

"VWI invites the Department of English and American Studies – University of Vienna"

Wednesday, 28 February 2018, 3.00 pm
1010 Vienna, Rabensteig 3, 3rd Floor

Franziska A. Karpinski

Masculinity, Honour, and Shame in the SS Leadership Views and Regimes of Punishment

Based on a close reading of archival material, such as SS directives, SS court documents, private letters, and internal correspondence amongst the SS leadership, and drawing on perpetrator research, I illuminate how the concepts of collective and individual honour and masculinity were defined, negotiated, and practiced within the SS. In addition, I explore how these concepts fuelled violent peer interaction. This discussion will be embedded in the socio-political conditions of the 'Third Reich', which in turn fostered a radicalisation of concepts such as honour and masculinity in terms of their valence and definition. The SS nourished a soldierly and self-sacrificing form of masculinity, persecuting more civilian patterns thereof.



Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-R98880
Foto: o. Ang. | 9. November 1939

Moreover, honour and masculinity became state-sanctioned entities woven into Nazism's fabric, its judicial, social, and political institutions. Consequently, honourable behaviour and unconditional loyalty to the cause of Nazism was especially demanded within the SS, which conceived of itself as an elite order of political soldiers in the service of Nazism. Within this framework, I specifically examine the following questions: What was considered 'SS-worthy' behaviour? What virtues and ideals did the SS leadership prescribe for SS members? How were masculinity and honour appropriated by the SS and woven into mandatory SS directives? Why, how, and with what consequences did this appropriation happen? What mechanisms were created in order to translate masculinity and honour into entities

informing SS peer interaction? What punitive and shaming measures were used in order to weed out the dishonourable? To answer these questions, I will also highlight how shame and shaming within the framework of the SS functioned as a tool of social control and punishment. An analysis of honour, masculinity, and emotional dynamics within the SS can help us understand its processes of radicalization and its immensely violent and (self-)destructive nature.

Commented by Ranthild SALZER

Franziska A. Karpinski is currently Junior Fellow at the VWI, she received her B.A. in North American Studies at the Free University in Berlin (2011), her M.A. in Holocaust and Genocide Studies (with Distinction) at the University of Amsterdam (2012). She has been a Ph.D. candidate at Loughborough University since 2014. Her latest publication is *Sexual Violence in the Nazi Genocide – Law, Gender and Ideology*, in: Uğur Ümit Üngör, *Genocide. New Perspectives on its Causes, Courses and Consequences*, Amsterdam 2016.

Ranthild Salzer is an assistant lecturer for cultural studies at the Department of English and American Studies of Vienna University, where she is currently writing her Ph.D. on the constructions and negotiations of masculinities in North-American comics. Her current research interests include psychoanalysis, comic studies, film and television studies, popular cultures, gender studies and body studies. Her latest publications are: *Tracing Masculinities in Joe Sacco's Palestine* (2001), in: Rebecca Klütsch, Sina A. Nitzsche, Stefan Schlenz (Eds.), *Breaking the Panel: Comics as a Medium*, Wien 2015 and *Anti-Colonial Discourse in Joe Sacco's Palestine: Making Space for the Losers of History*, in: Maarit Piiipponen, Mark Salmela (Eds.), *Topographies of Popular Culture*, Newcastle 2016.

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