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The Child As Father to the Man

D.T.

1937-1876

was not filled in that day. Many years later, in 1876 the name Johann Georg Hitler was added in a different handwriting and a fresher ink.¹

The mother never revealed the name of her lover, and over the years doubt and controversy enveloped the identity of the man who was Hitler's paternal grandfather. But the family background of his grandmother is clear. For generations, the Schickelgrubers had been farmers or itinerant farm laborers in the lovely rolling countryside of the Austrian Waldviertel. Even in a part of Europe where inbreeding and incest was not uncommon, the Schickelgrubers were noted for particularly complex family interrelationships, as well as a history of mental and physical aberration. Documents later collected in the Gestapo files show, for example, that three of the children of one Joseph Veit, a cousin of Hitler's father, were mentally retarded, and one of them committed suicide in a mental institution. Other branches of the family seem to have been similarly affected—or so it was rumored.²

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In the capital, Alois became an apprentice to a boot maker and began a rise in life remarkable for a man of his background and unique in the family annals. Two years after completing his apprenticeship, at the age of 18, he was accepted by the Austrian Civil Service in the Department of Inland Revenue. Thus he was to become a member of the Royal and Imperial Officialdom, entitled to all its very considerable prerogatives and privileged to wear its uniform—which he would do with palpable pride for the rest of his life.

In 1876, when he was 39, he succeeded in persuading his foster father, Johann Nepomuk Hiedler, to have his birth records altered. Thus, on an autumnal day in 1876, old Nepomuk Hiedler and three of his illiterate relatives harnessed up a horse and made the trip down the narrow, winding country road from Spital to Dollersheim to fill in the blank in Adolf Hitler's official genealogy. Nepomuk swore to the aged parish priest that his foster son, Alois, now a customs inspector, had in truth been sired by his deceased brother, Johann Georg Hiedler. The priest accepted the testimony, and the original baptismal entry of 1837 was altered in the Registry for the Parish of Dollersheim. In the space "Name of the Baptized" the last name Schickelgruber was crossed out, and the space for the father's name, previously left blank, filled

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 of a new-born, and this acceleration
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D.T.

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D.T.

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1876

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Not very true

1842

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Childhood lives on, in some

—Erik Erikson

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Birth

The Child As Father to the Man

Priest

1876

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J Nepomuk - This is not easy for me.

a powerful man that he was the
only one of his family to rise
and that his children might even function

GOD: ADOLF HITLER

"Georg Hitler, Cath. relatives carefully made Father Josef Zahnschirm, comparison with other exam- that he, as the parish priest

epamuk Hiedler made the aged. He may simply have who had turned out so well; own family's name rather epamuk himself had sired man may have been more Aols assume that pleasant had really been a Jew, as the proud old farmer and was anxious to "legitimise" a book. At any rate, history is quiet crossroad in rural to Hitler that autumn day, so well politically. It is a Schickelgruber!"

Hitler called in his private consultation.* Hitler had sent smuggled by a relative who the Führer had a Jewish threat of such a disclosure Frank did so and discovered, then the illegitimate son of as a domestic in Graz "in Frankenberg." From the born until the boy was 14, of the child. According to evidence, he said that the other was a total and com- mother had told him so.

and power in the Third Reich ber of the Reichstag, leader of gruppenführer, and govern- criminal at Nuremberg, he told

The Child As Father to the Man

She had accepted the money from the Jew only because she was so poor.⁴

Despite Frank's reputation as the "Butcher of Poland," there would seem to be reason for believing his story. He wrote his memoirs as a condemned man who had converted to Catholicism. He wrote, in part, to expiate his sins. He had no apparent reason to misrepresent Hitler or to invent the story. That Hitler should have lied when he said his grandmother assured him that his grandfather was not a Jew—Hitler's grandmother, Maria Anna Schickelgruber, had died more than 35 years before he was born—is not particularly unusual. What is noteworthy is that Hitler made no attempt to deny that his grandmother had received money over many years from a Jew. The evidence Hans Frank produced must have been quite impressive; it was good enough to force Hitler to admit the possibility that a Jew had been very much involved with his own grandmother. But the evidence has never surfaced. Frank said it was based on correspondence between Maria Anna Schickelgruber and Frankenberger and that these letters were "for some time" in the possession of a lady related to Adolf Hitler through marriage. But Frank did not say directly whether he had ever seen the letters, and they have never been found. Further, there is nothing to corroborate Frank's statement that Maria Anna actually worked as a servant girl in the household of a family named Frankenberger—if, indeed, such a family ever existed in Graz.*

German historians and journalists have pondered the identity of Hitler's paternal grandfather through dozens of heavily argued pages.⁵ Their industry is laudable, but the question they ask is not really very important and it is almost certainly unanswerable. We do not know, and we probably never will know whether in fact Hitler had a Jewish grandfather. The more important question is a different one: did Hitler think

* The research of Nikolaus Preradovic, a historian at the University of Graz, casts further doubt on the story. Preradovic set his task at finding Hitler's mysterious Jewish grandfather—called Frankenberger by Hans Frank and Frankenreiter by Hitler's step-nephew, William Patrick Hitler—in an exposé article of *Paris Soir* in 1939. Preradovic discovered that in books of the Jewish Kultusgemeinde of Graz there is no record of either a Frankenberger or a Frankenreiter. It is true that the records of the Jewish congregation go back only as far as 1856 and that Adolf Hitler's father, Alois, was born 20 years before. During this time, however, not only in Graz but in the entire province there is no record of one single Jew having lived there. The Jews were driven out of the area in 1496 and were not allowed to return until after 1856. The name of Leopold Frankenreiter, mentioned by Adolf Hitler's nephew, was found. But he was the son of a Catholic cobbler. Born in 1795 in Bavaria, he had moved to Graz, where he became a meat cutter. His son, who according to one story would be the putative grandfather of Hitler, was ten years old in the year 1837, when the then 41-year-old Maria Anna Schickelgruber was delivered of a child. If he was indeed the father, Preradovic has commented laconically, he must have been "a remarkably precocious boy" (*Spiegel*, no. 24, June 12, 1957). Simon Wiesenthal, who knows as much about investigating European family backgrounds as anyone, says he has searched through all the archives of Graz and has found no trace of a Jew named Frankenberger ever having lived there (Letter to the editor, *Spiegel*, no. 23, August 7, 1967).

Used pages up to 1860

1950

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reiter is not
but Frankwreiter
can mean Franciscan reiter
& other non-significant
translations

THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

mentary school education. After continually uprooting his family, often leaving attractive homes for no apparent reason,* Alois finally moved in retirement to a little house in the village of Leonding just south of Linz. In that village, on 23 January 1903, while sipping his morning quarter liter of wine at the Stammtisch of the Gasthaus Stiefler, he died without benefit of medicine or clergy at the age of 66.

It is difficult to get a balanced picture of Alois Hitler. Contemporaries who knew him well had differing impressions of him. His sexual exploits, for example, drew mixed reviews. Some villagers were shocked by his infidelities, others indifferent, others a bit envious.

