School of Humanities and Communication Arts

Permeating the Human Psyche: The Role of Emotions in Nazi Propaganda

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Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

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Stefani Fontana
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Abstract

Society is infiltrated with propaganda and its ability to permeate one’s psyche has culminated in profound emotional manipulation. While there is a plethora of existing literature in political science and history regarding the compelling influence of propaganda, the nexus between political propaganda and the history of emotions has not been extensively explored. This project investigates the role of emotions in propaganda manipulation through a historical case study of the National Socialist German Worker’s Party (Nazi) campaign. This was achieved by an analysis of Third Reich propaganda such as film, speeches, education and Hitler Youth alongside a biopsychological approach to the emotional responses of German audiences, as described by first-person and eye-witness accounts. This project focuses specifically on targeted audiences such as those who were disillusioned Germany's instability following WWI; those who had fought in WWI and experienced the sense of humiliation in loss; the politically naïve, anti-Semites and German youth, who were more susceptible to emotional manipulation. By triggering emotions of fear, hatred, national esteem, belonging, humiliation and loss, the Nazi Party were able to garner ardent devotion to the Regime.
Introduction

Although few periods in European History have received the same attention as Nazi Germany, there remain meaningful gaps in knowledge of how one of the most brutal totalitarian systems came to be so convincing to large numbers of Germans. The ‘brainwash’ notion of propaganda is invalid as it fails to consider the individual’s ability to resist ideas that are presented to them.¹ This thesis is concerned with the role of emotions in propaganda manipulation that paved the way for the rise of the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP). Without this achievement, Hitler and the Nazis would have hardly received the loyal following to facilitate their unprecedented leadership. Work exploring the nexus between political propaganda and the history of emotions has not previously been extensively explored. Historians such as Karl Dietrich Bracher have argued that Nazi success can only be explained by the role of Third Reich propaganda.² While it is undeniable that propaganda played a pivotal role in the entire apparatus, the ability of Third Reich propaganda to exploit emotional vulnerability has achieved significantly less attention. Thus, an important connection between propaganda and emotion is pivotal to account for the success of Nazism.

Propaganda in the Third Reich was thoughtfully designed to exploit the emotional vulnerability of specific individuals and groups. Minister for Propaganda and Enlightenment Joseph Goebbels was an advocate for the role of emotions in motivating behaviours. He was not so much concerned with presenting Nazism in a positive light, but to generate the illusion that the entire German population enthusiastically endorsed everything they did.³ In order to account for the effectiveness of propaganda in the Third Reich, it is important to consider the emotions being targeted and for what purposes within the Nazi worldview. There are several different facets which entail specific emotional triggers that are not shared by the other facets. Nazism entailed a set of ideological motifs - the concept of the Aryan race; the motif of redeeming the humiliated German nation; the motif of Hitler as an authoritarian father figure; the motif of modernity, technology and being world leaders; the motif of restoring the army; and the motif of the morally corrupting and diseased influence of Jews. Delving into the Nazi worldview helps to understand the importance of targeting emotions specific to furthering these ideological visions. It is just as important to examine who Nazi propaganda targeted as the

¹ Kallis, Nazi Propaganda and the Second World War, 12.
² Bracher, German Dictatorship, 347. O’Shaugnessey, “Selling Hitler, propaganda and the Nazi brand,” 55.
³ Redlich, Hitler: Diagnosis of a Destructive Prophet.
⁴ Evans, The Third Reich in Power, 68.
audience for their propaganda messages. Germans who were vulnerable to emotional manipulation included those who were disillusioned with Germany's instability following WWI; those who had fought in WWI and experienced the sense of humiliation in loss; those who were politically naïve and had little critical facility to understand what Nazism represented; those who were already persuaded by antisemitic and right-wing ideals, and impressionable German youth generally. But these elements alone do not account for the success of National Socialism in harnessing fanatical support among Germans. It becomes necessary to scrutinise the emotions Third Reich propaganda sought to exploit and instil within these groups. Emotions such as fear, nationalism and pride, a sense of belonging – or the heightened Nazi form of Rausch, as well as hatred, humiliation, anger, and nostalgia are identified as potential emotional triggers that are susceptible to manipulation. In recent years, National Socialism has been subjected to paradigmatic shifts and it has become evident that this field has been most strongly shaped in recent decades by what Wolf describes as the “racial turn.” Nazism would hardly have been able to foster a cult-like devotion from its people through anti-Semitism and hatred alone. A following of this kind necessitated the amalgamation of both positive and negative emotions. Audiences would be captivated by the euphoric realm of Nazism, defined by a history of strength, honour and purity. The NSDAP sought to evoke Rausch – the feeling of rapture associated with the fusion of a collective body. It is during these experiences that an enemy to the regime was defined to create divisions between ‘us’ and ‘them.’ Lastly, an analysis of Nazi propaganda found in film, speeches and rallies, education and the Hitler Youth alongside a biopsychological approach to the emotional responses of German audiences, as described by first-person and eye-witness accounts is presented here as evidence of Nazi emotional manipulation.

The concept of the ‘Aryan race’ was a pre-existing racial concept adopted by National Socialists to define the ideal race. This idea was promoted from the earliest stages of Nazism in the 1920s and would be used as a pivotal tool for rallying the masses. National Socialists altered, manipulated, and radicalised the idea of a racially pure Germany united against the parasitic, ‘degenerate’ races: namely, Jews, Roma and Sinti, people of colour and all Slavic peoples, as well as all Germans with disabilities and chronic diseases, and homosexuals. In this racial hierarchy, Aryans were positioned as the superior race, and it was

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5 Kilmo, “Nazi Disourses on “Rausch” Before and After 1945: Codes and Emotions,” 3.
6 Kershaw, Volksgemeinschaft, 29.
this populist rhetoric that contributed to Hitler’s rise to power. Nazi rallies and Hitler speeches were used to unite members of the celebrated ‘master race’ to experience the collective intoxication of being part of this movement. The Nazi vision of a Volksgemeinschaft “national community” was defined by racial ideals to effectively separate those who belonged to this community from those who did not. By targeting the ordinary German who felt disparaged in everyday life, National Socialism offered a sense of escapism - the ecstasy that was National Socialism. Hence, this ideological vision rested on emotional premise because it relied upon the human experience to authorise fanatical devotion.

The motif of the Aryan was used to play upon a story of German revival. Many Germans were low in morale from a lost war and were left frustrated by the Treaty of Versailles. Nazi propaganda exploited a damaged sense of national esteem and used this to instil feelings of deep humiliation - by which they promised to restore. Nazi propaganda appealed to nationalists through a narrative of struggle, revival and unification to instil the belief that they would reassert the nation as a European superpower. The incessant focus on the stab-in-the-back legend (Dolchstoßlegende), the unfairness of the Versailles Treaty and the weakness of Weimar Republic, functioned as a trigger for anger that could be transformed into deep fervour, excitement and hope for the future through Hitler’s passionate speeches and the intensity of Nazi rallies. National officials reiterated how German revival could only be achieved through leadership who shared in their frustrations of their struggle. What supposedly separated Hitler from other leaders was that he passionately shared in their suffering.

After the turmoil of the interwar period in the years that followed the First World War, many Germans yearned for a strong and powerful leader who would facilitate a structured political system. The motif of Hitler as an authoritarian father figure targeted a variety of Germans with emotional promises of relief and comfort. This facade worked to gain support from parents by communicating the idea that Germany would be taken care of, because Hitler cared for Germany like he would his own children. This notion also played an important role in promoting support from youth groups. Hitler would replace father figures who abandoned their children during the war. His speeches served to trigger feelings of anger and resentment due to

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7 Welch, “Nazi Propaganda and the Volksgemeinschaft: Constructing a People’s Community,” 213.
8 Fest & Herrendoerfer, Hitler, a Career, 4:00.
9 Shapira, ‘The Führer’s child’: How Hitler came to embrace a girl with Jewish roots,” 182.
the starvation and abandonment suffered as children. Youth were targeted to ensure Nazism would propagate future generations of followers born in the principals of the regime. They would also be integrated into the Hitler Youth organisation to prepare them for service as soldiers in the armed forces or the Schutzstaffel (SS). Propaganda encouraged the fanatic devotion to Nazi ideology, such that an adolescent’s enthusiasm and eagerness was used to generate violence and ensure fear to opposition.

Propagandists understood the value of seizing attention and attracting groups of people by preying on values and emotions. The Nazis were one of the first to exploit film technology as a central means of propaganda. It is important to appreciate the considerable and often demanding task of sound and visual editing during this time. In 1936, directors did not have the tools to simplify the task of editing. Nevertheless, Riefenstahl used an array of techniques to maintain equally gripping movements throughout each scene of her films. This was not an attempt to win over artists and film experts, but rather, as Hippler makes clear, this was a deliberate strategy to captivate people and garner support for Nazism. State of the art, avant-garde film technology was a pivotal component of Nazi film propaganda, which served to position Nazi Germany as a European superpower. For the first time since the First World War, Germans were led to feel proud of their nation and its technological prowess. This idealised the glory Germany strived for to create a realm of inspiration and admiration associated with Nazism.

The motif of the morally corrupting and diseased influence of Jews was central to the Nazi narrative. It was important to define ‘non-Aryans’ who represented the racial threat to the state. Anti-Semitism has been described as more than an idea, but a passion. Yet, only very few historians have explored the connection between the history of emotions and anti-Semitism. Historian Daniel Goldhagen makes the claim that Germans could be persuaded to commit genocide because of their visceral hatred of Jews. While controversial, it is important to account for the pre-existing anti-Semitism Nazi propaganda was able to exploit. Historians of emotions have often focussed on specific adverse feelings, such as hatred, resentment or disgust in isolation from positive emotions, while historians of anti-Semitism often exclusively

12 Baert, “Jean-Paul Sartre’S Positioning In Anti-Semite And Jew,” 379.
13 Goldhagen, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners*. 
scrutinise the prejudices against Jews. In this regard, anti-Semitism in the Third Reich would benefit considerably from an analysis of emotions. Nazi propaganda represents anti-Semitic discourse that relied upon emotions such as hatred, anger, fear, disgust, resentment, nostalgia and pride. Nazi propaganda also frequently condemned Jewish behaviour as immoral. Thus, anti-Semites were often triggered by emotions like indignation or distress on moral grounds. The psychological warfare evident in Nazi propaganda worked to achieve collective sensitisation and desensitisation. First it sought to heighten emotive responses to Jewish presence such as disgust and aggression, before diminishing emotional responsiveness to mistreatment of European Jewry to further Hitler’s vision for a ‘racially pure’ nation.

This thesis scrutinises the history of propaganda in the analysis of National Socialist Propaganda and its ability to use entertainment, visuals, slogans, and symbols to attract evade critical thought or reflection on its meaning.\textsuperscript{14} This work examines propaganda sources with the purpose of delineating the specific language and imagery which appealed to emotions. Nazism has been described as a ‘brand’ that was successful purely on account of Hitler’s ability to produce captivating propaganda that infiltrated German society, particularly through rallies, newspapers and educational curricula.\textsuperscript{15} This is combined with the history of emotion, drawing upon ideas from Jan Plamper’s \textit{History of Emotions} which provides a comprehensive overview of the field. It also engages with selective neuropsychology that focus on the mechanisms of emotional response and the forms of stimuli that trigger them. The role of the amygdala in perceiving emotions such as anger, fear, and sadness is important, as triggering this part of the brain can result in outbursts of aggression, panic and hurt.\textsuperscript{16} When such emotions are heightened, this impedes an individual’s rational judgement. Research in the field of psychohistory such as George Krem’s \textit{Psychohistorical Interpretations of National Socialism} often focus on psychopathologies ascribed to Nazi leaders, rather than on the Nazi appeal to emotions. This thesis is not concerned with the psychology of Nazi leaders themselves. It does, however, draw upon few psychohistorians of Nazism that speculate on the emotional needs of specific German audiences in the Third Reich.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{14} Koppang, “Social Influence by Manipulation: A Definition and Case of Propaganda,” 122.
\textsuperscript{15} O’Shaughnessy, “Selling Hitler: propaganda and the Nazi brand,” 56.
\textsuperscript{16} Wright, “Higher Cortical Functions: Language and Cognition.”
\textsuperscript{17} Waite, \textit{The Psychopathic God: Adolf Hitler}, 74.
Stalcup, \textit{People Who made History: Adolf Hitler}, 76.
Nationalism, Belonging and Rausch

While anti-Semitic ideas and other ideological themes were critical to Nazi popular success, it is not clear that they can entirely account for the rise of National Socialism or Hitler’s widespread support from the 1930s to the early years of the Second World War. How the Nazi Party captured the nation emotionally has received significantly less attention. This thesis will focus on the cunning deployment of propaganda in the Third Reich and its ability to harness emotions and motivate behaviours. This chapter will centre itself on key themes in Nazi propaganda: German humiliation and Dolchstoßlegende; nationalism and patriotism; characterising Hitler; modernity and being world leaders; and the Aryan race. This will be achieved through the scrutiny of infamous propaganda films: Triumph des Willens and Olympia – and the Nazi exploitation of humiliation, pride, belonging and Rausch. Nazism would not have been successful by stimulating negative emotions alone. Fostering widespread support and persuading the ideologically committed to perform radical acts required an appeal to enthusiasm and positive emotion. The term ‘Rausch’ cannot be defined in simple terms because its meaning changes according to different lexical fields and discourses. Nonetheless, it has been used to describe both individual and collective experiences of intoxication or ecstasy in relation to Nazism. In this way, Rausch describes the emotional processes associated with being entirely part of a movement – it is the power and exaltation associated with the fusion of a collective body. Propaganda targeted patriotic groups, those who opposed other political ideologies, those who were crippled by a lost world war and the politically naïve - playing upon a story of a damaged sense of national esteem and betrayal. While Reich Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels did not invent propaganda, its use in Nazi indoctrination is largely responsible for the negative connotation associated with it. The term propaganda continues to imply deceit and manipulation. Goebbels himself stated “I cannot convince a single person of the necessity of something unless I get to know the soul of that person, unless I understand how to pluck the string in the harp of his soul that must be made to sound.” This demonstrates the central role of emotions to the entire apparatus. Propaganda in the Third Reich was thoughtfully designed to target specific individuals and exploit their affective

18 Bavaj, Die Ambivalenz Der Moderne Im Nationalsozialismus, 16.
19 Kilmo, “Nazi Disourses on “Rausch” Before and After 1945: Codes and Emotions,” 3.
vulnerability. The success in attracting Germans was achieved by appealing to traditional doctrines and emotional patterns. Goebbels used propaganda as a tool to condition people either to passively accept or actively support Nazi ideology. This thesis will focus on the emotional triggers targeted and exploited by National Socialism through their use of propaganda which has been largely overlooked in existing scholarship on Nazi ideology and power.

