



Murderesses in German Writing, 1720-1860: Heroines of Horror (Cambridge Studies in German)

Susanne Kord

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The way deviant women - murderesses, witches, vampires - are perceived and represented reveals much about what a society considers the norm for acceptable female behaviour. Drawing on extensive archival records and published texts, Susanne Kord investigates the stories of eight famous murderesses in Germany as they were told in legal, psychological, philosophical and literary writings. Kord interrogates the role of representation in legal judgment and the way the emancipation of women was perceived to be linked to their crimes. She demonstrates how perceptions of normal and criminal women permeated not only legal thought but also seemingly unrelated cultural spheres - from poetry, philosophy and physiognomy to early psychological profiling. A major work of German cultural history, this highly original book raises thought-provoking questions about eighteenth- and nineteenth-century gender norms in ways that continue to resonate today.

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