We know that during his 30's he fathered a child by a country girl named Thelka, whose last name is lost to history. A few years later, in 1875, he advanced his career by marrying Anna Glassl, the daughter of a governmental inspector. The bride was physically unattractive and 14 years older than Alois, but the dowry was generous enough to provide a maidservant named Antonia Mayr who had attracted his attention. While married to Anna, Alois also had liaisons with another teen-aged maid, Franziska Matzelberger—commonly called Fanni—and also with Klara Pölzl, his 16 year old niece who would become the mother of Adolf Hitler. Klara had left the farm to come to work in the Braunau inn where Alois and his wife were then living. Apparently Alois's overtures to Fanni were sufficiently clumsy as to arouse the suspicions of his wife; in 1880 Anna Glassl Hitler won a separation. Alois then took Fanni to live with him, but only after he had agreed to send her rival, Klara Pölzl, packing—apparently off to Vienna. Fanni gave birth to a son, also called Alois. (This Alois Hitler, Jr.—Adolf's stepbrother—later became something of a black sheep, married an Irish girl, and fathered William Patrick Hitler, the nephew who reportedly tried to blackmail his famous uncle in 1930.) Alois married Fanni on 22 May 1883, the groom was 46, the bride 22. Two months after the wedding, Fanni gave birth to a daughter, Angela, who would later play a rather important role in the life of Adolf Hitler. When Fanni became ill with pulmonary tuberculosis, Alois shifted his attention back to Klara Pölzl, who had been brought back to take care of Fanni and her two children. As soon as Fanni died and he had received a papal dispensation for the wedding, Alois married Klara early one bleak winter morning in January 1885 in the parish church at Braunau. The pregnant

* During his 21 years of service in Braunau, where Adolf was born, the household was changed at least 12 times; during two years at Passau, the family moved twice; while posted at Linz, Alois moved many times. He had bought attractive property in the neighboring village of Fischham. This purchase of some nine acres of land allowed Alois to indulge his favorite pastime of beekeeping; chickens and a cow helped provide for family needs; there were also fruit trees and a lovely view. But after only two years of occupancy Alois sold the place and moved his family to the village of Lambach, where they lived first in the Leingartner Inn, and then in an old mill—two changes in one year. No financial crisis seemed responsible for all these moves. Alois's income was steady, secure, and on the rise, and these were peaceful, economically stable times in rural Austria.

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* It was a reasonably good period in his life. He was happy when he made love to all three women—in the morning to his elderly wife (because he was full of the bounty offered by testosterone after his sleep) then to the maid (because she was young) and finally to his niece Klara (because she was beautiful and he enjoyed the company of her lips while she was a wet cloth hanging from his neck to a hot bath).

The Child As Father to the Man

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Everyone agrees that Altilious to a fault. He was a family and left them comfort his son's fantasies. That he w been respected in the villages gave him a general reputation passing has left a gap circle of his friends and memories of him.

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Adolf Hitler's father hated of the habit seems father's tobacco pipes. In the symbol of paternal authority that even after Alois Hitler's presence continued to be full entire flat, and "on the left carefully arrayed the long almost a symbol in the family when talking of his father, pointing to these pipes as fully she carried on the father.

Hitler's efforts to discipline with his father's pedantic punctuality. Indeed, nau recalled that among him a real "demon on time." Even he would never allow his axis time on any occasion.

He was a very handsome man, and on his way to the front, after his first marriage, he was a very handsome man.

ADOLF HITLER

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Sept 6th 1905, after joining of the Hitler off in 1905, 1905

(1892) 1902 1903
The Child As Father to the Man

bride was 25, the groom 48. Klara later recalled, "We were married at six in the morning and by seven my husband was already on duty again." After the marriage, husband and wife continued to call each other "uncle" and "niece."¹⁰

Everyone agreed that Alois was a conscientious bureaucrat, punctilious to a fault. He was also a frugal person who provided for his family and left them comfortably off. There is no evidence—except in his son's fantasies—that he was the village drunkard. He seems to have been respected in the villages in which he lived, and the local newspaper gave him a generous obituary which concluded: "All in all, Hitler's passing has left a great gap not only in his family . . . but also in a circle of his friends and acquaintances who will preserve pleasant memories of him."¹⁷

Yet there were some less favorable notices. Even those associates who were interviewed by the Gestapo—and who would not be expected to put the father of the Führer in an unfavorable light—had some hesitations about his character. Frau Hörl, who worked for Alois as a cook after his second wife died, testified that he was a very strict man with a terrible temper.

Alois' colleagues in the Customs Service and his cronies at the village Stammtisch found him a dutiful official but also a humorless person with a temper that flared with no apparent provocation. After his promotion, he insisted upon being addressed as "Herr Senior Official Hitler" and was furious when referred to with the more usual "Herr Official." He was not a heavy drinker, but he did "smoke like a chimney," and even a friendly witness found him arbitrary and unfair about his addiction. While indulging it himself, he would not allow a subordinate to smoke while on duty.

Adolf Hitler's lifelong revulsion to smoking, indeed his visceral hatred of the habit, seems to have stemmed from memories of his father's tobacco pipes. In the family household those pipes became the symbol of paternal authority. Hitler's boyhood friend remembered that even after Alois Hitler had been dead for two years the old man's presence continued to be felt in the home. His portrait dominated the entire flat, and "on the kitchen shelves I still remember there were carefully arrayed the long pipes which he used to smoke. They were almost a symbol in the family of his absolute power. Many a time when talking of him, Frau Hitler would emphasize her words by pointing to these pipes as though they should bear witness how faithfully she carried on the father's tradition."

Hitler's efforts to disregard time, or to conquer it, also seem connected with his father. Everyone who knew the old man stressed his pedantic punctuality. Indeed, a co-worker in the customs office in Braunau recalled that among punctual officials, Alois Hitler stood out as a real "demon on time." Even when there was no need to be punctilious he would never allow his assistants to leave five seconds before quitting time on any occasion.¹⁹

1892 1902 1903

1893-1903

He is not sure of his own profession

the night of the paper

133

* the father, slightly drunk, would call the boy over, grasp his head, and blow smoke into his face. A job he would struggle when Adolf would cough, later the boy would go to the bathroom, + clean up. The rot of his father's lungs and stomach was in the smoke, the wet smoke of the breath.

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ADOLF HITLER

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~~1898~~ ~~7/1892~~ ~~1895~~ ~~Alois~~
THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

The general agreement that Hitler's father demanded silence in his presence and absolutely forbade any back talk also had reverberations for the future. Hitler would grow up to be the greatest demagogue in history; he would talk compulsively in endless monologues, forcing other people to listen to him, often all night long. He too would tolerate no back talk.

Old Josef Mayrhofer, a farmer who was for many years mayor of Leonding, had been a close friend of Alois and, after his death, was appointed Adolf's guardian. In 1948, when he was 80 but still alert and clear-minded, he admitted that Alois Hitler had been something of a tyrant: "The boy stood in awe of him . . . he was strict with his family. No kid gloves as far as they were concerned; his wife had nothing to smile about."²⁰

There was indeed little to smile about in the Hitler household, and no sense of fun. The point about fun is important. Erik Erikson has shown the contribution which spontaneity and play make to a child's development. Habitually unresponsive, cold, and negative parents such as old Alois Hitler can produce in a child deep-seated desires to negate and destroy. Erikson's comments are remarkably descriptive of young Adolf's experience with his father—and his subsequent attitude toward other people:

Anxiety and rage mostly develop where essential needs are not satisfied, growing capacities are not given opportunities, and developing gifts are denied an instructive response. For the opposite of interplay is deadness. In the child's unconscious, the habitually unresponsive adult can assume the image of a mortal enemy, while the experience of a passionate search unrequited by the environment leads to a sense of being negated and most importantly to the aimless impulse to negate and annihilate others.²¹

Alois at home 1891-92
Like many fathers of his place and time, Alois Hitler believed in corporal punishment. Bridget Hitler, the wife of Alois Jr., testified that her husband had often told her about his childhood and described his father as a person with "a very violent temper. He often beat the dog until it . . . wet on the floor. He often beat the children, and on occasion . . . would beat his wife Klara." Other people who knew Alois Hitler have said that his children never dared to speak in their father's presence without being told to. They were not permitted to use the familiar "du," but were told to address him as "Herr Vater." He was accustomed to calling his son Adolf not by name but by putting two fingers in his mouth and whistling for him as he did for his dog.²²

Let us try to reconstruct young Adolf's perception of his father as revealed by his own memories and fantasies and, indirectly, by the testimony of others.