Nazi Germany was one of the first global powers to exploit emergent film technology to extend its reach into popular culture. Film was undoubtedly one of the most influential forms of propaganda during the Third Reich and was a primary means of disseminating political objectives to the public.\(^{22}\) German writer and renowned film theorist Siegfried Kracauer closely examined German society during Hitler’s rise to prominence. His work of *Film Theory* provides a connection between the escapist and apolitical orientation of the Weimar Republic cinema and German totalitarianism. He wrote: “to be sure, all Nazi films were more or less propaganda films—even the mere entertainment pictures which seem to be remote from politics.”\(^{23}\) Following Hitler’s Chancellorship in 1933, Goebbels moved swiftly to control the film industry. In 1936, Goebbels prohibited foreign films and outlawed film criticism, replacing it with “film observation” which only permitted journalists to describe films, not critique them.\(^{24}\) German filmmaker, Fritz Hippler directed the film department in the Propaganda Ministry of Nazi Germany under Joseph Goebbels. Joining the party at the age of seventeen, Hippler became a member of Sturmabteilung (SA) and was an active member in the 1933 burning of ‘un-German’ books. Hippler later became the director of prominent Nazi films such as *The Eternal Jew*, *Feldzug in Polen* and *Die Frontschau*.\(^{25}\)

Hippler wrote:

> In comparison with the other arts, film has a particularly forceful and lasting psychological and propagandistic impact because of its effect not on the intellect, but principally on the emotions and the visual sense. [Film] does not aim to influence the views of an elite coterie of art experts. Rather, it seeks to seize the attention of the broad masses. As a result, film can exercise an influence on society that is more enduring than

\(^{22}\) Hoffmann, *The Triumph of Propaganda*, 76.

\(^{23}\) Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film*, 275.


that achieved by church or school or, for that matter, literature, the press or radio. Hence, for reasons that lie outside the realm of art, it would be negligent and reckless (and not in the interest of the arts themselves) for a responsible government to relinquish its leadership role in this important area.\textsuperscript{26}

Hippler’s statement is an explicit reference to the psychological and emotional impact of film propaganda. His words transmit the very reasons National Socialism adopted film as a fundamental propaganda tool. They understood the value of seizing attention and attracting groups of people by presenting something they value deeply. This was not an attempt to win over artists and film experts, but rather, Hippler makes clear how this was deliberate in captivating and thereby influencing those who are vulnerable to emotional manipulation. What distinguished the National Socialists’ delivery of information from conventional democratic speeches was their vision, forcefulness and mesmerising emotionalism.\textsuperscript{27} Chief architect of Nazi Germany, Albert Speer, stated in the Nuremberg Trial that “what distinguished the Third Reich from all previous dictatorships was its use of all the means of communication to sustain itself and to deprive its objects of the power of independent thought.”\textsuperscript{5} Film has the power to activate what neurologists refer to as emotional triggers, which the brain uses to conserve the energy required for analytical thinking.\textsuperscript{28} Tapping into these functions enables swift and intense decision-making. This necessitates a discussion about the intersection between emotive appeal and mobilisation. Emotions are often assumed to be automated, and seldom receive a detailed analysis in the study of National Socialism. Nazi propaganda’s ability to play upon the desires and resentments of groups exhilarated and united crowds to foster widespread support to the entire apparatus.

**German Humiliation and the Dolchstoßlegende**

Consider the infamous propaganda film *Triumph of the Will (Triumph des Willens)* produced by prominent German film producer Leni Riefenstahl. The picture opens to a large caption on a black screen which reads: “On 5 September 1934, 20 years after the outbreak of the World War, 16 years after the beginning of German suffering, 19 months after the beginning of the German rebirth, Adolf Hitler flew once again to Nuremberg to review the columns of faithful

\textsuperscript{27} Hoffmann, *The Triumph of Propaganda*, 74.
\textsuperscript{28} Finger, Boller & Tyler, *History of Neurology*, 390.
followers.” By introducing the film in this way, German audiences were reminded of their crippling circumstances, which Hitler promised to redress. In the aftermath of World War I, Germans felt unsettled by a state of uncertainty, enduring radical social change, surging unemployment and economic and political instability. For those impoverished by the Depression and with the unemployment rate reaching almost 30 percent in 1932, National Socialism appealed to the desperation and fears of many Germans. A major reason Nazism so successful in winning German hearts was their unique appeals to emotion. Hitler gave numerous speeches where he warned that rampant inflation, unemployment, hunger and financial woes would persist until there was a total revolution in German life. His fiery speeches exploited fears, frustrations and hopes of German citizens. Hitler’s speeches functioned to reiterate fears that Germany was declining, and thus came the call for a leader who understood what they saw as Germany’s place rightful place in history. The Nazis targeted the desperation of many to position themselves as Germany’s only hope. Invigorating Germany’s patriotic sentiment could solicit the need for a strong, enthusiastic leader who would revive the nation. Hitler’s fervour was depicted as the solution to social problems and embodied political legitimacy against the perceived injustice of the Versailles Treaty. Such propaganda emphasised the idea of a people’s community, social order and restoring the supremacy of Germany that had been threatened by The Versailles Treaty, as well as by Jews and Communists. The opening sequence targeted those shaken by a lost war. Nazi propaganda played upon a damaged sense of national esteem, promising to redress the humiliation caused by the loss of the first World War. This calls to question, whether humans naturally feel humiliated by experiencing the losing side of a war. Researchers studying the interface of hormones and behaviours have found that testosterone concentration is related to dominance and competitiveness. Sociologist Allan Mazur’s “biosocial theory of status” hypothesised a connection between a person’s level of testosterone and their readiness to maintain or achieve interpersonal status. Thus, as an individual’s testosterone level rises, they become triggered and increasingly willing to compete in contests for domination. Psychologist Eric Steiner conducted a study of the effect of competition on testosterone levels. His research revealed that

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29 Riefenstahl, Triumph des Willens, 00:27.
31 Fest & Herrendoerfer, Hitler, a Career, 1:10.
32 Weaver, “Adolf Hitler’s Account of Nation and Nationalism,” 14.
33 Weaver, “Adolf Hitler’s Account of Nation and Nationalism,” 11.
34 Booth et. al, “Hormones and Behaviour,” 57.
35 Mazur, “Cross-species comparison of status in small established groups,” 513.
the relative importance of the competition did not affect testosterone levels, but rather, locus of control, individual competitiveness and internal and external factors had a more significant impact. While this rationale has been primarily based on male physiology, hormonal responses in females involved in competition is also present. Anxiety and temper changes have also been identified in females after winning or losing a competition. This is reflective of how Nazi propaganda exploited psychological and emotional vulnerabilities in men and women. Here, testosterone’s influence on decision-making is determined by its ability to enhance one’s status. Nazi propaganda targeted testosterone level changes to instil feelings of shame and humiliation associated with a lost World War. While morale was low in Germany following WWI, the NSDAP exploited such vulnerabilities by focusing on theme of supposed betrayal by socialists and Jews in World War I that had caused German men to be humiliated. This allowed Third Reich propaganda to centralise upon a story of a damaged sense of national esteem – to which they promised to restore. By insisting that the German army was not defeated during the battle but were betrayed by Jews, republican politicians and revolutionary socialists - Hitler legitimised the Dolchstoßlegende “stab-in-the-back” legend which emphasised betrayal and humiliation. The Nazi Party was able to establish a realm of emotional vulnerability in a nation in turmoil after lost war and propaganda exploited this idea to define the enemy. During a speech at Munich in 1929, Hitler ardently declared that “we will be concerned day and night with the question of how to produce the armed forces, which are forbidden us by the peace treaty [Treaty of Versailles]… We confess further that we will dash anyone to pieces who should dare hinder us in this undertaking… Our rights will be protected only when the German Reich [country] is again supported by the point of the German dagger.” Hitler’s oratory prowess is worthy of mention. His use of first-person pronouns ‘we’ and ‘us’ provided unification between the leader and the public. Hitler was visibly shaken, with his voice trembling and face sweating as he expressed dissatisfaction with the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Hence, what separated Hitler from other leaders was that he claimed to share passionately in their suffering.

37 Oliveira et. al, “Testosterone responsiveness to winning and losing experiences in female soccer players,” 1056.
38 Hitler, Speech at Munich on 15 March 1929.
Nationalism as an Emotion

It is necessary to explore the interplay between patriotism as an ideology and nationalism as an emotional field. While patriotism is perceived as an obsolete depiction of people who manifest excessive pride in their country, it is an enduring idea that is targeted by propagandists to foster widespread support. Ideology, in this sense, provides a vocabulary of outward expression for internal responses. Delving into the context of Nazi Germany highlights the importance of the ideologically charged notion of *Volksgemeinschaft* “people’s community.” Nazi ideology was a coherent fantasy that was a product of the passion reflected in it. The idea of a *Volksgemeinschaft* promoted the vision of a renewed German identity which defied previous divisions and ideologies, and would now be formed around unity, struggle, discipline and governance. *Volk* represented cultural understandings of belonging derived from late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century romanticism of Herder and Fichte, but has now been understood in predominately racial terms. Nationalism centred itself on the circular relationship between the nation and the individual. The nation was made up by the people, in the same way that each person belonged to their nation and attained their identity by virtue of this association. Nationalism presumes that members become closely affiliated with, and experience intense emotions based on the affairs of their nation state. Nazi “nationalist” ideology evoked enthusiasm to a form of rapture - generating a fantasy shared by specific members of Germany. Such members who were captivated by Hitler’s passion included those who were disillusioned with other political ideologies; those who had fought in WWI and experienced the sense of humiliation in loss; those who were very politically naïve and had little critical facility to understand what Nazism represented and those who were already persuaded by antisemitic and right-wing ideals. Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch declared that the National Socialists “spoke deceptively, but to human beings,” while the communists “spoke the plain truth, but about things.”

Effective propaganda presents themes, messages and dialogue that is targeted directly, and even exclusively, to specific and distinctive groups of the population. Historian Aristotle Kallis suggests that successful propaganda “maintains a dialogue between traditional social principles and its own alternative prescriptions by using

39 Welch, “Nazi Propaganda and the Volksgemeinschaft: Constructing a People’s Community,” 213.
41 Wolf, Gerhard, “Volk Trumps Race,” 431.
some of the vocabulary, terminology and fundamentals of the existing value system.” The effect is that the audience are brought new ideas in a way that coincides with pre-existing attitudes and values. By continuously expressing of ideas of struggle, German revival and unity, the Nazis were able to use discourse that aligned closely with German principals to introduce a new ideology that would expectantly occasion new behaviours. Hitler’s ideas seemingly galvanised such groups because he adopted the charisma of a true demagogue.

Hence, the function of Nazi propaganda was not targeted towards the masses, nor was it intended to alter the beliefs of an entire nation. It did however, appear “to absorb the individual into a mass of like-minded people, and the purpose of the ‘suggestion’ was not to deceive but to articulate that which the crowd already believed.”

Nationalism was a key theme explored in *Triumph of the Will*. The film often launches into an array of long shots capturing eager crowds cheering and smiling as Hitler drives by, waving at his enthusiastic followers. When speaking to the ideologically committed to motivate behaviour, there needs to be an appeal to enthusiasm and positive emotion. Director Riefenstahl utilised thirty cameras to capture a multitude of angles and shots that were craftily edited to a standard well beyond the norms of their time. She captured sixty-one hours of footage, in an array of perspectives and angles, including moving cars, airplanes and the crane of a fire engine. A key function of Nazi propaganda was for emotion to supersede reason. Members were encouraged to feel rather than think – so at its core, Nazi operational formula was the exploitation and mobilisation of emotion. For Goebbels, propagandists were to use words and images to reflect what audiences felt in their hearts.

The audience was instructed to become engulfed in a realm of unity, excitement, and anticipation in a series of close ups and long shorts of adoring crowds. Extreme high and low-angle shots of Hitler delivering his climactic speeches position him as the commander of an empire of flawlessly orchestrated subjects and swastikas fill almost every scene. This imagery supported by grand musical score by Herbert Windt, a creative blend of party songs and folk art inspired by Richard Wagner. Riefenstahl declared “in 1934 people were crazy and there was great enthusiasm for Hitler. We had to try

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45 Fest & Herrendoerfer, *Hitler A Career*, 5:05.
48 Chorny, “Leni Riefenstahl on her way to the Triumph of the Will” 10.
50 Riefenstahl, *Triumph Des Willens*, 20:00.
and find that with our camera.” Sontang, “On Style,” 34. The assemblage of cinematic techniques promoted the thrill of becoming part of the Nazi movement. This served to create an atmosphere of invincibility to compel viewers to mirror such feelings of reverential admiration, optimism and nostalgia. The indestructible spirit of Germany authenticated the inevitability that National Socialism would remake Germany in their desirable image.

The American journalist William L. Shirer, newly arrived in Germany, witnessed the Nuremberg rally first-hand. He described his experience:

About ten o’clock tonight I got caught in a mob of ten thousand hysterics who jammed the moat in front of Hitler’s hotel, shouting: “We want our Führer.” I was a little shocked at the faces, especially those of the women, when Hitler finally appeared on the balcony for a moment... They looked up at him as if he were a Messiah, their faces transformed into something positively inhuman. Shirer, Berlin Diary: The Journal of a Foreign Correspondent, 1934–1941, 17.

While Shirer’s sensationalist writing was worded and selected to excite readers, it does highlight more significant ideas about women in politics evident in the film. Shirer’s astonishment that women too were part of Hitler’s support base reflects the assumption during this time that women should not be politically engaged. In this way, Hitler’s ability to unite crowds of men, women and children opened doors for new associations and contributions amongst all people. Women and Hitler Youth were now seen to be just as important and valued as political supporters in the Third Reich. This scene was captured by Riefenstahl and replicated feelings of belonging and revival. Now, for the first time since the disillusionment of the Great War, people were encouraged to feel proud of Germany and its leadership. Writing in Mein Kampf, Hitler noted “the individual leaves their small workplace or the big factory, where they regard themself a little person, and enters for the first time a mass meeting and is surrounded by thousands and thousands of people of the same conviction, and they as a searcher gets caught in the mighty effect of the suggestive Rausch and enthusiasm of three to four thousand others… in this moment they fall under the sway of what we call mass suggestion.” Hitler, Mein Kampf, 536.

51 Sontang, “On Style,” 34.
53 Hitler, Mein Kampf, 536.
work is not recognised was pivotal to nationalist discourse following the First World War. Hitler targets the everyday individual who feels dejected and undervalued, until they are suddenly captured by the collective experience of heightened emotion and being part of something greater. This scene reinforced the perception that Hitler was reviving Germany after the failures of the ill-fated Weimar Republic. The purpose of the documentary-style film was to exhibit a rejuvenated nation where previously there had been only despair and instability. Each German citizen is represented by their own role in fostering Germany’s heroic future. Schutzstaffel (SS) and Sturmabteilung (SA) soldiers are seen to be establishing law, order and discipline; in stark contrast to the chaos of the Weimar years. Peasant families with shovels in their hands are depicted bringing the product of their labour to the Party Rally; young boys are presented as the future leaders of the nation who will ensure a bright future. The use of idealised white bodies as a counterpoint to the deformed, hooked-nosed Jew in Nazi imagery was also important. The film showed inclusivity in filming women and children as part of the Volk, but also showed an exclusively Aryan ideal of Nordic whiteness indicated by a preference for tall statured, lean built and chiselled faces in either traditional Germanic clothing, military uniforms or no clothing at all. The combination of these elements worked to define the excitement of an active member in Germany’s restoration during the Third Reich.

