

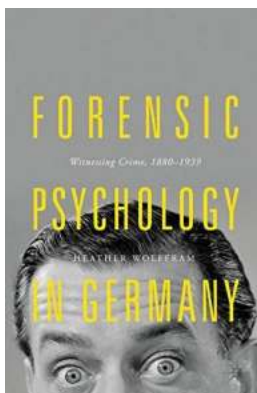
# Forensic Psychology in Germany: Witnessing Crime 1880-1939

Forensic psychology is a field that focuses on the intersection between psychology and law. It involves the application of psychological principles and research methods in legal contexts to aid in the investigation and understanding of criminal behavior.

One country where forensic psychology has played a significant role is Germany. From 1880 to 1939, a period marked by social and political upheaval, Germany witnessed remarkable advancements in the field of psychology in relation to crime and criminal justice.

## Development of Forensic Psychology in Germany

In the late 19th century, Germany emerged as a leading center for psychological research, with notable contributions from renowned psychologists such as Wilhelm Wundt and Sigmund Freud. During this time, forensic psychology started to gain recognition as a distinct field.



## Forensic Psychology in Germany: Witnessing Crime, 1880-1939

by Heather Wolfram (1st ed. 2018 Edition, Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

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Print length : 270 pages



Psychologists in Germany began applying their knowledge to the legal system by providing expert testimony in court cases. They examined the psychological factors contributing to criminal behavior and offered insights into the mental state of the accused. This marked a significant shift in the way the legal system perceived and understood criminality.

One prominent figure in the development of forensic psychology in Germany during this period was Hugo Münsterberg. As a psychologist and philosopher, Münsterberg emphasized the importance of applying psychological theories to legal issues. His influential book, "On the Witness Stand," explored the psychology of testimony and the reliability of witnesses, highlighting the role of perception, memory, and suggestion in shaping witness accounts.

### **Witnessing Crime: The Role of Perception and Memory**

The study of witness testimony became a crucial area of research within forensic psychology during this time. Researchers in Germany delved into the intricacies of human perception and memory, aiming to understand how these processes influenced the accuracy and reliability of eyewitness accounts.

One key study conducted on witnessing crime was by Albert von Schrenck-Notzing. He explored the phenomenon of false memories and demonstrated how external factors, such as suggestion and leading questions, could impact the accuracy of witness recall. Schrenck-Notzing's research illustrated the vulnerability of human memory and highlighted the need for careful consideration of witness statements in criminal investigations.

Another significant area of study was the impact of stress and trauma on witness testimony. Researchers, such as Karl Marbe, examined how emotional arousal and intense experiences could affect memory recall and the ability to provide accurate information. This research helped shed light on the limitations of eyewitness testimony and the importance of considering contextual factors when evaluating witness accounts.

## **Psychological Assessment and Criminal Profiling**

In addition to studying witness testimony, forensic psychologists in Germany during this period also focused on developing psychological assessment tools and techniques for criminal profiling. Their aim was to identify psychological traits and characteristics that could assist in identifying and apprehending criminals.

One influential psychologist in this area was Hans Gross. He pioneered the use of psychological profiling in criminal investigations by analyzing crime scene evidence and linking it to behavioral patterns. Gross's work laid the foundation for modern criminal profiling methodologies and shaped the way investigators approach unsolved cases.

The advancements made in psychological assessment and criminal profiling during this period allowed investigators to gain insights into the psychological makeup of criminals. This knowledge helped in not only understanding criminal behavior but also informing strategies for prevention and rehabilitation.

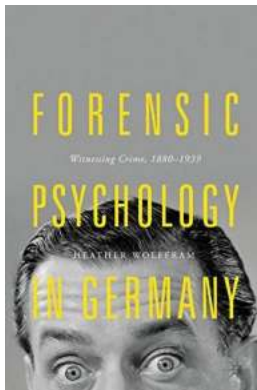
## **Implications and Legacy**

The developments in forensic psychology in Germany between 1880 and 1939 had profound implications for the criminal justice system and beyond. The recognition of psychology as a valuable resource in understanding criminal behavior led to the integration of psychological expertise in legal proceedings.

Modern forensic psychology owes a great deal to the early pioneers in Germany who paved the way for the application of psychological principles in the investigation and understanding of crime. Their research and insights into witness testimony, perception, memory, and profiling have had lasting impacts on the field.

Today, forensic psychologists continue to contribute to the criminal justice system by evaluating the mental competency and sanity of defendants, providing expert witness testimony, and conducting research on various aspects of criminal behavior.

Keywords: forensic psychology Germany, witness testimony, witness accounts, witness recall, psychological assessment, criminal profiling



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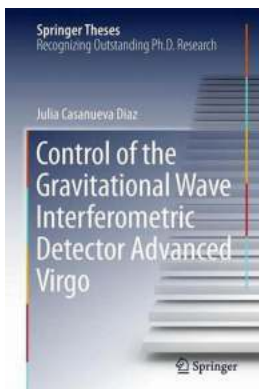
This book examines the emergence and early development of forensic psychology in Germany from the late nineteenth century until the outbreak of the Second World War, highlighting the field's interdisciplinary beginnings and

contested evolution. Initially envisaged as a psychology of all those involved in criminal proceedings, this new discipline promised to move away from an exclusive focus on the criminal to provide a holistic view of how human fallibility impacted upon criminal justice. As this book argues, however, by the inter-war period, forensic psychology had largely become a psychology of the witness; its focus narrowed by the exigencies of the courtroom. Utilising detailed studies of the 1896 Berchtold trial and the 1930 Frenzel trial, the book asks whether the tensions between psychiatry, psychology, forensic medicine, pedagogy and law over psychological expertise were present in courtroom practice and considers why a clear winner in the “battle for forensic psychology” had yet to emerge by 1939.



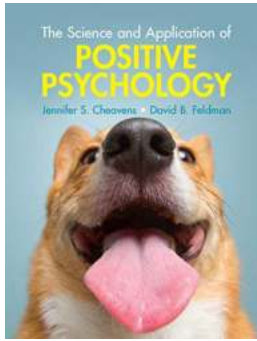
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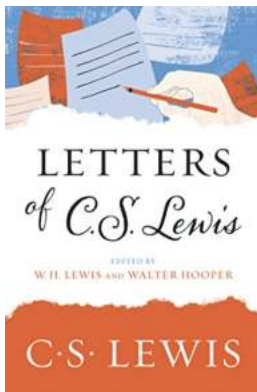
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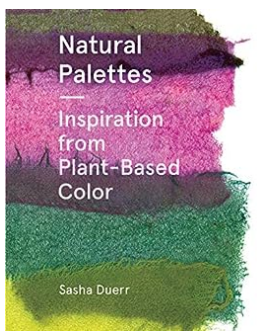
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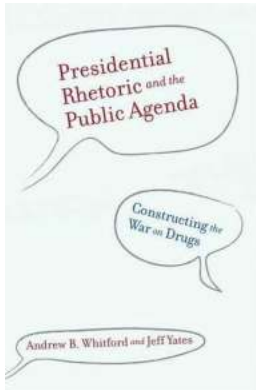
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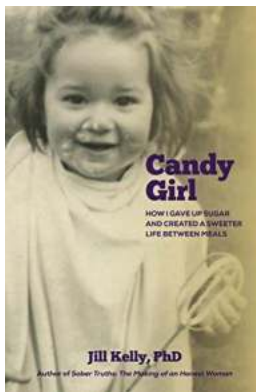
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