134

*Alois, Jr + Angela pay the
mort for the draught.*

~~1898~~ ~~29a~~
The Child As Father to the Man

The child must have been required to obey and to admire. In the careful Imperial Customs Service dedicated civil servant, a pious father in the village. I provided his family with a special status. But this arbitrary little boy's dread Oedipal who launched sudden thunders.

In short, Hitler's ambivalence that it could serve him. In young Adolf, as in there was conflict between late and to be loved by him from his father and to destroy.

The ambivalence remembered that "Adolf never heard him say anything of opinion about his career talks respectfully of his father servant." He dwells on the off to Vienna) and draws his father leaving home to see.

Not yet thirteen years his things and ran away. A bitter resolve it must be known and with only the time the thirteen-year-old's examination which he had passed, his resolve. . . . With through want and sorrow year-old youth clung to now there has been poor boy once had sworn before he had become.

The ambivalence he felt passage of a nocturnal moment he manages to put upon him an unearned title attack upon bureaucrats and one time, I regarded jurors I looked at all such state honorable man. A chairman

*Fruit year
of the
draught
Adolf
wrote*

1902

reflect

THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

then that a *Justizrat* is a private individual who lives by defending swindlers." The passage is difficult to translate, and it may be that Hitler did not really mean to call his father by a title which he never held. But the false identification of his father given in another place is unmistakable—and peculiar. In a letter of 29 November 1921, he demotes his father, and tells a lie, by writing, "I was born on 20 April 1889 in Braunau on Inn, the son of the local postal official [*Post-offizial*], Alois Hitler." ²⁴

1900

His memoirs and conversations reveal a desire to emulate his father, but one can always feel the cutting edge of rivalry and the determination to triumph over an adversary. In recalling, for example, that, as a boy, he once sang in the choir of a local monastery Adolf Hitler says, "I repeatedly had an excellent opportunity of intoxicating myself with the solemn splendor of a magnificent church festival. It was perfectly natural that the position of abbot appeared to me to be the highest idea attainable, just as that of being the village pastor had appealed to my father." He was fond of depicting his relationship with his father as a battle of conflicting wills in which his own will triumphed:

No matter how firm and determined my father might be . . . his son was just as stubborn and obstinate. . . . My father did not give up his "never" and I strengthened my "nevertheless." . . . ²⁵

1902

And so it remained throughout his life. His will must prevail: first against his father, then against his political rivals, and finally against the whole world in battle.

At the time of his father's death, when Adolf was 14, he ostentatiously rejected all identification with the old man. Usually, when a father dies, the surviving male child attempts to play a father role or at least assumes a form of masculine identity of which the father would have approved. But young Hitler immediately took on negative identities—that is, the kinds of life-style which would have infuriated his father. As we shall see, he first played the effete artist and dandy. Then he ran off to Vienna to become an art student dropout and vagabond, an image his father would have found equally abhorrent.

Later on in life, however, Adolf indirectly accepted the challenge of his father "to make something of himself." He did so in a way that would have impressed and intimidated the old man: he too became a government official—but one of unbridled power. In effect, Hitler was saying, "My father always considered me a failure. I'll show him in a way he understands. Not as an artist but as a government official—I'll become so powerful that I could make and break bureaucrats like him and conquer his beloved Austria."

The mixed feelings of respect and disdain which he felt for his father were later transferred to the awesome figure of the Field Marshal-President Paul von Hindenburg who, with his uniform, close-

43

The Child As Father to the Mar

cropped hair, impressive m of Adolf's own authoritarian Hitler spoke of him with re to his own father—as "The had felt cowed by his father denburg. "The Old Gentler thing we stood for. . . . The I want to hear what kind (*wahnsinzig schwer*) in s ing." And again, using an e he warned his followers th annoy [*was verärgert*] the O

While his memoirs and hatred and fear also keep sl justified in doing so, Adolf degenerate. He confided to was forced to go and rescu entering a "stinking smoke drunken father to come hon iating experience I have eve: is. It was—because of my f

Hitler also sought syn what a cruel person his fatl whippings. A secretary rec father. I therefore feared h and often whipped me." He fond of Karl May stories a refusing to cry out under to his cane and his frighte counted the blows without a gave me 230 blows!" After him again. ²⁸

How can one calculate psychological wounds scar t soul, sobbing and alone, ba noninterfering mother? The can trust no one else; he is ness, hatred. Is it not possi was so important to his life less hatred that sobbed: "If experiences, a prominent p Hitler would have agreed co Chessman, who recalled th concluded that "there is not to be anything than to be af

It is, of course, possible and sadistic father were exa

1932

also 1931 or 1932 1900-02

Ston 1873 (107)

THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

Keepin 1901

of guilt engendered by his wish to destroy his father. He may have tried to justify to others and to himself his bitter hatred by insisting that Alois was a cruel and vicious man who deserved a son's animosity. It may be objected that even if young Hitler was beaten by his father, many other children in rural Austria were certainly whipped without, apparently, receiving the psychic scars that Hitler suffered. "Well," one might say, "all boys in Austria were beaten on their backsides, so what's the difference?" The difference, as Erik Erikson has noted in his study of Luther, is this: with Hitler, as with Luther, a sensitive man remembered those punishments and talked bitterly about them later, showing that the whippings did indeed have an effect on his development. As Erikson wrote: "The assertion that the cause was too common to have an uncommon effect on one individual is neither clinically nor biographically valid. We must try to ascertain the relationship of caner and caned and see if a unique element may have given the common event a specific meaning." In Hitler's case, as in Luther's, the fact that the whippings were remembered and resented, and that he hated his father for giving them, indicates that they had an uncommon effect upon him.

The workings of hatred and love, of pleasure and pain, are complex. Hatred may be a distortion of love: pleasure may be sought through pain. Consciously, Adolf certainly resented the beatings and hated his father for hurting him; unconsciously, he may have desired the punishment as a way of winning his father's attention and love. We are suggesting the possibility that the sadomasochism we shall observe in the adult Hitler had its beginnings here. Clinical studies have shown that often, as children, people with masochistic tendencies baited their fathers into whipping them. "The desire to be punished or humiliated," a specialist in the pathology of masochism has written, is another way of "wanting to be loved . . . being beaten and being loved are fused into one single masochistic expression."³⁰

As with all little boys, Adolf's image of his father was heavily influenced by the picture he had of his father's sexual relations with his mother. For Hitler this memory was traumatic because, as we shall soon see, Adolf at the age of three had seen—or imagined that he had seen—his drunken father rape his beloved young mother.

THE MOTHER: KLARA PÖLZL HITLER

Unhappiness was the lot of Klara Pölzl, the woman who was to become Adolf Hitler's mother. All her life she was pushed about to accommodate the wishes of others.

At the age of 16 she left the family farm to become a member of

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The Child As Father to the Man

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1931?
1932?

Memo also 1931 or 1932 1900-02
1932 THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

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The Child As Father to the Man

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1931?
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GOD: ADOLF HITLER

The Child As Father to the Man

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Rather than proving that Klara had no "hard feelings," her almost saintly kindness and endurance seems more likely to have demonstrated her capacity to suppress or deny her true feelings. Deme or refusal to help her rival and her inconsiderate employer would seem to have been the more direct and appropriate response to the treatment she had received.* It is of course true that Klara was the product of a peasant culture dominated by males who expected her to accept as natural behavior what a more sophisticated woman might not have tolerated. But there is no indication that Klara was intellectually subnormal or dull. She was not a simple one-dimensional person of little sensitivity; she was a woman who was successful in her struggle to control and subdue complex feelings which may well have included not only resentment and rage but also an active sense of guilt.