Riefenstahl's film offers the audience a privileged and intimate view of the ritual and ceremony of National Socialism. Ordinary people, for the duration of the film, could feel like the protagonists of Nazism, in control of Germany’s bright future. The sequence of Hitler’s theatrical speech to the grandeur of the indoor party hall create a mesmerising political sphere. Every gesture, expression and intonation were thoughtfully calculated as a facade of an on-screen character. One moment he is amiable, joking and laughing with his followers. The next, he is distracted, so lost in the urgent responsibilities of governance he is seemingly unaware of the enraptured chanting as he glances over his notes. Hitler is always represented from a low angle as he towers above the crowd in the stands. Such images serve to reinforce both admiration and respect for Hitler. While viewers are called to feel central to National Socialism, they are also reminded of the authoritarian leadership who guides them. Psychotherapist

54 Chornyi, "Leni Riefenstahl on her way to the Triumph of the Will” 10.
55 Riefenstahl, Triumph Des Willens, 32:30.
56 Riefenstahl, Triumph Des Willens, 19:00.
57 Chornyi, "Leni Riefenstahl on her way to the Triumph of the Will” 11.
Yvonne Karow describes this as a “cult of self-extinction” (kultische Selbstauslöschung): a feeling of belonging exclusively to the movement that bred enthusiasm for Nazism and fervent devotion to their Führer.\footnote{Karow, \textit{Deutsches Opfer}, 78.}

Hitler stated in one of his speeches:

“When someone says, ‘You’re a dreamer’, I can only answer ‘You idiot…. If I weren’t a dreamer, where would we be today? I’ve always believed in Germany. You said I was a dreamer. I’ve always believed in the rise of the Reich. You said I was a fool. I’ve always believed in our return to power. You said I was mad. I’ve always believed in an end to poverty! You said that was utopian! Who was right? You or me?! I was right!’”\footnote{Souverän, “Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Führer,” 2:35.}

Hitler’s ideology and uncompromising goal was evident in his appearances. He was passionate and intense, and the crowds responded accordingly. Each time he stopped to catch his breath, the applause would intensify and heighten. Hitler himself believed in the power of speech to move and motivate groups of people.\footnote{Hitler, \textit{Mein Kampf}, 106.} In this way “all great movements are popular movements, volcanic eruptions of human passions and emotional sentiments, stirred either by the cruel Goddess of Distress or by the firebrand of the word hurled among the masses.”\footnote{Hitler, \textit{Mein Kampf}, 107.} Hitler’s passionate proclamations from stages and balconies noticeably stirred the same passion within many citizens.\footnote{Musolff, \textit{Metaphor, Nation and the Holocaust: The Concept of the Body Politic}, 37.} The Nazis created an atmosphere of thrill and eruption to captivate the audience and provide an overwhelming sense of belonging. Third Reich propaganda targeted the personal and internal experience of the individual and the group. Goebbels himself believed propaganda’s task was to mobilise people in service of the Nazi worldview.\footnote{Welch, “Nazi Propaganda and the Volksgemeinschaft: Constructing a People’s Community”, 217.} This would be achieved by targeting the spirit and the mind of nationalist groups to evoke feelings of rapture, enthrallment and even ‘transcendence’ – the feeling of being more than just oneself. The visionary transcendence aspect of Nazism was clearly part of its appeal, inspiring people who felt ordinary and whose upbringing was largely religious. The ‘Rausch’ initiated by the mass rallies and Hitler speeches served to achieve an ‘instinctive’ connection to the regime.
According to Hitler, the Volk members or Volksgenossen required a specific rapture to believe the promise of a prosperous German future.\(^66\)

**Characterising Hitler**

The first scene of *Triumph of the Will* presents Adolf Hitler up in the clouds using a high camera angle to manifest his transcendent view of Germany.\(^67\) The film plays on heroic motives, where Hitler takes on the charisma of a Messiah figure, he appears to the audience as an untouchable representation of ancient Germanic myths.\(^68\) The presentation of National Socialism as a political religion was a predominant theme that would be explored in all forms of propaganda. Cultural historian Piers Brendon deemed propaganda the “gospel” of National Socialism.\(^69\) This projection of Hitler’s power and charisma is raised to a form of ‘Rausch’ as the film begins, the audience views Hitler descending from the clouds of heaven down to the terrestrial bounds of Nuremberg. Hitler appears both in and out of this earthly sphere; a transitional figure of political religion that is National Socialism.\(^70\) This realm of inspiration not only triggers enthusiasm, but it was also deeply inspired and incredibly attractive. This is a prime example of ‘Rausch’ – an experience of heightened emotion and exuberance that is slightly inebriated. The effect is a collective experience of fanaticism, enthusiasm and in some cases, violence that is associated with mass gatherings or rallies. German groups shared in the religious image Hitler culminated of himself as the saviour of the earth.\(^71\) The messianic, pseudo-religious aspects of Nazism have been the focus of historical enquiry in recent years.\(^72\) With their distinctive uniforms and rituals, the infamous salute paying homage to Hitler, and the symbolic Swastika that largely aped traditional reverence, National Socialism perhaps embodied a new denomination of worship as much as a new political ideology.\(^73\) National Socialism offered elatedness, vivacity and extraordinary forces of emotion and belonging. As with any religion, while Hitler offered alleviation and reassurance, this relationship expected devotion and loyalty in return.

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\(^66\) Kilmo, “Nazi Discourses on "Rausch" Before And After 1945: Codes and Emotions,” 5.


\(^69\) O'Shaughnessy, “Selling Hitler: propaganda and the Nazi brand,” 61.

\(^70\) Chornyi, “Leni Riefenstahl on her way to the Triumph of the Will” 8.

\(^71\) Fest & Herrendoerfer, *Hitler, a Career*, 7:10.

\(^72\) Evans, “Nazism, Christianity and Political Religion: A Debate,” 5.

\(^73\) Hastings, Nation, Race, and Religious Identity in the Early Nazi Movement, 303.
The significance of a close-up portraying Hitler holding a young girl’s hand while her mother stands proud is worthy of mention as it conveys key ideas about Hitler’s paternalistic leadership. The audience were positioned to feel comforted to know their own needs and the needs of the ‘fatherland’ would be taken care of by their benevolent Führer. Projecting Hitler’s nurturing side positioned him as trustworthy and dependable. The fatherly imagery worked to soothe, pacify and reassure viewers of their protection because Hitler seemingly cared for them like he would his own children. Hitler was often photographed embracing young children, while appreciative mothers gazed in admiration. In this way, it appears that the Nazis tried to portray Hitler as an object of sexual desire for women – a strong and dependable man so longed for during the war years. While women have previously been blamed for Hitler’s success in the 1933 election because of sexual attraction, women did not account for the majority of voters. Nonetheless, what we have seen in Nazi Germany was an interest in the minority. Many Germans were called to feel like protagonists of Nazism - each involved in their own set of duties. The image of womanly ideals promoted by Nazism was somewhat reflected the expression “Kinder, Küche, Kirche” (children, kitchen, church). Although the slogan predates Nazism, in some respects, the NSDAP reflected traditionalist ideas in Volk imagery of women relegated to the household as housewives and mothers. German women became central to Nazism because they were recognised purely as mothers. For this reason, propaganda needed to ensure the support of women through an emotional connection to Hitler’s attractive and protective pretence.

Hitler as a paternal figure also offered relief to parents by reassuring the safety of German children. While models of fathering have evolved over time, paternalism evolved in the 19th and 20th centuries as “family relations and practices of patronage.” The authoritarian style of parenting that was common in early 20th-century Germany, while fostering warmth and love, also demanded devotion and obedience. The role of the father was to offer protection, guardianship and control. Children – and in this case, “Hitler youth”- were expected to follow this social order, and such notions would supposedly extend to their relationship with Hitler.

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75 Shapira, ‘The Führer’s child’: How Hitler came to embrace a girl with Jewish roots,” 182.
76 Reich, *The Sexual Revolution*, 77.
79 Gupta, “Politics of Gender: Women in Nazi Germany,” 40.
As will be explored, this was a predominant theme that would be developed throughout all forms of propaganda in the Third Reich.

**Modernity, Technology and being World Leaders**

*Olympia* served as an effective propaganda tool for the promotion of National Socialism as the paragon government body. One of the most considerable sports films ever produced, *Olympia* was also directed and produced by Leni Riefenstahl, under the control of Goebbels. The film posed as a documentary of the 1936 Summer Olympics and was released in two parts: Firstly, *Olympia 1: Teil — Fest der Völker* (Festival of Nations) portrays a historical account of the Olympic games, depicting ancient game traditions in Olympia. *Olympia 2: Teil — Fest der Schönheit* (Festival of Beauty) features the field events of the 1936 Berlin Games. The documentary narrative structure functioned as a testament to the informative and unbiased nature of the film. On the surface, it appears to chronicle the achievements of athletes all over the world. However, scrutinising Riefenstahl’s cinematic techniques reveals sources of emotional exploitation in the promotion of the Nazi worldview. State of the art, avant-garde film technology were pivotal components of Nazi film propaganda, which served to position Nazi Germany as a European superpower. *Olympia* was the first film documentary of the Olympics to be produced. Germans were led to feel proud of the film’s perceived value and their nation’s technological prowess. While posing as a documentary, the film incorporated two pivotal components: sound and editing - which were still uncommon in documentaries of the time. Narration and background music were key components of the film, transforming the viewing experience to one of thrill and exhilaration. Like *Triumph of the Will*, Part One opens with the transcendence through smoke-filled ruins and statues of ancient Greece. The statues soon transfigure into naked dancers and professional athletes, and the audience are taken through time before arriving at the torch relay of the Olympic cauldron in Berlin. The film paces through an array of events in and out of the stadium, accompanied by enthusiastic commentary and electrifying music. The momentum in these scenes is never stagnant, and the audience becomes situated in an atmosphere of grandeur and extravagance to stir emotions of awe and astonishment. The motif of modernity and technology was used to promote National

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81 Berg-Pan, *Leni Riefenstahl*, 197.
Socialism as truly ground-breaking. This worked to assert Germany as the world leader with its advanced production and state-of-the-art technology.

It is important to appreciate the considerable and often demanding task of sound and film editing during this time. In 1936, directors did not have soundproofed cameras, zoom lenses or computer polishing to simplify the task of editing. The use of advanced motion picture techniques such as extreme close ups, smash cuts and tracking shots were well beyond its time and truly engaging. By ensuring fluent transitions between scenes to creating artificial sunlight, Riefenstahl’s cinematography set the film apart from the uninspired nature of customary documentaries circulating during this time. Viewers today can become immersed in an atmosphere so compelling that one feels as though they are a living part of the 1936 games. Nevertheless, the film is hardly concerned with the competitiveness of the Olympics, and refrains from building anticipation for the winner of each event. The primary focus was to render each event uniquely cinematic. This aesthetic approach turned an ordinary record of diving into an abstract and mesmerising aerial ballet through slow-motion and crosscuts. One segment is reversed so that the diver emerges out of the water and into the air. The film did not merely chronicle Olympic events, it evoked and idealised the glory Germany strived for. Primarily, this film served to promote the quintessential ‘Aryan’ and the underlying principles of National Socialism to the rest of the world.

Riefenstahl filmed each event in a slightly different manner to maintain equally gripping movements. Olympia has been described as “a film within a film” where it became the archetypal emblem for achievement and endurance. The imaginative use of distorted bodily shadows, intertwined with shots of leg muscles pulsing and feet beating against the track, invited viewers to notice their own bodily sensations, feeling the strength flowing within themselves. As the athletes began to endure the exhaustion draining from their bodies, each frame provided a surplus of energy and an admirable, perpetual drive. Thereby, Olympia epitomises what Graham called “sociological” propaganda. The film did not blatantly

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87 Berg-Pan, *Leni Riefenstahl*, 201.
88 Hilton, *The films of Leni Riefenstahl*.
89 Barber, "How Leni Riefenstahl Shaped The Way We See The Olympics".
90 Riefenstahl, *Olympia Part One: Festival of Nations*.
91 Downing, *Olympia*, 23.
indoctrinate viewers with the principles of National Socialism, but rather, promoted an
embodied, innate and racialised image of ethnic Germans. The audience were called to engage
in a captivating documentary film featuring admirable feats performed by athletes across the
globe. Viewers of other nations could be delighted to see their favoured athletes being
promoted. Such positive feelings about the film would expectantly extend to the creators of the
film - and to National Socialism. *Olympia* awarded Nazism widespread exposure and
recognition across other nations. This would pave the way for Nazi Germany to emerge as the
European Superpower.

**The “Aryan” Race**

Olympic imagery was used to replicate Nazi ideology disguised in the form of entertainment.
Riefenstahl captured the competition between German, Lutz Long and American, Jesse Owens.
The element of drama and tension are effectively heightened through acute, slow-motion
camera work and rapid medium-shots of audience reactions. Significantly, Hitler is excluded,
as he seldom appeared applauding non-German athletes. The camera was not concerned with
record-breaking feats as much as the athletes themselves. This film promotes a striking vision
of the superiority of the “Aryan” race, a mythical invention the Nazis adopted and developed
to epitomise the ideal German. While this notion predated Nazism, they embraced this racial
hierarchy which deemed the Aryans to be superior ‘master’ race, destined for world
domination, later manifested through the ambition to annihilate those deemed their racial
enemies. Slow motion was applied to German athletes, depicting their bodies as superhuman,
despite the outcome of the race. The quintessential Aryan attributes align closely with Olympic
games: physical sublimity, a heroic, ancient past and the division of the world into separate,
competing countries.

Riefenstahl’s use of propaganda, in the form of content, music and editing, targeted a range of
emotional responses.94 Part Two opens to an extreme close-up of meticulous details of a bird's
wing, as well as a vibrating drop of water on a web and of white, muscular, male figures.95 The
combination of sensual and visual techniques promoted Nazi ideology as seductive and
beautiful. Such avant-garde sequences served to publicise Nazism as technologically advanced,
the white, sculptured bodies epitomising the German ‘master race.’ Hence, *Olympia* was

designed to create a realm of excitement and admiration, to celebrate the Aryan ideal and to shape the Nazi image to Germans and the rest of the world. The film ends with a crescendo; the diving sequence included an elevation device mounted by the pool to warrant effortless movements. In slow motion, the divers appear from the sky above, defying the notion of gravity as they twist and twirl in the air. Riefenstahl omitted commentary in this scene to ensure a mesmerising impact on its audience. Such carefully crafted filmic techniques were deployed to create an unprecedented experience of viewing documentaries. Viewers were compelled to become engulfed in awe and admiration in the hope such feelings would extend to National Socialism. Whenever the audience becomes mesmerised by the film, the frame shifts to Hitler cheering from the stands when the Germans are doing well, anxiously tapping his fingers on his uniformed knee when they are not. These candid intervals show Hitler in a different light. The audience were privileged to view Hitler in a seemingly natural state of being. This served to humanise him as a dictator.

