2007, 302 Seiten, EUR 19,90, ISBN 978-3-525-61594-2**

Apokalyptische Texte stellen bekanntlich Deuterätsel dar, sie verschlüsseln ihre Botschaft. Der neue Sammelband in der Reihe „Biblich-theologische Schwerpunkte“ tut dies schon in seinem Titel: Wollen die Herausgeber auf die nie endende Mode von Apokalypsen oder die sich endlos hinziehenden Diskussionen über die Apokalyptik anspielen? Dann schwänge in ihrer Titelfrage resignative Ermüdung über das Thema mit, das sie sich selbst gewählt haben. Oder soll gleich auf dem Einband auf die größte Schwäche aller bisherigen Apokalypsen hingewiesen werden: dass nämlich ein verheißenes oder befürchtetes Weltende nie eintraf? Dann wäre im Titel eine fundamentale Distanzierung vom Stoff des Buches ausgesprochen: Hier schreiben Autoren über ein Genre, dessen Kernbotschaft sie schon entschärfen, bevor die Interpretation beginnt. Entsprechend stelle ich auch meine Antwort