Klara had been living with Alois since the spring of 1884 and had become pregnant by him in August of that year, about four months before their marriage. She was a devout and conscientious Catholic, carefully instructed in the catechism of sin and penance—and the gossip of the little community of Braunau would have given her little opportunity to forget her sins. It seems reasonable to suppose that Klara, the devoted Catholic, felt acutely guilty for her adultery and for her transgressions against both the older first wife, Anna, and the younger second wife, Fanni. And Klara had survived. While the other women had been struck down by death, she had been allowed to go on living with their husband and their dowries. A sense of guilt and the need for penance and atonement help to explain Klara's apparently docile acceptance of her lot: first defeat and exile; then service to the children and abject obedience to their father; and throughout, willingness to bear gossip and scandal that surrounded her whenever she ventured into the streets of the town.

Klara began her married life with the responsibility of caring for Fanni's children, Alois Jr., age two, and Angela, three. In a few months there was added the care of her own son, Gustav. About fifteen months after his birth, a second child, Ida, was born; then promptly a third, Otto, who died within a few days. More tragedy struck when her two surviving children contracted diphtheria. Day after day Klara watched in

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GOD: ADOLF HITLER

The Child As Father to the Man

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Francis sees her then as peasant

1884

The idea that within her the child was a father was not only a painful but a humiliating

1887

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GOD: ADOLF HITLER

D.T.

1889

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1889

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1889

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1887

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women + the 1930s

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Guilt 1885-7

The Child As Father to the Man

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1880

?

the cancer gets its start

1884

1880

THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

helpless despair as the heavy, greenish-gray mucous membrane enveloped her children's throats and slowly strangled them." Gustav died in December 1887. Ida was buried in January 1888. During that same year she became pregnant again.

At half-past six on Easter Eve, 20 April 1889, an overcast day with the temperature 67 degrees Fahrenheit and the humidity 89 percent, Klara gave birth to the future Führer of the Germans in the crowded quarters of the Gasthof zum Pommern, an inn in Braunau.

Adolf was a sickly baby and must have evoked in his mother fears that he, like all her other children, would die. Her energies, already taxed by four pregnancies in rapid succession, had been further drained by worried and fruitless efforts to save her children from death, and then by having to move the household, at her husband's orders, soon after Adolf's birth. During all this time, she bore the stress of caring for the little children of her dead rival and the grief of her own children's death. Before she finally died—after giving birth to two more children after Adolf—from the ravages of breast cancer, Klara Hitler had seen her dreams of happiness in marriage and a family of healthy children repeatedly collapse. Small wonder that she struck contemporaries as a disappointed and depressed person who did not linger in conversation with neighbors but seemed always to hurry home to care for her children and her house.

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The Child As Father to the Man

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- 1 When your n
And you have
When things
Are now a bit
- 5 When her eye
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When her we
No longer ca
Then give to
- 10 Accompany h

140

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P. T. H. There were no movies in that day to dramatize the oncoming monster, the green slime.

the loyal observer and guardian angel, May not preferred to be subtle. Inasmuch as a lover's war of attrition studies.

(1890)

Klara

THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

(1889) - 1892

The Child As Father to the Man

Klara:
* My
last
attempt

helpless despair as the heavy, greenish-gray mucous membrane enveloped her children's throats and slowly strangled them." Gustav died in December 1887; Ida was buried in January 1888. During that same year she became pregnant again. * (6 months later)

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* It is the deepest beginning of his last anxiety. The other children died there. 10 When your I And you have When things Are now a boy When her eyes No more, as When her will No longer can Then give to Accompany I

didn't w
Gustav

* B.T. She was a study in exultation, a natural volitional to the double-entry book-keeping that so concerns the religious soul. Every spot removed was in payment for the small but perhaps acceptable payment for the extent of her exultation.

Sudden rough

The only way that was into.

D.T.

new notes - (3 weeks) 1989-90

THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

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The Child As Father to the Man

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D.T.H. There were no movies in those days to dramatize the oncoming monster, the green slime.

DT essay

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Of course, she told her.

* She charges her maid & decides to have one more baby.

The Child As Father to the Man

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- 1 When your n
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When things
Are now a b
5 When her ey
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No longer ca
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* ~~Dr. T.~~ She was a student in
evolutionary questions, a natural volunteer
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D: ADOLF HITLER

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hem.* Gustav died in
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389, an overcast day
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Klara tried to imbue
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mother and son clung
was dependent upon
as her means of prov-
r despite all her self-

Adolf the way his little
count for Hitler's lifelong

The Child As Father to the Man

doubts and feelings of guilt—indeed, because of them. As a German
psychiatrist has noted, by loving Adolf so thoroughly, Klara could
combat resentments she may have unconsciously felt toward a child
who "enslaved her, sucked her dry and crippled her with never-ending
demands." Through Adolf, she could numb her feelings of shame and
guilt for having yielded to her "Uncle's" sexual demands at the very
time his wife was living and dying in the same house. Constant ex-
pressions of love for her little boy could also assuage the fear of God's
wrath she must have felt had been visited upon her by the early
deaths of her first three children. "No wonder that Klara not only
over-fed Adolf, but anxiously hovered over him, desperately needing
him as living proof of her being a good, giving, non-destructive mother
whom God still loved." 33a

Throughout his life, Hitler proclaimed his love for his mother.
Indeed, the family doctor reported that many of the neighbors believed
his love for her "verged on the pathological." While the doctor per-
sonally did not believe that the relationship was abnormal, he did say
that, in a long practice, "I have never witnessed a closer attachment
between mother and son." 34 All his life Hitler carried his mother's
picture in his pocket. In all his bedrooms—in Munich, the Berlin Chan-
cellery, the Obersalzberg—her portrait hung over the head of his bed. 35

Hitler always prided himself on being as "hard as steel" and "cold
as ice," a person who showed no emotion in adversity. He confessed,
however, to having wept twice in his life: once when he stood at the
grave of his mother in December 1907; the other time at the death of
his Motherland during the defeat of 1918. 36 On the evening that his
mother died, during Christmas week of 1907, a neighbor reported that
Adolf sat in the twilight, staring at her dead body. He lingered in the
death room a long time, carefully drawing a picture of his beloved
mother as she appeared in death, ravaged by cancer. 37

A curious poem he wrote in 1923 testifies to one aspect of his love
—and to the limits of his literary talent. After he came to power in
1933 he was able to have it published in an edition of a Nazi paper
largely devoted to extolling motherhood.

BE REMINDED!

- 1 When your mother has grown old
And you have older grown,
When things she once did e'er so lightly,
Are now a burden, heavy borne,
- 5 When her eyes so dear and trusting
No more, as once, look forward brightly,
When her weary, falt'ring feet
No longer carry her step lightly—
Then give to her a helping hand,
- 10 Accompany her with gladsome smile—

durably
MK
↓
writes
it
for
political
reasons

cont on p 142
this is p 141

his mega-best will
by stimulating disrupts
of his mother

p 142 should be xerographed.

* D.T.
this was of
immense
use to me
—as are
all
argument
overcome
I could not
win along
almost
will—despite
his mega-best will
by stimulating disrupts
of his mother

1907

D.T.