Hitler himself claimed that the function of propaganda was to steer the attention of the masses to necessities, by situating them within their vision. He maintained how propaganda needed to be simplistic, focussing on a few points that were continuously repeated, with specific emphasis on positive and negative emotions. A shining example of this was Hitler’s rallying slogan “Germany, Awake!” Posing as a cry for salvation, aimed to galvanise a nation in turmoil with its identity shaken after a lost war. It was intended to be chanted by those present to create a sense of unity against the Jews and enemies of Germany. Hitler wrote how “Germany had failed to recognise propaganda as a weapon of the first order, whereas the British have employed it with great skill and ingenious deliberation.” Hitler’s seeming transparency in the discussion of propaganda itself, not only worked to trigger anger and resentment, but also performed as an act of honesty and sincerity. Providing Germans with answers they were searching for, would also establish trust in the Nazi regime. Germany, however, was in danger. By generating fear and hatred of the ‘other’ who was deemed responsible for the harsh conditions of the Versailles Treaty, who was hindering the Aryan potential and who was

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96 Riefenstahl, *Olympia Part Two: Festival of Beauty*, 1:20:00.
100 Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 134.
orchestrating the destruction of Germany, this paved way for the escalating Nazi mistreatment, an eventual attempted genocide of Jews.\textsuperscript{102}

\textsuperscript{102} Weaver, “Adolf Hitler’s account of the Nation and Nationalism,” 14.
Fear, Disgust and the Scapegoat

Many have asked the question: How are certain groups persuaded to participate in genocidal violence? Anti-Semitism was not central to Hitler’s widespread support from the late 1920s until 1933, which focused instead on themes of belonging, renewal, and nationalism. Nonetheless, the role propaganda played in provoking and legitimating hatred toward European Jewry became a central theme of Nazi propaganda once they were in power. While the Holocaust was not premediated, what is apparent is the Nazis’ ability to trigger an array of positive and negative emotions to first captivate the audience and then motivate them to work in support for Nazi ideology. This chapter explores how emotional triggering bypasses analytic thinking. As such, it appears that the Nazis were not only trying to convince the population of the repulsive nature of Jews, but were also working themselves up into the state of murderous Rausch that would make their engineering of the genocide possible. On top of this, because this worked on the level of emotion, it is possible even the Nazis themselves did not understand what they were conjuring – as they too were overcome by intensity in the same way as many others. Demonising the Jews was achieved by incorporating propaganda in numerous forms: incessant passionate speeches and rallies and the exhilaration of enthusiastic crowds; structured, uniformed squads with Swastika armbands generating fear to opposition and the intimidation of enemies; and the capitalisation of resentments and fears of those crippled by Germany’s instability. Nazi propaganda celebrated the rapture of being part of National Socialism, before presenting a clear obstacle to their success: poison races that threatened to bring its demise. The Nazi Party exploited and amplified existing and entrenched anti-Semitism in Germany. Emphasising feelings of shame across Germany following the outcomes of World War One and blaming the Jewish population to alleviate such shame, was a central part of the Nazi propaganda narrative. Third Reich propaganda played upon cultural beliefs in German privilege in conjunction with anti-Semitic sentiment to establish a sense of ‘us’ and ‘them.’ The disidentification with the Jews facilitated the scape-goating of the Jews for Germany’s perceived socio-economic and political failures during the Weimar period. Clinical

psychologist Avner Falk remarks that prejudice is inherent in all groups. This necessitates an examination of the persistent disgust imagery in Nazi propaganda, and its attempt to characterise the Jewish population as inhuman.

**Defining the Enemy**

In cases of genocide, there is often an emphasis on the fundamental distinctions between purported ‘racial’ groups. An examination of the way Nazi propaganda generated hatred and fear of Jews during the 1930s requires the scrutiny of film and entertainment. *Der Ewige Jude* (The Eternal Jew) was the anecdotal propaganda film, distinctive for its hate discourse that often plays an important role in genocidal contexts. Straub underscores propaganda’s role in providing a “way station in the evolution of genocide” by offering a scapegoat intensifying the devaluation of that group. Nazi propaganda was effective in both reflecting and responding to needs, as well as shaping and influencing them. The film’s trenchant depiction of Jews as disease-carriers; dangerous threats to public health also served to justify the removal of Jews and the establishment of the Lodz ghetto in 1940. The film reflected and amplified widespread fears about the Jewish threat to German revival, generating fear and hatred toward the ‘other.’ Professor of Psychology Ervin Staub suggests that hate speech functions as a predictive condition for the development of genocidal violence. When one group begins to blame another for conflict or struggle, the disillusionment with the ‘scapegoat’ often results in harmful actions toward the latter.

It is important to consider the way in which the deployment of linguistic devices established a dichotomy between Jewish and German culture in *The Eternal Jew*. Hitler blamed the economic and social turmoil of the interwar period on the Jews: “the real organiser of the revolution and its actual wirepuller, the international Jew, had correctly estimated the situation.” The linguistic representation of the Jew offers justifications for the upcoming catastrophe of genocidal violence. The Jew’s ability to “correctly [estimate] the situation” reflected long-standing Nazi stereotypes of European Jewry as cunning and devious and was

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107 Jewish Virtual Library, “The Łódź Ghetto: History & Overview”.
110 The National WWII Museum. *How did Hitler Happen?*. 
suggestive of Jewish culpability in the hardships Germany had faced in recent years. These ideas seemingly aimed to evoke feelings of fear and outrage for Germans who suffered greatly in the post-war period, such allegations would evoke feelings of fear and outrage. Fear, hatred, anger and nostalgia have been recognised as the chief emotions targeted by radical populist leadership in recent analyses of such movements in the present. The success of National Socialism in the years leading up to the Second World War was largely owed to its ability to appeal to an array of positive and negative emotions. The persistent reference to a revitalised Germany sought to evoke nostalgia, and solicit a profound sense of loss, which in turn paved the way toward eradicating the cause – the enemies of the German state. In this manner, Third Reich propaganda facilitated what Kirk Hawkins and Levente Littvay call “a populist framing of issues” in their political science framework. Germans who were crippled by the dire economic and social consequences of the Great War and the Depression would be frustrated to learn that the devastation was avoidable, and furthermore, fearful about Jewish plots into the future. These ideas contributed to the atmosphere of panic and desperation across Germany, paving the way for the implementation of harsher measures against Jews. The capacity for propaganda to turn anger and fear into political power should not be overlooked.

The Eternal Jew exhibition opened in Munich in November 1937 and ran until January 1938. The exhibition in the first instance was an exercise in orientalism in the depiction of Jews as having Middle Eastern and Asiatic physical features. The prominent poster for the exhibition contrasted the Jewish egotistical temperament with the Nazi’s glowing vision for a Volksgemeinschaft. This was achieved through an exaggerated depiction of ‘the Jew’ as a universal type. The Jew in the poster is depicted as a kaftan-clad male, holding gold coins in one hand and in the other, a map of the world and a sickle. This was used to symbolise the Jewish method of world domination through finance, as well as through Bolshevism which Jews were thought to control. The Jewish financial empire idea is reiterated in the film through a low-angle shot of the Star of David, superimposed onto capital cities of the world. The visual illusion is suggestive of Jewish domination of capital to trigger fear and panic. Since eastern European, Jewish immigrants arrived with scarce resources and limited education, they

113 United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, “Der Ewige Jude.”
114 Hippler, Der Ewige Jude, 11:00.
115 Hansen, "The Art and Science of Reading Faces: Strategies of Racist Cinema In The Third Reich" 82.
were seen as competition for employment.\textsuperscript{116} The seeming objective of such a portrayal was to amplify frustrations within the hardworking German family, who not only felt unfairly punished by the penalty of reparations imposed by Treaty of Versailles, but who also felt threatened by Jewish immigration. This sought to appeal to an individual’s natural tendency to shift blame for their own suffering.\textsuperscript{117} Nazi propaganda perpetuated a myth of German struggle and resilience, claiming all successes as the achievements of Germans, while blaming the Jewish population for all failures.\textsuperscript{118}

\textbf{The ‘parasitic’ Jew}

The Nazis’ claim to documentary authenticity derived from the use of a vast amount of archival footage, underscoring that no Jewish person was coerced during the filming.\textsuperscript{119} The absence of fear or reluctance in the facial expressions of Jews in the footage served as testimony to the film’s authenticity. The film depicted unsanitary living conditions within the Lodz ghetto, which was overcrowded and infested with flies and rats.\textsuperscript{120} Documentary-style footage established the illusion of credibility, distorting boundaries between fact and fiction, ideology and reality – described by film theorist Anton Kaes as the ‘reality effect.’\textsuperscript{121} \textit{The Eternal Jew} references scientific ethnographical documentaries, encapsulating native peoples in their natural habitats.\textsuperscript{122} Structurally, it has been described as a compilation film due to its widespread use of footage and images which were repurposed to reconfigure their original context.\textsuperscript{123} Combining documentary with entertainment allowed third Reich Propaganda to achieve credibility and emotive appeal simultaneously. Consequently, it was believed the film had captured the ghetto Jews in an unprejudiced manner, reflecting how they behave in their own natural surroundings, ignoring the role of anti-Semitism itself in the causing the extreme poverty of the ghetto.

There was considerable evidence of shame circulating in Germany at this time which left many vulnerable to emotional manipulation. \textit{The Eternal Jew} played upon widespread and overt feelings of injustice, betrayal and frustration. An examination of the language used by the narrator reveals how blame manifested itself in the form of dehumanisation and scapegoating:

\textsuperscript{116} Brustein & King, Anti-Semitism in Europe Before the Holocaust, 39.
\textsuperscript{117} Narayanaswami, “Analysis of Nazi Propaganda: A Behavioural Study,” 7.
\textsuperscript{118} Narayanaswami, “Analysis of Nazi Propaganda: A Behavioural Study,” 3.
\textsuperscript{119} Fishlock, "The Eternal Jew: Jewish Victimisation Through Marginalisation,” 16.
\textsuperscript{120} Hippler, \textit{Der Ewige Jude}, 1:30.
\textsuperscript{121} Fishlock, "The Eternal Jew: Jewish Victimisation Through Marginalisation,” 15.
\textsuperscript{122} Hake, \textit{Popular Cinema of The Third Reich}, 19.
\textsuperscript{123} Hornshoj-Moller, and Culbert, "Der Ewige Jude (1940): Joseph Goebbels' Unequaled Monument to Anti-Semitism,” 49.
Jewish home life reveals remarkable lack of creative ability to civilise.... Jewish dwellings are filthy and neglected. These Jews aren't at all poor. After decades of business, they've hoarded enough to acquire decent, comfortable homes. But they live for generations in the same dirty and bug-ridden dwellings. Untroubled by their surroundings, they go right on with their prayers.\textsuperscript{124}

The narration worked to seize the attention of the masses and steer their perception to the degradation of Jewish life. Dehumanising language reinforced the division between the ideal Aryan and the Jew. European Jews were depicted to be content with horrendous living conditions, residing in their own filth. Nevertheless, the narrator reminds the audience of Jewish wealth to hinder the tendency to sympathise with them. Hence, despite their riches, their savage nature perpetuates this appalling lifestyle. In this way, the Jew is wealthy because he steals from hard-working families, yet continues to live in filthy conditions because he is uncivilised and indeed, sub-human. Jews were portrayed above all else as “Untermenschen” who were not deserving of humane treatment, which functioned as a trigger for disgust that fuelled hatred. Emotions become salient when propaganda is capable of channelling emotional triggers for the purpose of political action. Sociologist Mabel Berezin describes emotions as “physical and expressive responses to some sort of destabilisation.”\textsuperscript{125} She considers how on a collective level, conditions of epidemic, severe economic hardship or a lost war provoke radicalism. Values and attitudes can be altered by emotional experiences, are often that of disgust, fear, anger and sublimity, hence the manipulation of emotions for the purpose of populist mobilisation such as is found in ideals of multiculturalism, migration and national identity.\textsuperscript{126}

\textit{The Eternal Jew} is riddled with illusion and cinematic trickery. The film was described as “an obscene propaganda compilation that manipulates and reinterprets an alternative reality.”\textsuperscript{127} This was achieved by amplifying and exaggerating stereotypes, labelling Jews as materialistic, frugal and deceptive. Its panoply of material worked to shock and outrage its audience. \textit{The Eternal Jew} synthesises clips from seven feature films, including a scene from the American film \textit{The House of Rothschild}, whereby a Jew conceals his earnings from tax collectors.\textsuperscript{128}

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\textsuperscript{124} Hippler, Der Ewige Jude, 1:30.
\textsuperscript{125} Berezin, “Secure States: Towards a political sociology of Emotion,” 36.
\textsuperscript{126} Georg-Betz, A Distant Mirror: Nineteenth-Century Populism, Nativism, and Contemporary Right-Wing Radical Politics, 201.
\textsuperscript{127} Weg, The Eternal Jew: The film of a 2000 - year Rat Migration, 54.
\textsuperscript{128} Hippler, Der Ewige Jude, 25:00.
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film deliberately conceals its context—that Jewish businessmen were taxed more heavily than other merchants which forced them to withhold their earnings. In this way, self-preservation was presented as greed and deceit. Manifesting such stereotypes played into anxieties about Germany’s economic and political circumstances, and Jewish culpability in Germany’s economic and socio-political turmoil. German nationalists who experienced the wrath of a lost world war could now be comforted to know there was someone to blame for their hardship. Despite the highly exaggerated style and content, *The Eternal Jew* provided many Germans with an outlet for their suffering by reinforcing pre-existing prejudices and anxieties towards the Jewish population.