170

1900

1905

1902

Klara 18. -

THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

based. Phyllis Greenacre has studied closely the role of trauma in the infancy of people who later manifested traits strikingly similar to Hitler's. She stresses the particular importance of the very early years. "The existence of any conditions which seriously impair the mother-infant relationship at this time . . . increases and prolongs primary narcissism and tends to damage the early ego. . . . such fundamental disturbances may arise either through pathological conditions in the infant . . . or they may arise through a maternal disturbance of any sort that alienates the mother from emotional and bodily contact with her baby in the first months of life."⁴¹

We may assume that some sort of basic psychological difficulty developed in the infant Adolf, since there is evidence both of unhealthy conditions in the child and of emotional disturbances experienced by the mother. Working together, the two conditions would have impaired the vitally important mother-infant relationship. We know that at birth, and for some time thereafter, Adolf was a "sickly baby." No further details have been given, but his ailments seem to have been sufficient to cause his mother to fear that he would die in infancy, as his brother and sister had done. Worries about Adolf's health helped produce the excessive maternal solicitude which Klara showered upon her son until she died. Hitler himself confirms this overprotectiveness and indulgence when he refers to himself in his memoirs as a "mother's darling" who lived a comfortable life in his "soft, downy bed" until his mother's death. As we have noted, Hitler's family doctor reported that several of the neighbors found the mother's love for her son verged on the pathological.

The special nature of the mother-child relationship, as well as the troubled history of the relationship between Adolf's parents, suggests strongly that Klara transferred her libidinal interest from her unresponsive uncle-husband to her little son. Anxiety about Adolf's health and survival certainly would have played a part in reinforcing the displacement. There is evidence that Klara's response to her baby's sickness was to nurse him for an excessive length of time—perhaps as long as two years. A psychoanalyst has suggested that she may have done so as a way of quieting her guilt feelings and restoring her self-esteem as a mother: "In this kind of situation, the nipple is nearly forced into the baby's mouth whenever he screams, regardless of what is troubling him."⁴²

Klara may have continued to force-feed Adolf because, as a peasant daughter, she believed that good food was the best medicine for any childhood complaint. As a rigorously disciplined person herself, she might well have compelled her little boy (as she often forced herself) to do what was "good for him"—in this instance, to eat food whether he wanted it or not.

A boyhood memory of a farmer, Johann Schmidt, who was an older cousin of Adolf's, supports the hypothesis that Klara tried to im-

The Child As Father to the I

prove Adolf's health by feeding him throughout his childhood. Aunt Klara, after her first summers on the farm, was obliged to work in the field when he did not feel well, and he would drink the cow's milk into his room and drink it.⁴³

Hitler's oral habits at that time were serious, which the well-meaning adult Hitler's inordinate crisis; the sucking of his rages; his poor appetite; his constant comment on basic mistrust of others.

Adolf was a compulsive boyhood friend recall he could dominate verbal

Soon I came to understand the reason that I TALK and needed so startled when he would vivid gestures, for I by the fact that I usually delivered so cano erupting. . . .

A close associate of his aggression. The Führer, literally to destroy opposi-

The fury raged itself contradiction only he would crush all objection scenes occurred over

During one of his he to embarrass him by asking he had ever joined the cipher of the *Einwohnerwehr*. [Mit dem Maul kann man

In a classic account of lems during the oral stag

1892 1892
THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

describing one of Hitler's nightly monologues when he wrote that the desire to expel words "results in an obstinate urge to talk, connected in most cases with a feeling of overflowing. Persons of this kind have the impression that the fund of thought is inexhaustible, and they ascribe a special power or some unusual value to what they say. Their principal relation to other people is effected by the way of oral discharge."⁴⁰

Melanie Klein has shown that adults who exhibit oral sadism—the need to command, subdue, and conquer opposition—are reverting to a much earlier stage of oral hatred: "In my analysis of boys and adult men I have found that when strong oral-sucking impulses have combined with strong oral-sadistic ones, the infant has turned away from his mother's breast with hatred. . . ." Such people, she notes, have an everlasting concern with diets and food fads; they worry about potency in their heterosexual relations or become deeply concerned about homosexuality. As we shall see, Hitler had similar worries.⁵⁰

Anal Stage

Psychoanalysts from Freud to Erikson have also emphasized the importance of the "anal stage" in human development, or, in Erikson's terms, the period in which the conflict of autonomy versus shame and doubt takes place. Failing to achieve a sense of autonomy, accomplishment, and self-control, the child may feel humiliated, frustrated, and ashamed. In adulthood his behavior will be marked by indecisiveness and a desire to humiliate others. Feelings of guilt and shame may also be present.⁵¹

1892-92
scene?
The anal period (ages two to three) is important because this is the first opportunity the child has to show a degree of mastery and control over others, especially his mother. And to a certain extent, she becomes "dependent on the will of the child."⁵² This period in Adolf's life must have put excessive strain on the mother-child relationship. For it was precisely at this time, as we shall see, that little Adolf believed that his mother had betrayed him by following his father-rival to master her sexually. Retention and control of feces could have been his childish way of showing his capacity to force her to pay attention to him. His temptation then—as in later life—was to retain his feces.

It seems likely that Klara, with the best of intentions, contributed to little Adolf's difficulties. We know that she was a fastidious and compulsively clean woman, and it may be assumed that she was particularly rigorous in the toilet training of her children. That Hitler experienced difficulties in this period which further strained the mother-infant relationship is manifested in his adult behavior. We should note first how often he used anal imagery thereby showing an unconscious fixation on feces, filth, manure and odor. Let us consider a few examples:

148

→ the cleverness of the three year old child studying his mother. How he tortures her with his changing habits.

the switch is often seeing the parent act
see p 262

23a
The Child As Father to the Mother

You don't understand:
heap and then we wi
there is and how much

And when he [the Jew
are transformed into d

Charity is sometimes
is spread on the field
precaution for one's ov

Hitler even used an
midnight reverie in the Wo
ing himself, once again, to
that Frederick was outnuml
while he, Hitler, actually
front. He concluded that in
like a shithead." It was one

One of his most vivid
both to his secretaries and
preoccupation with anality.
he got drunk as a teenager;
defecation with the school
proudly to his mother. I
both at the time and years
iated, even from here." Th
indicates anal fixation. It
masochism which will be d

As we have noted, H
sonal body odor and flatul
feces and examined them
gence officers after the w
quently took enemas, whic

According to Otto Fen
shows certain distinctive
point of passive aggression
excessive concern about ti
save time in small amou
thinks of Hitler and his tr
own tie, yet he could squ
alysts have also found a c
Patients are particularly n
yield. A tendency toward
patients are meticulously
prisingly, was Adolf Hitler.

must have been! The fear they aroused would have been associated with the retraction of his one remaining testicle. This extra intensity of fear may explain why Hitler's memories of beatings were so vivid.

A childhood habit of clutching at defective genitals would explain Hitler's lifelong gesture of moving his hands down to cover his crotch, particularly in moments of tension or excitement. As an American film reviewer noticed in watching the "home movies" Eva Braun made of Hitler, the repetition of the gesture is remarkable: "I was fascinated to watch the ex-corporal's gestures whenever he finds himself confronted by other people: usually he folds his hands protectively over his crotch . . . then they flutter up to his face, covering his eyes for a moment, sweep back the famous forehead and then travel down to be folded, piously, over the Führer's pelvic region."⁷⁰ A check of only two illustrated books which the Nazis published about their Führer confirms the impression. Indeed, the number of pictures showing him in this pose is striking: in two books, more than two dozen pictures of the same gesture. And in one of his last official propaganda portraits, painted in 1943 after the catastrophic defeat at Stalingrad, the Führer is shown hiding his lower torso behind the back of a chair. The date and the pose lend irony to the heroic caption: "Adolf Hitler Is Victory!" *

Another distinguishing characteristic of disturbed monorchid boys is physical hyperactivity—a voracious appetite for active outdoor games but, at the same time, a desire to avoid physical contact. There is no reason to doubt Hitler's later contention that he was a very active boy, "the little ringleader" of all neighborhood games. Indeed, all evidence shows a degree of activity that is extraordinary. In letters and interviews, former playmates all stress Adolf's unusual passion for war games. He played them by the hour, and for many years after his contemporaries had outgrown this interest. Three of his former playmates, Baldwin Wiesmayer, Franz Winter, and Johann Weinberger, all agreed that he wanted to play war games all the time: "We Leonding kids were the Boers under Hitler's leadership, the kids from Untergaumberg were the English." Another of his childhood friends, who later became the abbot of a Cistercian monastery, recalled vividly in an interview that "We were always playing at war—war games endlessly. Most of us got sick of it, but Hitler always managed to find someone who could play with him, usually younger boys."⁷¹