One of the film’s most notorious scenes used juxtaposition to compare Jews emigrating from Palestine to that of a plague of rats swarming through sewers and cellars. The dehumanising imagery worked to a form of allusion that invited the audience to perform their own deductive reasoning and apportion feelings of disgust toward European Jews. To further solidify this point, the vivid imagery is accompanied by the narration which explains how “rats constitute the destructive element in the animal kingdom, just like Jews do among humanity.” This sequence seemingly targets strong emotions of both fear and disgust and a compulsion to stop the threat - as would be done with parasites or pests. The appeal to emotion is often centrally featured in the task of harnessing support for political objectives as well as motivating behaviours. The exploitation of emotional responses to graphic, visual scenes and confronting imagery works to alter attitudes, values, and motivate behaviours. *The Eternal Jew* utilised graphic footage of a butcher slaughtering cattle as part of a Jewish ritual. Coupled with the heavy emphasis on the alien-like nature of the East European Jew, this functioned as a trigger for disgust which also helped habituate viewers to extreme violence. Nazi propaganda effectively denied European Jewry their humanity, while simultaneously planting triggers of disgust and violence. Narayanaswami argues that “given the political and economic climate in Germany at the time, combined with the humiliation and unfairness of the Treaty of Versailles, the German population was ripe for such propaganda.” Although the film was directed by

129 Fishlock, "The Eternal Jew: Jewish Victimisation Through Marginalisation, 45.
130 Hansen, "The Art And Science Of Reading Faces: Strategies Of Racist Cinema In The Third Reich" 84.
131 Fishlock, "The Eternal Jew: Jewish Victimisation Through Marginalisation" 45.
134 Hippler, *Der Ewige Jude*, 57:16.
Fritz Hippler, *The Eternal Jew* was the inspiration of Joseph Goebbels. Repetition was the quintessence of Nazi propaganda as Goebbels advocated for the “repeated exposure effect.” Historian Baruch Gitlis noted how “wherever the German turned, he met his most ‘dangerous enemy,’ the Jew… while he walked in the street he encountered posters and slogans against the Jews at every square, on every wall and billboard. Even graffiti greeted the German at the entrance to his dwelling: ‘Wake up Germany, Judah must rot!’” Jews were repeatedly presented as disease-ridden, parasites who were threatening to Germany. In *Mein Kampf*, the Jews were described as the “eternal fungous growth.” The metaphor of fungus as a parasitic organism that grows on walls and skin, causing disease and sometimes death, became a key notion of Nazi propaganda. The idea of a Jewish virus, spreading through the nation and crippling its people became a central part of Nazi ideology. Historian Ian Kershaw identified numerous passages in *Mein Kampf* that contained genocidal undertones, such as: “the nationalisation of our masses will succeed only when, aside from all the positive struggle for the soul of our people, their international poisoners are exterminated.” Hitler also proposed “if at the beginning of the war and during the war twelve or fifteen thousand of these Hebrew corrupters of the nation had been subjected to poison gas, such as had to be endured in the field by hundreds of thousands of our very best German workers of all classes and professions, then the sacrifice of millions at the front would not have been in vain.” *Mein Kampf* offered justifications for German superiority and for the dehumanisation of the Jews. In this way, Nazism became a political anthropology, contrasting the social awareness of humans to the egoism of vermin. On a collective level, with an abundance of grievances from the devastation of a lost war and the social, economic, and political instability that followed, these circumstances produced a realm of emotional instability and yearning powerful leadership, one that was capable of restoring order and national esteem. Hitler maintained that all culture was conditioned by social disposition (*Gesinnung*) which demanded individual sacrifice for the welfare of their nation. In this way, humans were constituents of the community in which they live, and the needs of the community surpassed the instinct of self-preservation. Hence,

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138 Baruch Gitlis, *Cinema of Hate*, 64.
141 Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 258.
142 Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 259.
144 Fairweather, “Hitler and Hitlerism: Germany Under the Nazis,” 3.
145 Stiezinger, “The Significance of Dehumanization: Nazi Ideology and Its Psychological Consequences,” 139
civilisation was defined by patriotism and duty to one’s culture, nation or community, in which the Aryan race demonstrated its superiority. In the same way, there were also inferior races incapable of such human virtues. Hitler argued that Jews did not possess an ‘idealistic disposition’ (*idealistische Gesinnung*) and were driven purely by the instinct of self-preservation.146 This message penetrated indifference through the appeal to universal existing values: national identity, emotional and political stability. The Nazis perceived the masses to be slow and unperceptive, so to facilitate recognition, comprehension, retention, and conviction ideas needed to be continually repeated.147

**Addressing the Jewish problem**

The Nazis claimed that the overarching purpose of *The Eternal Jew* was to serve as a tool of education.148 Hence, the film manifested Jews as they ‘really are’ and to provide the audience with the skills they needed to unveil the assimilated Jew and to recognise their European disguise. Cinematic techniques constructed a new reality which was supposedly more authentic than the initially visible one. The motif of the enemy hidden within was an effective trigger for anxiety, paranoia and suspicion, moving the German population closer to the idea that the problem needed a solution, a common refrain throughout Nazi propaganda. In one of his most renowned speeches, Goebbels described Jews as “the enemy’s agents among us.”149 The well-disguised, devious and cunning Jew would become a dominant theme explored in Third Reich propaganda. In the film, the true “*morgenländisches Wesen*” (oriental nature) of a Jew is not immediately recognisable because of their incredible ability to deceive.150 A plethora of filmic techniques were used to un-mask the Jew in disguise; moving beyond the surface to uncover a hidden, deeper reality. The use of dissolve fused two separate realities to establish a symbiotic effect between the masked Jew and his true self. Camera angles such as the microscopic-like close-up encouraged the belief that scientific methods were used to unveil that which was not visible to the untrained eye. The viewer was informed they were witnessing a hidden reality, whereby, they were in fact presented with a fictional and emotionally laden vision of an imaginary other. In this way, the dissolve technique manipulated perceptual psychology to suggest the limits of the visual. This ‘informed’ viewers they must learn to practise methods of

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146 Stiezinger, “The Significance of Dehumanization: Nazi Ideology and Its Psychological Consequences,” 142.
149 Goebbels, “The Jews are Guilty.”
150 Hippler, *Der Ewige Jude*, 30:00.
identifying that which is not immediately visible. In one sequence, stereotypical, bearded, Polish Jews were clean shaven to reveal how they can transform into ‘western’ Jews. This process of unmasking, highlighted the interchangeability between Jews residing in German neighbourhoods and those in the ghettos. Hence, such stressors served to trigger emotions of anxiety, particularly among German nationalists. While the emotional experience is often compared against reasoned thought, it does not mean that evaluation is absent in this process. For example, feeling disgust results in the appraisal that an object is disgusting and experiencing fear involves the evaluation that an object is fearsome. Proud Germans could be disturbed by the notion of disease-ridden vermin infiltrating the country and poisoning its structure. Without an understanding of how one’s hidden fears remains throughout their life, individuals become vulnerable to emotional triggers that seek to activate this fear. Hence, the trauma of the disillusionment of the post-war period resided in the subconscious and could be reinvigorated by setting off emotions such as anger, disgust and fear.

The messaging in the *The Eternal Jew* became a mainstay of Nazi discourse as the regime veered toward a genocidal course. The film closes with Hitler’s infamous speech in 1939, foreshadowing the expulsion of Germany’s Jewish population:

“If international Jewish financiers inside and outside Europe should succeed in plunging the nations once more into a world war, then the result will not be the…victory of Jewry but the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe.”

Here, Hitler raised the suggestion of Jewish emigration from Germany. The film’s hate speech functioned as a trigger for frustration and hatred to warm Germans to the idea of accelerating the Jewish departure from Germany and to mainstream Hitler’s vision of a ‘racially pure’ society. Propaganda has been described as a ‘hypodermic needle’ with which opinions and behaviour could be controlled. The idea that successful propaganda achieves ‘control’ of any form, fails to account for one’s capacity to resist a message, despite its effective presentation. The active complicity or even passive consensus of the audience cannot be assumed, even in ‘totalitarian’ structures where independent concerns become subsumed under

151 Hippler, *Der Ewige Jude*.
152 Chaudhuri, “A study of emotion and reason in products and services.”
154 Hitler, “Speech to Reichstag in 1939.”
a single official worldview. In this way, effective propaganda is one that constructs a new dialogue which promotes an alternative set of values, presented in a way that aligns closely with the traditional social principles. Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda was effective because of its ability to exploit existing emotions of fear and disgust and it is important to appreciate the role emotions played in this. Goebbels recognised how behaviours emerge from one’s core beliefs and can only be altered by a “long-term attitudinal shift.” Hence, after establishing Jews as repulsive, deviant threats to society, and generating anxieties about their nefarious motives, the Nazis then provided the necessary substrate for a far more violent treatment of this already marginalised group. Once a new set of emotional values transforms traditional attitudes and beliefs, this would result in a change in behaviour – and at this stage, propaganda may escalate measures of indoctrination. Jews were stripped of their humanity, while the German public were continuously exposed to vulgar propaganda and images of slaughtering cattle. In effect, the NSDAP were preparing ordinary men to commit, or be complicit in forms of violence more extreme than might otherwise be possible.

**Sexual Representations**

At the core of Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda, were two main characterisations of the Jew. The greedy Jew who set out to orchestrate Germany’s demise and the lecherous Jew who fed off the flesh of Germans. A 1920 German Reichstag election poster portrayed Germany as a healthy and attractive, young woman. Lurking behind her is a Jew with deformed features, a disproportioned nose, bald head and a double chin.

German Sociologist Klaus Theweleit summarises it thus:

> First, their home is the bank, from where they practice their economic extortions on their host nations. The second… are the Jews one invariably sees sitting with blonde German girls in bars and cafes, sapping the sexual and racial strength of their host people and destroying them.

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159 Kershaw, “How Effective was Nazi Propaganda?,” 201.
These two types became ubiquitous. Such images aimed to solicit disgust and anxiety and ultimately helped to create a climate of tolerance to discrimination and violence against Jews, paving the way to the introduction of anti-Jewish laws and decrees to restore public order. Propaganda encouraged passivity through campaigns dedicated to producing an atmosphere tolerant of anti-Jewish violence. This was achieved by promoting anti-Jewish laws and decrees as mandatory to restore public order. Such ideas were amplified through Hitler’s reference to “pulling down blood barriers.”

The newspaper *The Attacker (Der Stürmer)* published by Julius Streicher, was another outlet for anti-Semitic propaganda. The newspaper often depicted Hitler as a noble leader of a European Superpower and projected the Nazi ideal of a *Volksgemeinschaft.* Streicher was notorious for the use of disgust imagery in his vulgar style of propagandism. Despite his profession as a schoolteacher, Streicher immediately enlisted to fight in the Great War. Germany’s tragic defeat, in combination with the social and political unrest that followed, urged Streicher to become involved in radical political activism. *Der Stürmer* was renowned for its malicious, anti-Semitic caricatures, which depicted Jews as repulsive, with misshapen bodies and exaggerated facial features: bald, wrinkled faces with giant noses, clothed in dark kaftans, all of which contributed to create an atmosphere of disgust and paranoia towards the Jewish population. For example, the cover image of the June 1933 issue: *Revenge* displays an image of a Nazi official pushing a Jew off a cliff. Standing in front of a rising swastika, the Nazi officer appears to be neatly dressed, with his shirt tucked in, to symbolise an orderly and robust Germany under Nazi rule. The Jew on the other hand is overweight, stubby and unappealing. His facial expression betrays evil conniving and threatening motives. The caption reads: “Go to where you wanted me to go, you evil spirit.” The cartoon is an attempt to evoke terror amongst Germans, and to suggest that Germany is acting purely in self-defence. Germany’s ‘reaction’ is therefore justified, as Jews were simply victims of their own actions. Philosopher Aristotle maintained that anger is caused by something affecting an individual or their loved ones which they believe is undeserved, as Jan Plamper observes in his historical study of emotions.

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163 Hitler, *Mein Kampf,* 293.
165 Bytwerk, *Julius Streicher,* 38.
166 Bytwerk, *Julius Streicher,* 40.
necessary and justified. Streicher’s material was extreme - yet epitomises the power of imagery to evoke disgust - an intense emotion that compels an individual to terminate the source of the emotion. In this way, genocide is explicitly linked to accumulated disgust and dehumanisation. During the post-war years of unrest, violence was portrayed as something productive. For this reason, Nazi propaganda compelled people to believe that if harm was not done to the Jews, then the Jews would viciously annihilate the entire nation in a zero-sum game.

Accounts of sexual relations between Jews and Germans (Rassenschande) were staple notions of Der Stürmer. Streicher portrayed Jews as “violators of the innocent, perpetrators of bizarre sex crimes, and ritual murder,” using the blood of others for religious sacraments. Streicher found curious ways to suggest widespread Jewish violence against Germans. A 1926 picture revealed three Jewish men sucking the blood from a bound and naked woman. The woman’s white, naked body conveys the racial and moral purity and vulnerability of Aryan women, on the one hand, and Jews as racially ‘other’ parasites, feeding off the vitality of German women, and the German body politic, on the other. Linguistic and visual depictions of the ‘other’ as vile or sexually deviant served as a rationale for state violence. Sexuality is often used to define a transfer point for relations of power. Such repugnance was targeted towards male audiences in several ways. First, by evoking a sense of heroism and bravado that called for the protection of ‘damsels in distress.’ In addition, sexualised imagery also sought to evoke arousal and excitement to create enjoyment for German audiences. Graphic depictions not only fostered negative emotions such as repulsion anger and disgust, but also enticed and titillated audiences. Hitler found Streicher's crude methods to be an effective means of influencing “the man in the street.” Der Stürmer often featured explicit details of sex crimes and sexual intercourse to arouse its readers, ensuring they are both entertained and repulsed in a circular way. Nazism did not encourage people to think, so much as to feel. For this reason, propaganda needed to be simple and to appeal to what Hitler expressed as man’s inner Schweinehund (pig-dog). In this way, they were able to promote two possible outcomes: The victory of National Socialism and the domination of the Jew. O’Shaughnessy

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172 Streicher, “Der Stürmer.”
174 Foucault, The History of Sexuality, 96.
175 O’Saughnessey, Selling Hitler, 70.
176 Bracher, German Dictatorship, 347.
suggests how third Reich propaganda applied the formulaic propaganda methodology even at the expense of losing support from those with a more sophisticated worldview.\textsuperscript{177} The use of repetition and oversimplification was seen as a means of accessing the emotional and psychological sphere of many Germans. Ideas about Jewish sexual deviancy were also explicitly manifested in Hitler’s \textit{Mein Kampf} of 1925:

With satanic joy in his face, the black-haired Jewish youth lurks in wait for the unsuspecting girl whom he defiles with his blood, thus stealing her from her people. With every means he tries to destroy the racial foundations of the people he has set out to subjugate. Just as he himself systematically ruins women and girls, he does not shrink back from pulling down the blood barriers for others, even on a large scale.\textsuperscript{178}

\textbf{Mein Kampf} (My Struggle) is filled with vivid and disturbing descriptions of the capture and violation of innocent Aryan women by lascivious Jewish men. The ‘unsuspecting girl’ is depicted as vulnerable and oblivious to the sexual predator lurking behind her, the parasitic Jew with the satanic joy on his face, as he seeks to destroy the racial foundations of Germany by targeting women. These depictions aim to spark horror and disgust among the readers, appealing to an individual’s inner sense of heroism and duty of care. This worked to create a sense of urgency – to protect German women from sexual predators. A group may be denied empathy if it appears to be threatening in some way.\textsuperscript{179} Through the exploitation of pre-existing stereotypes and imagery, Jews were portrayed as a foreign race who poisoned German culture, fed off its resources, defiled its womenfolk, and seized its economy. While many Germans did not approve of anti-Jewish violence, antipathy toward Jews saw a considerable increase after years of unrest, which ultimately led to the passive acceptance of state discrimination against them.\textsuperscript{180} In 1936, an observer for German Social Democratic Party in exile reported that: “the feeling that the Jews are another race is today a general one.”\textsuperscript{181} The use of blood metaphors in the context of the Nazi obsession with racial purity and impurity is well-documented. Jewish blood was described as contaminated; capable of infiltrating the body and causing terrible afflictions. The notion of blood is also evident in discovered letters between Edith, a former employee of the SS Lebensborn program, and Horst Wagner, a high-ranking official in Ribbentrop’s Foreign Ministry after World War II, as described by Annette Timm. Horst wrote

\textsuperscript{177} O'Shaughnessy, “Selling Hitler: propaganda and the Nazi brand,” 64.
\textsuperscript{178} Hitler, \textit{Mein Kampf}, 293.
\textsuperscript{179} Falk, “Collective Psychological Processes in Anti-Semitism,” 41.
\textsuperscript{180} Bytwerk, “It’s Them or Us: Killing the Jews in Nazi Propaganda,” 21.
\textsuperscript{181} Holocaust Memorial Museum, “Defining the Enemy.”
to Edith “…but also our hot blood that inescapably strives to bring us near and into each other… For my blood and my eyes, my lips and hands you are the most perfected and longed for creature.” Edith responded with similarly elaborate references of her “strong desires” and her “foaming” blood. Their outpourings represent the quintessential Nazi, whose core value of a ‘racial utopia’ is represented by the frequent use of the metaphor of blood. Even in their decorative triteness, these love letters symbolise the relationship between Nazi ideology and emotion. It is representative of perceptions of gender during the Third Reich that allowed for Nazi propaganda to trigger disgust about Jewish capture of women and sexual arousal. It has been argued that all emotions are innate, and prejudice is inherent in all groups. However, such letters are indicative of how emotions also become shaped by the culture and environment in which one resides. Different cultures hold their own values which have a pivotal impact upon the emotions people experience, and how such emotions are triggered. For this reason, Nazi propaganda evoked images of sexuality and power, gender roles and violence.

The perpetual dehumanisation of Jews also served to emotionally prepare the German population for their mistreatment and exile through collective desensitisation. Demonising Jews also served to evade the tendency to empathise with others. By stripping Jews of their humanity, they were also stripped of their human rights. CEO of New York Historical Society Louise Mirrer draws upon “the ease with which the rhetoric of hatred, directed against a particular group—in this case, of course, the Jews—can permeate a national discourse and become ‘normal’ for ordinary people.” Through their relentless promotion of a racist ideology that demonised an entire group of people, Nazi propaganda laid the foundations for genocidal violence on an unprecedented scale.

There is no doubt that both the interwar period and instability that followed produced profound suffering in Germany, both individually and collectively. After capitalising on existing German fears and the desperation of many disillusioned by their troubling circumstances, the Nazis provided what Freud refers to as the growing ‘scapegoat.’ Third Reich propaganda was able to utilise this desperation to garner widespread support by passionately ‘sharing’ in Germany’s hardships. This was accompanied by the perpetual dehumanisation of Jews by triggering

185 Freud, *Civilisation and its Discontents*, 41.
feelings of disgust, fear and hatred over prolonged periods of time. Long-term exposure to such material worked to emotionally prepare Germans for the proposed solution – the elimination of the Jewish people.
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Emotional Learning

National Socialism promoted the idea of a united Germany identity that moved beyond the bounds of previous ideologies, doctrines and class divisions. National Socialism found insightful ways of achieving inclusivity to create a feeling that each person was a chief and valued member of the regime. From the 1920s, German youth became the target audience for Nazi propaganda.\textsuperscript{186} Writing in \textit{Mein Kampf}, Hitler expressed “whoever has the youth has the future.”\textsuperscript{187} Harnessing the support and devotion from young people was pivotal to the longevity of Nazism and would be achieved by infiltrating all aspects of life. Aware that young people were not eligible to vote, they were called to promote National Socialism and use their enthusiasm to devote themselves entirely to the cause. The Nazi Party used radical appeals to freedom, national rebirth, martyrdom and self-sacrifice to recruit German youth. This focus of chapter is how the NSDAP normalised violence and anti-Semitism in children’s books and education, within the culture of the Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls, and in films such as \textit{Hitlerjunge Quex}. Drawing upon Hitler Youth pedagogic texts and autobiographical accounts of former members will provide a key insight to the emotions that were evoked in them. Neuroscientific works have also considered that focus on the mechanisms of emotional response and the forms of stimuli that trigger them. National Socialists educated children in Nazi principles, influencing children to adopt anti-Semitic and racist ideas from the early stages of life. Young people’s thirst for action and adventure was used to indoctrinate them into militarism. The Hitler Youth targeted young people who were hopeful, resilient and dynamic to devote themselves to Nazism.

This thesis engages with neuropsychological ideas about emotion toward an analysis of how Nazi propaganda functioned. Meaningful gaps have been identified in the critical connection between human emotion and propaganda messages in fostering motivation and this thesis seeks to address this gap. By current neuroscientific consensus, there are two recognised paths to fear: the fast route through the amygdala, and a steadier route by the cerebral cortex where a threat is consciously processed.\textsuperscript{188} The amygdala governs the perception of emotions such as

\textsuperscript{186} Gottfried, \textit{Children of the Slaughter: Young People of the Holocaust}, 30.
\textsuperscript{187} Hitler, \textit{Mein Kampf}, 343.
fear, anger and anxiety, such that triggering this part of the brain can result in outbreaks of panic, aggression and hurt. Along with its role in governing a fear response, the amygdala is also responsible for the memory affiliated with fear-inducing episodes. For example, experiments using rodents with uninjured amygdalae reveal that when a tune is played just before they are given an unpleasant foot-shock, they soon begin to affiliate the tune with the irritating shock. Hence, they will exhibit a fear reaction once they hear the tune before they are shocked. Such reactions involve elevated blood pressure, freezing and increased heart rate. This is an example of fear conditioning or Pavlovian conditioning where a biologically potent stimulus is paired with a neutral stimulus. The relationship between perception and fear conditioning is an important one. Much of the amygdala’s role in emotional learning derives from conditioning. Nazi propaganda was riddled with such conditioning, its language and visual imagery filled with emotion. Neuroscientist Antonio Damasio stated:

Culture works by a system of selection similar to that of genetic selection, except that what is being selected is an instrument that we put into practice. Feelings are an agent in cultural selection. I think that the beauty of the idea is in seeing feelings as motivators, as a surveillance system, and as negotiators.

Humans are inherently social beings. Individual experiences within a particular group are experiences of wellbeing or ill being with the group remaining as the central object. This means individuals often seek advice from fellow group members when they experience uncertainty, in the search for validation and acceptance. Children and adolescents are particularly susceptible to such outside influences and often learn attitudes, ideas and beliefs through observation and interactions with others.

**Indoctrination through Children’s Literature**

During the Third Reich, Jews became objects of conditional stimulus in children’s books, education, within the youth organisations, and in film, all of which worked to normalise anti-Semitism. Frequent exposure to confronting material could ensure young people became
equipped to recognise the Jewish threat and respond with violence and ‘othering.’ Mirrer, argues that children’s books had the strongest manifestation of anti-Semitism, because lifelong Jewish hatred required disgust imagery to be introduced at the earliest possible stages of a child’s life. Consider one of the most infamous propaganda storybooks: *Trau keinem Fuchs auf grüner Heid und keinem Jud bei seinem Eid* (Trust No Fox on his Green Heath and No Jew on his Oath). It was published in 1936 by Streicher, and written by teenager, Elvira Bauer who was eighteen years of age. Anti-Semitism was expressed through crude poetry and graphic illustrations which highlighted the difference between Germans and Jews. The cover image is of a fox ready to seize its prey, and a Jew swearing an unfaithful oath under the Star of David, as the title would suggest. Nazi propaganda began using the Star of David to depict the Jews as ‘others’ – that is, culturally separate and entirely detached from Germans. The cover alone serves to communicate ideas about danger and enemy groups to young children. Children often associate ‘the enemy’ with terror and hostility, which worked to develop an intolerance towards the Jewish population from an early age. Bauer juxtaposes the ideal Aryan, who is characterised as God’s creation, who is attractive, honest and honourable, against the fraudulent, ugly Jew. Jews are described as being affiliated to the Devil, depicted as un-attractive, greedy and untrustworthy to trigger feelings of discomfort and animosity in their presence. Children’s books featured long-standing stereotypical tropes that exemplified the culmination of the desensitisation that took place leading up to and during World War Two. Establishing a divide between German children and Jewish children transmitted ideas about belonging that necessitated an exclusion of the ‘others.’ Nazi propaganda reinforced cultural beliefs and attitudes through unifying and isolating words such as, ‘us’ and ‘them.’ German children were invited into a realm of warmth and belonging associated with being valued members of National Socialism. Being part of ‘us’ meant that children would enjoy a future of strength, superiority, honour and order. In the same way, establishing a contrast between Germans and Jews initiated a process of desensitisation, where children were conditioned not to empathise with the alienated group. This is because they were regularly depicted as evil, threatening and repulsive; everything that was repugnant to the NSDAP – and to young children.

196 Wecker, How the Nazis “Normalized” Anti-Semitism by Appealing to Children.”
199 Bauer, *Trau keinem Fuchs auf grüner Heid und keinem Jud bei seinem Eid*, 3.
200 Wecker, How the Nazis “Normalized” Anti-Semitism by Appealing to Children.”
201 Fitzmaurice, "Propaganda.” 71.
Trust No Fox was distributed to children from around six years of age in German schools.\textsuperscript{202} The book features images of Jews seizing innocent German women, explicitly remarking “what a creature is the Jew. Not even his own women he likes. To share himself a German wife.”\textsuperscript{203} This is accompanied by an illustration of a Jewish man tightly holding a young German woman under his arm. She is seemingly uncomfortable and reluctant, with her body positioned away from the Jew to suggest she is seeking help.\textsuperscript{204} His smugness is expressed through a smirk as he offers nothing but jewellery. While young children may not be equipped to grapple with the severity of such claims, they were invited to feel discomfort and uneasiness towards the Jew’s imposition on an innocent young woman. Such vivid depictions of heinous crimes would be confronting for a young child who was instructed to fear the Jewish nemesis. Exposure to such material from infancy, before acquiring the ability to separate fictional ideas from real life, could work to extend these attitudes and stereotypes to all Jews. These emotive images were expressed daily until these racial mantras became instilled, leaving lasting impacts on individual perception. In this way, the capacity for developing an individual reasoned response is slowly undermined by a regulated emotional response.\textsuperscript{205} Coercing children to think and feel in deliberate ways ultimately shapes emotional and cognitive processes away from sceptical doubt or critical analysis. Children and adolescents growing up during Nazi Germany were at a vulnerable age at which crucial emotional learning and personal development takes place. Indoctrination was used to influence impressionable young children during a time when humans are most vulnerable to external influences. Fearfulness towards Jews instilled in childhood, would later develop into animosity and repugnance - paving way for the acceptance of Jewish mistreatment.

Results from the German General Social Survey (ALLBUS) are reflective of distinctively higher anti-Semitism across cohorts who grew up during the Nazi regime than those born either before or after. Data was obtained from two surveys in 1996 and 2006 from 5,300 respondents across 264 cities or towns, all of whom had German parents and Grandparents.\textsuperscript{206} This survey was analysed by economist Nico Voigtländer and historian Hans-Joachim Voth who concluded that such data is reflective of a ‘magnification effect’ given indoctrination was particularly effective where it could exploit preexisting beliefs and attitudes. Data reveals how “17\% of

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\textsuperscript{202} Corelli, Poisoning Young Minds in Nazi Germany: Children and Propaganda in the Third Reich, 7.
\textsuperscript{203} Bauer, Trau keinem Fuchs auf grüner Heid und keinem Jud bei seinem Eid, 1.
\textsuperscript{204} Bauer, Trau keinem Fuchs auf grüner Heid und keinem Jud bei seinem Eid, 10.
\textsuperscript{206} Voigtländer & Voth, “Nazi Indoctrination And Anti-Semitic Beliefs in Germany,” 7934.
\end{flushleft}
German respondents felt that Jews should blame themselves for their own persecution, 25.7% were uncomfortable with the idea of a Jew marrying into their family, and 21.5% felt that Jews should not have equal rights. On average, attitudes persisted where schooling could exploit pre-existing prejudices. This reflects how confirmation bias may play a significant role in amplifying intolerance toward minority groups.

It has been argued individuals are not born with staple emotions which are instead learned and acquired through socialisation imitation. Whether humans are born with staple emotions or not, the degree to which a person experiences and expresses emotions is constituent upon an array of social factors such as gender, class, religion, nationality, and age. Emotions are volatile and subjected to social development such that outside influences like school, family and forms of entertainment play an influential role in this process. By recycling such repulsive attributes through the portrayal of Jews in only an unpleasant manner, Nazis were able to establish and reinforce this notion of ‘otherness.’ Nazi propaganda exploited the human tendency to focus on negative images by encouraging Germans to associate Jews with unpleasant mental images. Behavioural analyst Karthik Narayanaswami describes this as a clustering illusion, where Germans became conditioned to perceive ‘unpleasantness’ in all Jews. Emotions are identified as having a circular influential relationship; that is, they are pivotal to human development, as well as being shaped by human culture. Emotions play a crucial role in development because they serve different functions: the intrapersonal, the interpersonal, and the social and cultural. Nazi propaganda was able to exploit all three functions because of the role emotions serve in individual psychological composition, thereby influencing people in their relationships with others, and ultimately across German society at large. The intrapersonal function of emotion shapes individual perception and memory. Hence, anti-Semitic prejudices established in youth were able to persist over a lifetime because of the disgust and fear associated with this group from infancy. Nazi propaganda was then able to manipulate the interpersonal functions of emotion by creating a stark divide between Germans and Jews, influencing how individuals interact with one another. This divide thereby had an immense impact upon the maintenance and effective functioning of German society and culture as a whole.