Adolf's activity on his confirmation day, May 1904, seems curious for a boy in his teens. One of his sponsors, who had also been a pallbearer at his father's funeral in 1903, recalled that the confirmation

* Since the right hand is often found clasped over the left, it has been suggested that the only thing the gesture reveals is that Hitler had a weak left hand. But he could have favored it in other ways: holding it tightly against his side or behind his back, or folding both hands over his chest or at his waist. Instead, he habitually clasped both hands over his crotch. For a score of examples, see *Adolf Hitler: Bilder aus dem Leben des Führers* (Hamburg, 1936), and *Mit Hitler im Westen*, ed. Heinrich Hoffmann (Berlin, 1940). The propaganda poster is now in the Imperial War Museum, London.

ceremony took place in a prayer book and a sa returning to his mother to his sponsor, was unir and sullen. He only bri he ran off with them in Indians."⁷² Hitler hims Führer of his Party, rec sure" the war games the

Contemporary lette ably the ringleader—in than his playmates—bu preferring—as he woul means of his tongue.

Symptomatic irrita monorchid patients wer half-brother, Alois Jr., g of seven:

He was imperious ; would not listen to He would get the didn't have his way, over any triviality.⁷³

The testimony of Alois J behavior up to the age o his adolescence and me accuracy. It is also su friend, who reported th and insignificant thing along the Landstrasse recognizing him as a f ler," took his arm in a f. Instead of responding in

went red with rage he threw at him ex took my arm and w before he calmed (trivial ones, that cc all when it was su Whenever he hear connection with hi that these outburst with his long-dead j

Same page 2x

1912

THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

3 years old

done an evil thing to him, which he could never forget or forgive. She had given him a defect at birth that would mar him for life. And, as we are about to see, there was something else she had done to him that he resented bitterly.

The scene

HITLER'S "PRIMAL SCENE TRAUMA"

Alois Hitler was away from home for extended periods during the first three years of Adolf's life. In his absence, the little boy was drawn very close to his mother, who sometimes took him to bed with her "for company." * We may speculate that the closer little Adolf felt toward his mother, the more anxiety he felt about his father; the more he feared his father, the more he clung to his mother—and the circular anxiety of the Oedipal conflict was intensified. Fantasied incestuous relations would have sharpened his hatred of his father as a rival, as well as his fear of paternal vengeance.

Then one night, when he was about three years old, Adolf saw—or imagined he saw—a scene of horror: his inebriated father attacked his mother and did something terrible and strange to her. And, most awful of all, she seemed to enjoy it.

Once again the biographer is confronted with the question of whether his subject "actually experienced" an event or "merely imagined" it. And once again it must be emphasized that psychologically it does not make much difference. One of Freud's greatest contributions to a biographer's understanding is the insight that neurotic symptoms may not be related to any actual event at all. They are derived from what is often dismissed as "pure fantasy." But psychic reality is often more important than objective reality, and what a subject imagines to have happened must therefore be taken seriously. His fantasies, the words and turns of phrase he uses to describe them, the intensity of his imagery, the number of times he recounts them—none of this should be written off as accidental or arbitrary. These things are "unconsciously determined" and are very important indeed to the person involved. From a thousand other events in his life he has chosen these particular incidents; he has described them with these specific words, and not with the many alternative figures of speech available to him.

We shall never know with finality whether the infant Adolf actually saw the scene of sexual assault. But in his fantasy he did, and it was for him a "primal scene trauma." Parenthetically, it may be said that, in this instance, fantasy probably coincided with reality.

* Hitler told Hanfstaengl that one of his earliest and most pleasant memories was when he was permitted to sleep alone with his mother "in the big bed."

The Child As Father to the Mar

The best historical source quite unintentionally in his count of his own harrowing psychoanalytical colleagues we 1943, that a peculiar passage what happened to the little thinly disguised autobiography cussion, some key phrases numbered.)

Let us imagine the fol stuffy rooms lives a wo dren there is a boy, let a child becomes consci people [bei Begabten], even in old age. The (3) do not create favorable arise because of this. I with one another, but [drücken aufeinander]. ing, disgusting quarrel. their brutality leaves nc of such (5) visual edu apparent in the little or ences express themseve part of the father toward enness. The poor little which would (8) make fected . . . the young "cit

The three year old has [has been dismissed fro Now he loiters about home. . . .⁸⁹

The scene at the age of 1 one considers how little cor knowledge of his sexual life. presence of a little child in t he thought the child was asle

The description as giv which reinforce the conclus:

- (1) Five children. For se of five children, aloi brother and stepsize

Feeling of equality & tenderness. Only time is his life

the one exception to the dream - after a rolling from the point. This desire to see his mother's presence.

GOD: ADOLF HITLER

He flatly forbade her to harass him publicly. He accompany him on a trip

stood and watched in a lowered into a grave for

likely, was to increase ously, of course, he con-ther and to blame Alois, stern fathers help sons ion. "But if we penetrate ly to the deepest hurt of

his mother had done to fective testicles and ac- rival, she had given birth Adolf to the care of his "When the child is turned ften increases his burden ve." By a great show of lity to her . . . and avoid masculinity in a normal

s unusually difficult and of 12, were particularly mised, burdened by guilt ble that Klara's abandon- to lessen Adolf's feelings ility to project it. It was ; it was his mother who

other too much. He was transferring them to his from becoming too nega- tive idealization." In this ning father, he splits the totally evil. He fantasizes, of love, tenderness, and mpletely from the totally r's case this defense was l mother had not pro- now she had apparently

effect in reminding Adol- ed: Gustav in 1887, Ida o his childish mind, the

Perhaps the

unconclusion is immortal,

The Child As Father to the Man

most natural explanation for his own survival would have been that he was allowed to live because he was under the special protection of Providence. Nor was it only a question of having physically outlived the other siblings. Adolf—apart from his monorchism—was also the only one of the survivors who was untainted by some obvious aberration. Rumor was correct in saying that the Schickelgrubers had a long history of mental and physical affliction. An affidavit in the local archives in Linz says that Klara's irascible sister Johanna was probably schizophrenic.¹¹¹ Hitler's first cousin, Edward Schmidt, the son of Klara's sister Theresia, was a hunchback with a speech defect. In the more immediate family, Adolf may have had a sister, older than he, who was an imbecile. At any rate, Dr. Bloch, the family doctor, when questioned by OSS personnel during World War II, said that he was "absolutely certain of this because he noticed at the time that the family always tried to hide the child . . . when he came to attend the mother." The younger sister, Paula, "is also said to be a little on the stupid side, perhaps a high-grade moron."¹¹²

Childhood knowledge of the deaths of his brothers and sisters, it seems likely, also produced feelings of "survival guilt" of the type that Robert Jay Lifton has described in his studies of psychological reactions to death. The "survival priority" manifested by those who live while others are dying forces the question, "Why have I been selected to go on living?" With it comes "inevitable self-condemnation in the face of other's deaths." The general feeling of guilt is notably increased in cases of sibling rivalry where death suddenly takes away the rival. The child may then have the feeling that his life is somehow controlled by destiny and hence not entirely his own. In Adolf's case, not only the deaths of his brothers and sisters but also his mother's fretful solicitude for him as the sole male survivor, as well as her compulsive concern for his health, would surely have strengthened his idea of his own privileged position.¹¹³ also "favorite child" *Ein Liebling die Götter*

His mother's insistence that he was "special," her *Lieblingskind*, would have reinforced one of the common psychological defenses used by survivors: to justify their survival on the grounds that they have been specially selected by Fate or Destiny for a particular purpose. There is often an accompanying belief that as Destiny's choice, the survivor will somehow escape the death of mortals. Hitler, as we have seen, was convinced that he was spared because he was God's particular gift to the German people; he also believed that there was reserved for him a special place among the immortals of Mt. Olympus. Hitler was not unique in his intimations of immortality. One is reminded of Sigmund Freud's comment, "At bottom, no one believes in his own death, or to put the same thing in another way . . . in the unconscious every one of us is convinced of his own immortality." Otto Rank, following Freud, argued that the motive underlying man's historic search for religion is an assurance of eternal survival for his self.¹¹⁴

This broadly felt human desire is particularly acute for those who,

* D.T. We work on the principle that the best lies close to the worst. It is the Stanboff's inclination (in words I expect - from his part of review) that

* D.T. Of course. Karmically, we know that we will reappear. The anxiety over death has been that the new life will be more perilous than the previous one.