207 GESIS Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, General Social Survey for Germany (ALLBUS 1996 and 2006).
210 Plamper, The History of Emotions, 17.
Schooling and Education

During the Third Reich, lines also became profoundly blurred between propaganda and education. Anti-Semitism and Nazi ideology were disguised as textbooks and literature, covertly influencing the masses over prolonged periods.\textsuperscript{211} Only months after Hitler came to power in 1933, the government moved to expel Jews from public service positions (including school teachers) as well as limiting the number of Jewish students in schools to 1.5 percent.\textsuperscript{212} The Nuremburg Laws of 1935 deemed Jews as having different blood from Germans and deprived them of the rights of citizenship in the Reich – a common theme of Third Reich propaganda.\textsuperscript{213} By 1937, 97 percent of all German school teachers became members of the National Socialists Teachers' Union, which required all members to provide official documentation confirming there was no evidence of Jewish ancestry.\textsuperscript{214} In 1939, Jews were stripped of their German citizenship, and most public schools prohibited Jewish children from attending.\textsuperscript{215}

Children in the Third Reich were at a critical age where they were learning right from wrong, and the emotions associated with such norms. Stripping Jews of their citizenship reinforced their otherness and worked to create an atmosphere of detachment from the entire population. Education in the Third Reich served as an invaluable tool of indoctrination. Students were educated about the glorified ‘Aryan’ race, while also learning to recognise Jews and other so-called inferior peoples as incapable of creating their own civilisation – that is, parasitic, ‘bastard races.’\textsuperscript{216} After 1933, the Nazi regime cleansed the public school system of teachers who were Jewish or deemed “politically unreliable.”\textsuperscript{217} Hence, while education was traditionally viewed as a mechanism for resisting propaganda, they now became used as sites for propaganda to target youth.\textsuperscript{218} German schools emphasised obedience to authority and ideas about social hierarchy consistent with the Nazi worldview. Schooling was particularly effective because it held the ability to influence emotionally the worldview of children and young adults, disguised in the form of skill-teaching.\textsuperscript{219} A common assumption is that if students in school are educated

\textsuperscript{211} Fitzmaurice, "Propaganda,” 67.
\textsuperscript{212} Corelli, Poisoning Young Minds in Nazi Germany: Children and Propaganda in the Third Reich, 228.
\textsuperscript{214} Corelli, “Poisoning Young Minds in Nazi Germany: Children and Propaganda in the Third Reich,” 228.
\textsuperscript{215} Corelli, “Poisoning Young Minds in Nazi Germany: Children and Propaganda in the Third Reich,” 229.
\textsuperscript{216} Shirer, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, 113.
\textsuperscript{217} Corelli, “Poisoning Young Minds in Nazi Germany: Children and Propaganda in the Third Reich,” 229.
\textsuperscript{218} Fitzmaurice, "Propaganda,” 68.
\textsuperscript{219} Voigtländer & Voth, “Nazi indoctrination and anti-Semitic beliefs in Germany,” 7933.
to think critically, then they will acquire the skills necessary to identify deceptive attempts of coercion and ultimately prevent themselves from falling victim to it. The distinction between education as fundamentally true and propaganda as inherently false was cast aside in favour of embedding propaganda in education during the Third Reich. Textbooks and curriculum were neither neutral nor impartial, and they did not foster negotiations with diverse points of view. Instead, educational institutions disseminated propaganda, delivered as curriculum through the advocacy of racial theory. Conditioning children to think and feel in ways of exclusion and segregation ensures that belonging is shaped by defining the ‘others.’ Imbedding propaganda in formal education is an effective means of influencing the masses over prolonged periods. Curricula and textbooks reflected Nazi objectives to infuse anti-Semitism across school students, with mathematics even declared “Aryan spiritual property.” The following equation demonstrates how anti-Semitic propaganda was incorporated into the most unpredictable subject matter:

The Jews are aliens in Germany. In 1933 there were 66,060,000 inhabitants in the German Reich, of whom 499,682 were Jews. What is the percent of aliens? 

Ritual learning of such linguistic representations associated with the Jewish population, covertly shaped individual perceptions of an entire group. For those who were accustomed to such dehumanising language, this ultimately prevents feelings of empathy towards the mistreatment of Jews and thus establishes a generation of desensitised humans. Mirrer reflects upon how “you kind of lose the capacity to feel appalled. And then you just believe it... being exposed to such appalling comparisons over an extended period of time desensitised even the most well-meaning of people, so that comparisons like the Jew and the poisonous mushroom eventually came to seem normal.” Language not only influences how one expresses ideas about the world, but also how one perceives their world, and the emotions associated with this understanding. This is because it functions by establishing criterion norms of feeling. Such norms are evident across virtually all societies and have an immense impact on how people feel and how they express their emotions. German historian Ute Frevert describes this as

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221 Fitzmaurice, “Propaganda,” 67.
223 Jewish Virtual Library, “Propaganda and Children During the Hitler Years.”
224 Wecker, How the Nazis “Normalized” Anti-Semitism by Appealing to Children.”
“feeling rules,” whereby an understanding of such rules necessitates the examination of social contexts and practices. They are taught and learned in all aspects of life: through family and friends, in education, at church, in the workplace, through entertainment and in politics.\textsuperscript{226} Nazi ideology sought to establish a German population of individuals complicit in the mistreatment and eradication of Jews. In theory, normalising anti-Semitism would condition young people to preclude empathy and allow Nazism to move forward with Jewish mistreatment and eventual radical violence. Emotions in the Third Reich developed in an intense relationship to culture, and strongly impacted the way people viewed themselves and their world. The desensitisation of Youth was pivotal to ensure they accepted, respected and embraced Nazi ideology.

\textbf{The Hitler Youth}

The \textit{Hitlerjugend} (Hitler Youth) organisation was also established in 1926 to train future generations of faithful followers and even leaders of the National Socialism.\textsuperscript{227} The Nazis effectively monopolised such programs to allow little opposition, and in 1936, Nazi youth group membership became compulsory for all children classified as ‘Aryan’ aged between ten and seventeen. They offered attractive recreation programs and the deceptive feeling of being thoughtfully selected. \textit{Hitler Youth} and the \textit{League of German Girls} became tools for imparting beliefs, emotions, and behaviours to German youth. Boys took part in recreational activities that mimicked military training, while girls trained in domestic economics such as crafts, childcare, sewing and cooking. Werner Gottschau a former eighteen-year-old German soldier recalled “I wasn’t blinded I was thrilled, truly enthusiastic. I was turned completely inside out.”\textsuperscript{228} Gottshau’s account communicates key ideas of \textit{Rausch}. Young people were called to experience a fusion with a collective body to solicit feelings of power and exaltation – being part of a movement beyond themselves.\textsuperscript{229} Kenneth Rendell is the founder of The International Museum of World War II. He states that “Hitler Youth recruits were fanatical” and youth organisations were used as propaganda vehicles to produce German soldiers.\textsuperscript{230} Young people were not ‘brainwashed’ to join the military and become part of the war effort, but rather, Nazism was able to tap into pre-existing desires and values to foster great enthusiasm and eagerness. Many boys could hardly wait to become soldiers and were serious about training to

\textsuperscript{226} Frevert, \textit{The Modern History of Emotions: a Research Center in Berlin}, 37.
\textsuperscript{227} United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, \textit{Propaganda}.
\textsuperscript{228} Gottschau, \textit{Learn about the Hitler Youth program during the Nazi regime}.
\textsuperscript{229} Klimo, \textit{Nazi Discourses on “Rausch” Before And After 1945: Codes and Emotions}, 2.
\textsuperscript{230} Wecker, \textit{How the Nazis “Normalized” Anti-Semitism by Appealing to Children}.”
fight for their nation. The responsibility of fighting for one’s country was truly honourable. For the first time, young people felt like equally valued members of society with important duties. Hans Wolf Alfons Heck who was a member of Nazi Youth later reflected his experience in a memoir:

Far from being forced to enter the ranks of the Jungvolk, I could barely contain my impatience and was, in fact, accepted before I was quite 10. It seemed like an exciting life, free from parental supervision, filled with “duties” that seemed sheer pleasure. Precision marching was something one could endure for hiking, camping, war games in the field, and a constant emphasis on sports… To a degree, our pre-war activities resembled those of the Boy Scouts, with much more emphasis on discipline and political indoctrination. There were the paraphernalia and the symbols, the pomp and the mysticism, very close in feeling to religious rituals. One of the first significant demands was the so-called… “test of courage,” which was usually administered after a six-month period of probation. The members of my Schar, a platoon-like unit of about 40–50 boys, were required to dive off the three-meter board—about 10 feet high—head-first in the town’s swimming pool. There were some stinging belly flops, but the pain was worth it when our Fahnleinführer, the 15-year-old leader of Fahnlein (literally “little flag”) of a company-like unit of about 160 boys, handed us the coveted dagger with its inscription Blood and Honour. From that moment on we were fully accepted.231

Heck’s enthusiasm is striking because it is reflective of Hitler Youth’s appeal to young people. For the first time in their lives, young boys were offered the opportunity to take part in an initiative for their nation. They would be trained to become future leaders of Nazism, as well as soldiers fighting for their country. On the surface, it appeared they were awarded a great deal of responsibility, offering the psychological validation of importance that young teens yearn for as they develop into adults. In truth, they were play-acting this role. Boys’ Scout activities and mass rallies filled with spectacle and ritual were used to create a climate of national community, reaching far beyond the bounds of class and race divisions which defined Germany before 1933. Heck speaks of the exclusivity of acceptance and the overwhelming sense of achievement associated with such acceptance. Hence, young Germans approached such recreational activities with tremendous fervour because only the bravest and the strongest

would be selected to be part of the group. The need to belong became a key motivator exploited by the Nazis to foster support. Similarly, former Hitler Youth member Gary Gribnitz remembers joining the *Deutsches Jungvolk*, a division of the “Hitler Youth” for boys aged 10-14 years old. He recalls a similar experience:

> You see things that you wouldn’t have seen otherwise, and it was exciting, enticing, interesting for a youth, of course… there was lots of fellowship, survival training. We were taught to obey the law. We were taught to use self-defence, we were taught to use weapons, how to use them, how to disassemble them, clean them, and put them together again.²³²

Like Heck, Gribnitz’ comments are noteworthy, because he expresses a young man’s desire for adventure and heroism. Exposing youth to what was previously, exclusively for adults, was equally exciting as it was honourable. Hitler offered young people what they wanted: structure, adventure and a chance to rebel against the staid world of their parents. By December 1936, membership had exceeded over five million.²³³ Hitler Youth appealed to one’s need to belong, whilst also providing grave responsibility and validation of importance. It became mandatory to enlist in either the Reich Labour Service or the armed forces upon the age of eighteen. By this age, boys were equipped with the skills acquired from activities in the Hitler Youth program. The program offered activities which closely reflected military training, by learning how to handle weapons, basic tactics and assault course circuits. This worked to ensure the eagerness and motivation to generate dedicated German soldiers. Former Hitler Youth member Johannes Köppen said in an interview “you suddenly felt like something you had never been before. An important person with an essential task.”²³⁴ For boys like Gribnitz and Köppen, these activities and challenges created a sense of excitement, joy and a sense of duty. Providing young boys with such duties and responsibilities offered them a sense of purpose. The gravity of being called to perform essential duties, as well as training to be future soldiers offered youth a sense of exhilaration and high self-esteem. This was their opportunity to achieve self-actualisation as they develop into adulthood. Such excitement could extend to Hitler and the Nazi Party, who showed appreciation for the crucial role of youth groups and the invaluable skills they offered.

²³² Gribnitz, *Final Account*.
²³⁴ Britannica, “Learn about the Hitler Youth program during the Nazi regime.”
In 1938, Hitler himself expressed the value of youth programs during one of his speeches held in Reichenberg. His comments are striking because they offer explicit objectives to capture younger generations:

“These boys and girls enter our organisations [at] ten years of age, and often for the first time get a little fresh air; after four years of the Young Folk they go on to the Hitler Youth, where we have them for another four years... And even if they are still not complete National Socialists, they go to Labour Service and are smoothed out there for another six, seven months... And whatever class consciousness or social status might still be left... the Wehrmacht [armed forces] will take care of that.”

Here, Hitler blatantly describes the intent to indoctrinate Youth for the interests of the Nazi regime. In Hitler’s view, young people would become future leaders, soldiers and parents so captivating them from an early age ensures lifelong conformity to Nazi values. Hitler expresses the relentless drive to capture the younger generations and the systematic processes in place to ensure this was achieved. From the age of ten, children would be exposed to Nazi propaganda in a variety of different programs for over eight years. Hitler’s reference to eradicating ‘class consciousness’ or ‘social status’ is worthy of mention because it was a covert way to refer to communism, which was seen as a movement of working-class consciousness. Above all else, the Nazis were anti-communist in this period, and such values would be imposed upon young people. This way, Nazis were able to attract youth in the promotion of national unity which defied the boundaries of communism and social class. Youth organisations consisted of regular campfires and comradery-focused activates to establish a sense of belonging exclusive to Nazism. People were no longer bound by their social status, and the only outsiders were those who opposed National Socialism. Such principles were taught from the age of ten and remained at the forefront of Nazi indoctrination until adulthood. The Nazification process involved years of conditioning through instilling feelings of excitement, belonging, importance and anti-Semitism, to ensure dedication to the regime. The persistent exposure to Nazi ideology serves to shape individual principals and emotions during the most essential years of human development.

Film and ‘Entertainment’

Nazi Germany disseminated daily propaganda through media to motivate people to join the military and its extensive expansionist plans. Film has been identified as an invaluable propaganda tool, given its ability to evoke emotion. Delving further into this notion, it is important to consider films targeted towards young people. *Hitlerjunge Quex* (Hitler Youth Quex), published in 1933, presents the story of a teenage boy, Heini Völker, who is conflicted between his Communist father and his growing devotion to Nazism. His last name ‘Volk’ symbolises the German people, and the young audience are positioned to empathise with his experiences growing up during the Depression in a working-class district of Berlin. ‘Quex’ was a German sobriquet given to exceedingly eager and devoted young National Socialists. The film consecrates a young boy’s heroic deed, reconfiguring him into a sacrificial icon. *Hitler Youth Quex* is a primary example of how the Nazis deployed modernised technology for state purposes, framing gripping narratives to promote Nazism as innovative and inspiring. The emotional signals throughout the film work to entice excitement, enthusiasm and feelings of admiration. Young audiences are not only positioned to admire Heini, but they could also feel comforted by his relatable story. This served as encouragement to others to become the conquering hero who devotes himself to Nazism. *Hitler Youth Quex* opens to a street, evidently governed by chaos, poverty and crime - portraying images well recognised by German audiences. A series of mid-shots portray a reality of unrest, where a boy’s effort to steal an apple ignites a political dispute, before sparking a riot. The audience peers through a high angle shot into a world of disarray, filled with visibly distressed groups of people in a state of turmoil, turning against one another, while starving children steal food in desperation. Such images mirrored the circumstances of the Great Depression with an atmosphere of desperation and despair. This invited a recollection of the trauma associated with this hardship, calling German audiences to empathise with the desperation and suffering manifested in the film. From the onset, experiences viewers can regretfully connect with are used as emotional triggers to demand their attention.

In *Hitler Youth Quex*, the communist and Nazi youth organisations are starkly contrasted to one another. Heini is positioned as an outcast in the far corner of a long shot. He is visibly disturbed by the dishonourable morals of the communists, who are consumed by smoking.

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drinking, and lewdness. He soon wanders to a different part of the woods, where he discovers the Hitler Youth holding a campfire by the beach. The music shifts from busy and chaotic to patriotic and passionate. Hitler Youth is seemingly characterised by order and structure, while also offering a remarkably wholesome and warm environment. The extreme long shot allowed the audience to admire Hitler Youth from afar with Heini. The combination of campfire light, chatting and comradery is associated with feelings of warmth and belonging - everything that is attractive to a young boy. Such organisations are juxtaposed against one another, calling viewers to reflect upon their own values, as they decide which is more suitable for youth. Heini’s conversion is symbolised through the potent use of light. The illumination is suggestive of the righteous path, inviting the audience to become enthralled by the fervour of Nazism. This scene establishes a sense of escapism, whereby, viewers of all ages may have their spirits lifted by the intensity of National Socialism.

Heini’s initial struggle for acceptance is noteworthy, as it aligns closely with Heck’s account of Hitler Youth. When he is caught by youth members, they recognised him as having travelled with the communists and so he is consequently shunned. This is important because it mirrors the idea of rivalry promoted throughout Hitler Youth activities. The supposed exclusivity of Hitler Youth only enhanced one’s desire to be accepted. The idea of being specifically chosen ensured undivided loyalty to Hitler and the Nazi party – such loyalty which prohibited sympathies to communism. This notion is reinforced when Heini visits another member’s home in a quest to join the Hitler Youth and is mistaken for a communist targeting Hitler Youth members. The police arrest Hitler Youth members, but no communists. German audiences were called upon to feel frustrated by the injustices inflicted upon Hitler Youth members, who were merely victims of a cowardly attack. When the police release Heini, he is accused of colluding with the communists in the attack. The anticipation only heightens Heini’s desire for acceptance, as his needs echo the psychological validation of importance, experienced by so many young boys. Heini’s perseverance to join the Hitler Youth, despite his struggle for acceptance, established a realm of inspiration and motivation. Young people could admire his persistence in the face of adversity, increasingly feeling the magnetism of National Socialism as the film progresses.