* D.T. I kept telling him that every single

Nothing in the world is without some interesting possibilities, but the D. K. as that & indicated, greater over-extended, and was not employ in principle

19915

1895

171

1944 1901 160

THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

like Hitler, survive when others have perished. Moreover, he was denied several of the usual ways that man has sought to achieve victory over the grave. His religious faith was not the kind that vouchsafed salvation in a Christian heaven; he could not live on in posterity through his children. He sought other solutions to his problem: he would erect imperishable buildings and monuments; he would perform military feats that would win him eternal fame as "the greatest field commander of all time." When that was denied him, in the end he may have hoped to achieve historical immortality through truly monumental destruction.

The feeling of special mission which, we are suggesting, resulted in part from his survival fantasies was also strengthened in childhood by the defense mechanism of omnipotence. This defense is often used by both monorchids and borderline personalities to counteract feelings of insecurity and inferiority. The imperiousness and insistence on having his own way which Adolf began to manifest in early childhood were evidences of the strong unconscious conviction such personalities often harbor: that it is their right as special and privileged individuals to expect gratification and homage from others.

Clinical studies of disturbed children who have survived the death of a sibling rival show another symptom which we have found in Hitler: his resistance to growing old, his difficulty in maturing. Child psychologists have found that sibling survivors may be so terrified by the thought of death that they seek to escape by remaining childlike and refusing to mature. The result may be a kind of "defensive regression" into infantilism. When the mother (like Klara Hitler) is excessively protective toward "the only little boy I have left," the death phobia and the desire to remain childlike are both intensified. Many survivors also try to surmount their fear of dying by insisting (as did Hitler) that they live a charmed life, that others can't kill them, that they alone would survive dangers fatal to other people.¹¹⁵

Hitler's lifelong fear of death had larger historical consequence. As his future career would show so clearly, he tried to exorcise personal death fears by killing others. The more power he had in deciding that other people must die—the more he commanded death—the less he felt its horror for himself. Apart from the calculated murder of millions of "inferior" people, we should note the way he received news late in the war that his personal SS division, the elite *Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler*, was being decimated on the Eastern Front. When a staff officer reported that the number of deaths in Hitler's personal division was very great, he was startled by his Führer's exultant reply, "Losses can never be too high!"¹¹⁶

1944 1900-01

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Death of his brother Edmund
"I shall be the reigning monarch of this century"

The Child As Father to the Man

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"NEGATIVE IDENTITY":

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Thus did Adolf assume v identity"—that is, he took on a he knew his father would ha showed active contempt for 1 playing, as Erikson has show father but also a kind of per fantasize one's self by assumin painfully for genuine self-defin

Move to 1945

THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

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¹¹² "I shall be the reigning monarch of this century."

At the climax (1944) he had come to believe (and not unreasonably after all) that he was a high agent of the gods of death. So he also could believe that his death would not be like others. Of course, he wished to be cremated, the meanest aspect of his life had always been the body, body (smell, body!) in which his soul had been housed.

The Child As Father to the Man

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The Child As Father to the Man

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THE GOD: ADOLF HITLER

individual who lives by defending translate, and it may be that other by a title which he never father given in another place is of 29 November 1921, he de- jecting, "I was born on 20 April the local postal official [Post-

real a desire to emulate his fa- ng edge of rivalry and the de- ary. In recalling, for example, air of a local monastery Adolf ent opportunity of intoxicating magnificent church festival. It of abbot appeared to me to be of being the village pastor had depicting his relationship with lls in which his own will tri-

d my father might be . . . his inate. . . . My father did not ed my "nevertheless." . . .²⁵

l. His will must prevail: first tical rivals, and finally against

then Adolf was 14, he ostenta- he old man. Usually, when, a empts to play a father role or ptity of which the father would diately took on negative iden- ick would have infuriated his e effete artist and dandy. Then itudent dropout and vagabond, ally abhorrent.

directly accepted the challenge self." He did so in a way that he old man: he too became a d power. In effect, Hitler was e a failure. I'll show him in a t as a government official—I'll e and break bureaucrats like

disdain which he felt for his some figure of the Field Mar- ho, with his uniform, close-

The Child As Father to the Man

cropped hair, impressive mustache, and portly figure, was reminiscent of Adolf's own authoritarian father. Although he despised Hindenburg, Hitler spoke of him with respect, referring to him—as he had referred to his own father—as "The Old Gentleman" [*der alte Herr*]. Just as he had felt cowed by his father, so he dreaded a confrontation with Hin- denburg. "The Old Gentleman," he said, "was totally hostile to every- thing we stood for. . . . The Old Gentleman had said to me, 'Herr Hitler I want to hear what kind of ideas you have.' It was horribly difficult [*wahnsinnyng schwer*] in such an atmosphere to set forth my think- ing." And again, using an expression he must have learned as a child, he warned his followers that "we must never do anything that would annoy [*was verärgert*], the Old Gentleman."²⁶ (= resentment)

While his memoirs and conversations show respect for his father, hatred and fear also keep showing through. For whether or not he was justified in doing so, Adolf saw his father as a drunken and sadistic degenerate. He confided to an intimate that as a tender young lad he was forced to go and rescue his father from the clutches of alcohol, entering a "stinking smoke-filled tavern" in order to plead with his drunken father to come home. "Oh, that was the most shameful humili- ating experience I have ever had. How well I know what a devil alcohol is. It was—because of my father—the greatest enemy of my youth!"²⁷

Hitler also sought sympathy from his secretaries by describing what a cruel person his father had been and how vicious had been his whippings. A secretary recalled, "He used to say, 'I never loved my father. I therefore feared him all the more. He had a terrible temper and often whipped me.'" He liked to relate how, as a young boy, he was fond of Karl May stories about Indians who proved their courage by refusing to cry out under torture. One day, as his father beat him with his cane and his frightened mother stood outside the door, Adolf counted the blows without a murmur and proudly reported, "My father gave me 230 blows!" After that, he recalled, his father never whipped him again.²⁸

How can one calculate the consequences of child beating? What psychological wounds scar the child's mind as he lies hurt in body and soul, sobbing and alone, battered by his own father and deserted by a noninterfering mother? The infant must learn to comfort himself: he can trust no one else; he is overwhelmed by terror, fear, rage, helplessness, hatred. Is it not possible that the hatred which Hitler later said was so important to his life was learned in childhood's rage—the help- less hatred that sobbed: "If I were bigger, I would kill you!" Of such experiences, a prominent psychiatrist has said, are murderers made. Hitler would have agreed completely with the American criminal Carv Chessman, who recalled the brutal whippings of his childhood and concluded that "there is nothing that sustains you like hate; it is better to be anything than to be afraid."²⁹

It is, of course, possible that Adolf Hitler's memories of a drunken and sadistic father were exaggerated in order to hide personal feelings

(of violent of transcendence)
* It is at such moments that we can enter the client, or, in the case of children, the apprentice, so-called.

Alois

108
1901

*
1901

Obriqkeit - authority

THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

(1901, 1902)

1907

1806 (1801)

The Past As Prologue Hill

114

silently, pitilessly, i
of the musketry ce-
up to the level of
of the smashed skull

GERMANY WITHOUT A REICH, 1806-1871

Napoleon and the "War of Liberation"

It was at this time that Germany departed from
the mainstream of European political thought.

—Hajo Holborn

Germans had mixed reactions to Napoleon, the man who con-
quered their lands and dissolved their first Reich. He was hated as the
"Enlightenment on horseback" who brought with him Western ideas
of liberty and equality, constitutions, codes of law, and other concepts
foreign to the German experience. Yet there was grudging admira-
tion for this man of power and Obriqkeit. "Rattle your chains as you
will," said Goethe, "he is too strong for you." Hegel hailed him as a
"world historic hero." The most influential historian of the day, Jo-
hannes von Müller, extolled him as "a hero whose equal is not to be
found in the memory of the centuries." After receiving a personal
audience with the French conqueror of his native land, Müller wrote
ecstatically, "It was one of the most remarkable days of my life. By
his genius and his unconstrained kindness, he has conquered me."²¹

The "war of liberation" against Napoleon illustrates the tenacity
and power of myth in history: what is formative in the life of a nation—
as in personal lives—is not so much what actually happened as what
people believe took place. And what generations of Germans believed
about their Befreiungskrieg was pretty much what Germany's most
popular historian told them it was. Heinrich von Treitschke, "School-
master of Germany,"* enjoyed an influence over his countrymen
unmatched by any other modern historian. For generations, the
history taught in German schools was Treitschke's History of Germany.
Indeed, his book was so widely accepted that it was often cited as the
Deutsche Geschichte, without the name of the author being given.
In every school and university lecture hall the message was pro-
claimed: Prussia and the "North German stock," through glorious vic-
tories over Napoleon, had won the moral right and historic mandate
to unite the Fatherland and impose the Prussian system on a new and
militantly powerful Germany. Treitschke hailed the glories of Prussian
power in memorable—if not always accurate—prose:

The common people . . . had, amid need and suffering, rediscovered
their love for the Fatherland. Their souls were stirred . . . they
stormed forward irresistibly and then they broke loose the old
furia tedesca, the savage wrath of the Northern berserkers. . . .
What a wonderful sight it was when the peasants rushed upon
the compact square of the French infantry at Hagelberg, advancing

* For Treitschke's influence on other aspects of German thought, see pp. 272–

286.

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As a kid, in the war-fights after
school, he kept Treitschke's
words in his head

1901, 1902

It was a scene that

German Romanticism

Smashing military
Romanticism. Although
ment, as it developed i
tracted political consequ
arresting aphorism.

As in all acts of
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THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

1901 (1902)

1806 (1807)

The Past As Prologue to the

GERMANY WITHOUT A REICH, 1806-1871

Napoleon and the "War of Liberation"

It was at this time that Germany departed from the mainstream of European political thought.

—Hajo Holborn

Germans had mixed reactions to Napoleon, the man who conquered their lands and dissolved their first Reich. He was hated as the "Enlightenment on horseback" who brought with him Western ideas of liberty and equality, constitutions, codes of law, and other concepts foreign to the German experience. Yet there was grudging admiration for this man of power and Obriegkeit. "Rattle your chains as you will," said Goethe, "he is too strong for you." Hegel hailed him as a "world historic hero." The most influential historian of the day, Johannes von Müller, extolled him as "a hero whose equal is not to be found in the memory of the centuries." After receiving a personal audience with the French conqueror of his native land, Müller wrote ecstatically, "It was one of the most remarkable days of my life. By his genius and his unconstrained kindness, he has conquered me."²¹

The "war of liberation" against Napoleon illustrates the tenacity and power of myth in history: what is formative in the life of a nation—as in personal lives—is not so much what actually happened as what people believe took place. And what generations of Germans believed about their Befreiungskrieg was pretty much what Germany's most popular historian told them: it was Heinrich von Treitschke, "Schoolmaster of Germany,"^{*} enjoyed an influence over his countrymen unmatched by any other modern historian. For generations, the history taught in German schools was Treitschke's History of Germany. Indeed, his book was so widely accepted that it was often cited as the Deutsche Geschichte, without the name of the author being given. In every school and university lecture hall the message was proclaimed: Prussia and the "North German stock," through glorious victories over Napoleon, had won the moral right and historic mandate to unite the Fatherland and impose the Prussian system on a new and militantly powerful Germany. Treitschke hailed the glories of Prussian power in memorable—if not always accurate—prose:

The common people . . . had, amid need and suffering, rediscovered their love for the Fatherland. Their souls were stirred . . . they stormed forward irresistibly and then they broke loose the old furia tedesca, the savage wrath of the Northern berserkers. . . . What a wonderful sight it was when the peasants rushed upon the compact square of the French infantry at Hagelberg, advancing

^{*} For Treitschke's influence on other aspects of German thought, see pp. 272-

286.

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As a kid, in the war years after school, he kept Treitschke's words in his head.

1901, 1902

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German Romanticism

Smashing military Romanticism. Although ment, as it developed i tracted political consequ arresting aphorism.

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OD: ADOLF HITLER

The Past As Prologue: Hitler and History

was constantly impressed upon me in forceful terms that I must obey promptly the wishes and commands of my parents, teachers, and priests. . . . Whatever they said was always right. . . . These basic principles on which I was brought up became part of my flesh and blood. . . . From my earliest youth I was brought up with a strong awareness of duty. In my parents' house it was insisted that every task be exactly and conscientiously carried out. . . . My father took particular care to see that I obeyed all his instructions and wishes with the greatest meticulousness.

Hoess has provided statistical proof on his capacity to obey instructions:

I personally arranged for . . . the gassing of 2,000,000 persons between June-July 1941 and the end of 1943, during which time I was Commandant of Auschwitz.¹¹⁷

Respect for *Ordnung*—a favorite German word—was taught, not only by threat of punishment but also by ritual: the child learned to keep his hands on the table, never indecently in his lap; to go to sleep lying on his back with hands outside the covers. Closely associated with order was cleanliness, which the child was taught to associate with purity. Indeed the German word *rein* is applicable to both. He learned that to be dirty (*schmutzig*) was to be bad. Thus the association: order and cleanliness, dirt and evil. It was not a difficult transition to believe that the blond and white-skinned Germans were cleaner and purer than other people—hence better than those of “mixed” races, who were impure-dirty-inferior-bad.

The family experience put heavy emphasis on status and rank. Respect for hierarchical order was strengthened by the military tradition, but it started very early in family life. A child attained status in the home not just on the basis of age, complexion, or physical size but on whether he had earned the title of *Lieblingskind* (favorite child). When he went to school he was seated in order of his performance, starting at the top in the back seats and proceeding methodically downward in rank toward the front. At the age of ten a major status decision in his life was made: either he would become a member of the elite group bound for the university and a profession—perhaps with a coveted doctorate—or he would join the “masses” who terminated their academic career with the *Volksschule* certificate.

It seems likely that one of the reasons German consciousness of rank was so prevalent was because it was comforting. A father knew what he could demand from his family merely because he was the father. A wife and son and daughter knew exactly what their duties were, simply because they were wife and son and daughter.

Strong feelings, both passive and aggressive, were developed in the family. A son's attitude toward his father necessarily was passive,

* *Brigitte A. H.'s Thoughts while masturbating.*

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1901

How many times 1943

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