Steinhoff, Hitlerjunge Quex, 14:11 - 20:40.
Steinhoff, Hitlerjunge Quex, 33:00.
The claims to the victimhood of Nazism in this film are worthy of mention. The irony of this film is how it effectively depicts Hitler Youth as victims of communist violence and injustices, when in fact, Nazi thugs were responsible for attacks on communists and Jews. Communists were established as the villains from the onset – with Heini’s father characterised as the primary antagonist. He is depicted as an alcoholic, a domestic violence perpetrator, who viciously attacks Heini and his mother. When his father overhears him singing the Nazi song, he brutally attacks Heini and forces him to chant the communist “Internationale” instead. Viewers were positioned to feel distressed by the injustices Heini faces, while simultaneously feeling repulsed by his father’s actions. Such feelings would extend to all communists. However, the audience could admire how this does not change Heini’s determination to abandon the communists and join the Hitler Youth ‘family.’ He becomes a sacrificial emblem for National Socialism as his loyalty to Hitler leads to his murder. The film’s message is addressed in its final words, “the flag means more than death” which is immediately followed by the “Youth Song” and a Swastika flag taking up the screen. Heini becomes a part of a larger whole and is recognised as an invaluable part of National Socialism. He sets an example for both his comrades and young viewers. While young audiences are compelled to feel sorrow for Heini’s passing, he is presented as strikingly admirable for remaining true to his comrades and to Nazism, despite the horrific consequences.

Significantly, it is not any form of rational reasoning that lures Heini to Nazism, but rather, it is the primeval, emotional appeal of fire, songs, and flags, the instinctive, tribal call of German “blood and soil.” The passionate appeal of National Socialism transfers Heini’s conflict entirely to an emotional sphere. Nazism depicted as an incessant and restless movement embodied in the words of the song Our flags lead us forward, which became the official anthem of the Hitler Youth after the film’s success. Film assumed a central place in the Third Reich discipline, serving not only as a form of entertainment but as a means of motivation, and education. Nazi Minister of Education, Bernhard Rust claimed that film was particularly important for school children because “it must not only help them grasp contemporary political problems, it must also provide children knowledge about Germany’s great past, and a profound understanding regarding the future development of the Third Reich.”

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240 Steinhoff, Hitlerjunge Quex, 1:18:00.
241 Rentschler, Emotional Engineering: Hitler Youth Quex, 22.
242 Rentschler, Emotional Engineering: Hitler Youth Quex, 27.
It is important to examine the emotions associated with a film like Hitler Youth Quex. It offered young people a stirring passion for life and endorsed the sacrificial spirit of German youth. This is closely aligned to the descriptions of the lived experiences. Former Schutzstaffel (SS) member Hans Wierk exclaimed in an interview:

‘I joined the SS. I did it without my father’s knowledge. I wanted to die a hero’s death. I had written a goodbye letter to my parents’ When I fall, you should be proud. You should not wear black… nonsense like that. Today you wonder how that could happen.\(^{243}\)

Wierk’s expressions mirror the ideas depicted in the film. Young men were captivated by a sense of belonging and the honour of self-sacrifice. These groups were made to feel important, as they became recognised as the people who would build a new and better Germany. This devotion was also evident in the SA population, with two thirds of its total members under thirty years of age.\(^{244}\) Young people were enthralled by an overwhelming sense of duty, chanting “we are born to die for Germany.”\(^{245}\) Young boys were called to devote their lives to the cause - the political religion that was National Socialism. Hitler’s ability to make young people feel valued established faithful followers who were prepared to sacrifice everything for their beloved Führer. National Socialism encouraged teenagers to embrace their adolescent desires of defying their parents to further their own objectives. The Nazis allowed youth to embrace their rebellion, often remaining at the forefront of protests and violence.\(^{246}\)

Richard Evans argues that the First World War had effectively legitimised the use of violence.\(^{247}\) On top of this, Nazism importantly demanded of the SS and of the regular army that they ignore the moral codes into which they had been inducted by their families and religions: that it is wrong to hurt innocent people and killing is only permissible of enemy soldiers, not of women, children or civilians. So, the message that Nazism offered an exciting escape from parental authority may have been enabling for the genocidal capacity of those indoctrinated through films like this one. Hitler Youth and SS members were used for their aggression towards members of other parties in the NSDAP’s efforts to gain power. The

\(^{243}\) Brooks, “German war testimonies chill the blood.”
\(^{244}\) Fest & Herrendorfer, Hitler A Career, 30:20.
\(^{247}\) Evans, The Third Reich at War: How the Nazis Led Germany from Conquest to Disaster, 67.
organisation also became known for its vandalism and violence towards other youth groups and Jews. Along with the assistance of local police, group leaders would initiate violence to generate fear among those opposed to Nazism. This also led to the destruction of many competing youth groups.

It is also important to consider the insights into Nazism’s emotional appeal derived from the field of psychohistory. Drawing from the work of major psychohistorians of Nazism in an analysis specifically focused on childhood developmental psychology, provides a foundation on which to speculate on the emotional needs of youth during the rise of Nazism. The Hitler Youth appeal to racial belonging, blood and sacrifice is noteworthy because it expresses key notions of teenage rebellion and unresolved resentment. While external forces such as a history of authoritarian leadership, and the economic turmoil after the Great War are important to account for Hitler’s rise to prominence, it is also crucial to scrutinise the shared personal experience of this younger generation, who were only children at the time of the First World War and the succeeding Depression. Young children experienced fear, anxiety, malnutrition, starvation and abandonment during World War One. It is important to consider the gravity of emotions experienced by a child forced to say goodbye to their father, potentially for the last time. This is a deeply troubling experience, evoking feelings of uncertainty and vulnerability which would later develop into resentment. Children were also left unsupervised at home while their mothers took on wage work so that many suffered feelings of neglect during their infancy.\(^\text{248}\) Loewenberg found an explicit connection between infantile suffering associated with the First World War, and frustrations and anxieties experienced later in the Great Depression.\(^\text{249}\) This is because the Depression served as a trigger for the childhood trauma of the First World War. It is undeniable that in other countries, fathers left home during the War and children consequently suffered neglect. However, there are two critical factors which were exclusive to the German experience and had a detrimental impact on young children: first, they suffered chronic hunger more severely than neighbouring countries, and second, if their father returned home at all, he did not return a hero. Children often demonstrate the prevailing attitudes of the society in which they live, and in Germany, defeat was followed by near starvation and revolution – thus producing a culture of violence and instability. The Versailles Treaty heightened this adversity, for it held all of Germany – including the young –


\(^{249}\) Stalcup, *People Who made History: Adolf Hitler*, 76.
accountable for the failures of the war. Moreover, the 1923 inflation strengthened the belief that fathers failed to provide security to their families.\(^{250}\) The trauma associated with previous fears, abandonment and hunger was now reawakened – paving way for aggressive and destructive impulses. The economic distress and national humiliation that followed the war further wounded this generation. This renewed trauma occasioned the welcoming of a leader who appeared to address the emotional needs of the population past and present. One major reason this paternalism may have been readily adopted by groups of young people was because so many had yearned for a father figure during the war years.\(^{251}\) Evidently, young Germans were not merely charmed by Hitler because he was radical figure who offered authoritarian leadership, but rather, he responded to deep emotional and psychological needs. He was the embodiment of the idealised father-Führer they yearned for during the discomforting years of their childhood: a military-leader who understood and appreciated the young, and who promised to establish a purposeful, disciplined state. Waite argues that the very fact that Hitler appeared so ordinary yet enigmatic, served to reinforce his role as the father substitute.\(^{252}\) For many children, their own fathers were ordinary men who became strangers after their prolonged absence. One should appreciate how such elements were thoughtfully calculated, with each component meticulously designed to promote devotion to the Führer.

Propaganda also urged young people to target their aggression towards the Jewish population. Let us scrutinise arguably the most anti-Semitic film of all time, *Jud Süß (Jew Süss)* which was produced in 1940 by Terra Film under the orders of Joseph Goebbels. The film was described as "one of the most notorious and successful pieces of anti-Semitic film propaganda produced in Nazi Germany."\(^{253}\) The budget for this film was two million Reichsmarks\(^ {254}\) – considerably high for films of this era – which is reflective of the importance accorded to anti-Semitic propaganda in the eyes of Goebbels. *Jew Süss* played on staple Nazi stereotypes, characterising Jews as wicked, greedy and cunning. The unpleasant traits were appropriately accompanied by physically unattractive features such as being overweight, having unkempt, wiry beards and hooked noses. Actors playing male Jewish characters were made to appear both repulsive and alien to German audiences. The original tragedy, *Jud Süss* (1934) was reinterpreted as a story of Jewish trickery and pervasion. The selective process of the cast and crew included extortion,

\(^{250}\) Waite, The Psychopathic God: Adolf Hitler, 74.
\(^{251}\) Stalcup, People Who made History: Adolf Hitler, 76.
\(^{253}\) Cull, Culbert & Welch, Propaganda and Mass Persuasion, 205.
\(^{254}\) Winkler, "A candle for Veit Harlan," 156.
coercion and fear-mongering.\textsuperscript{255} While the film was not specifically targeting youth, it did bear a strong resemblance to \textit{Hitler Youth Quex} and was often played for Hitler Youth members and SS-troops.\textsuperscript{256}

\textit{Jew Süß} was to be presented as a “historically authentic” story of the Jewish banker Joseph Süß Oppenheimer. The film is centred around a story of a Jewish extortionist who compels an honourable German duke to betray his people. Süß’ cold-blooded actions almost lead to the outbreak of a civil war, before he commits suicide in fear of the repercussions.\textsuperscript{257} The film ends in a tragedy after an innocent German woman was raped whilst her fiancé and father were tortured.\textsuperscript{258} This reflected key themes in Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda, as Jews were often depicted as feeding off the virtuous and corrupting them.\textsuperscript{259} Such heinous crimes functioned to spark outrage and fear amongst German people. The film received considerable exposure, particularly among youth. Henrich Himmler urged members of the police and SS to see it.\textsuperscript{260} It was perceived as an effective means of establishing an atmosphere of hatred towards Jews, such that it was played for the SS at times before a mission.\textsuperscript{261} It was also used to boost the morale of concentration camp guards to validate the importance of the Final Solution.\textsuperscript{262} This is reflective of the film’s extensive anti-Semitic material and its emotional and psychological impact. In \textit{Jud Süß}, the dissolve technique is significant because it symbolises two key themes in the film: first, it represents the ability of the Jew to disguise himself, and second, it is suggestive of the dissolution of boundaries between Germans and Jews. Dissolve is used to depict the Jew’s transition from visible to invisible to communicate the Jews’ tendency to disguise themselves. \textit{Jud Süß} is quite complex and is arguably contradictory to Nazi ideology, because of Süß’ seemingly erotic appeal. Nevertheless, Süß’ erotic appeal is consistent with the Nazi stereotype of Jews as seducers and master manipulators who prey on the innocent. Calling attention to the potential danger this poses for the German public would spark a sense of alarm and panic that was needed to validate the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws.\textsuperscript{263} Young girls were positioned to feel vulnerable, and young boys were positioned to feel concern for the safety of loved ones – provoking an urgent need for protection. The film portrays how

\textsuperscript{256} Tegel, "Viet Harlan and the Origins of Jud Suess 1938–1939,” 3.
\textsuperscript{257} Veit Harlan, \textit{Jud Süß}, film (Germany: Terra Film, 1940).
\textsuperscript{258} Connolly, “Jud Süß: the Nazis’ inglorious Blockbuster,” 1.
\textsuperscript{259} Musolff, \textit{Metaphor, Nation and the Holocaust}, 37.
\textsuperscript{260} Winkler, “A candle for Veit Harlan,” 161.
\textsuperscript{261} Rentschler, \textit{The Ministry of Illusion}, 150.
\textsuperscript{262} Connolly, “Jud Süß: the Nazis’ inglorious Blockbuster”, 1.
\textsuperscript{263} Weinstein, “Dissolving Boundaries,” 122.
the danger of Jews resided in the absence of morals and boundaries, operating in extremely deliberate and deceptive ways.

During the opening scenes of the film, two segregated worlds between the German and the Jew are clearly defined. Department of Cinema professor Régine Friedman explains how *Jud Süß* manipulates filmic techniques to define and maintain a distinction between the two worlds. Germans operate as the criterion ethnicity as well as the ideal aesthetic with the use of ornate costuming and intense lighting. The use of space signifies the boundless potential of the Master Race. They are seemingly unstoppable, and their future is limitless. Establishing a realm of awe and inspiration through a compelling and inviting ambiance of both intense lighting and stirring music heightens the rapture associated with being part of National Socialism. This visual becomes ruptured in the presence of Jews, with a contrasting, jarring atmosphere, filled with Jews who appear identical to one another. The filmic elements work together to underscore the contrast between Germans and Jews – and German youth who were exposed to such material would develop ideas of racial segregation. Despite the fact Germans are visibly disturbed by Jewish presence, Süß' repeatedly attempts to fraternise with them.

*Jud Süß* deploys visual narrative features to communicate the redrawing of boundaries. The historical-style film offered Nazi solutions to the issue of assimilation. Presenting ideology to young people disguised in the form of entertainment would allow the Nazis to shape attitudes and principles that align with their own. Sexuality is used as the most paradoxical barrier between Germans and Jews, and the dissolution technique serves to underscore the lines of boundaries being blurred. While the film discourages sexual encounters between Germans and Jews, the male Jew who defies the boundaries is depicted as the most desirable. This reiterates the potential danger to German women, who are urged to maintain such boundaries. Hence, the erotic appeal of Jewish figures reveal anti-Semitic discourses in an unassuming way. Consider the emotions such accusations would instil amongst German youth: panic, anxiety and aggression. Young people were encouraged to use their aggression to perform acts of violence upon the enemy – for which their military training had prepared them. This would also allow for general complacency with increasing measures to protect innocent people from such threats. Suss’ crimes were identified in the trial, which included “blackmail, profiteering,

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sexual indecency, procuring, and high treason.” Despite an array of heinous offenses, intercourse between a Jew and a Christian sparked the most outrage. The film juxtaposes the Nuremberg race laws of 1935 against the “old law” to create a sense of urgency. That is, the desperate need to ban sexual intercourse between Jews and non-Jews. Creating a climate of anxiety and panic would allow the Nazis to provide other solutions to this problem — the relocation of Jews. Sturm’s final address validated the pretence that removal of European Jewry was the wish of the populace: “May our descendants hold firmly to this law, so they can save themselves much sorrow… and save their goods and lives… and the blood of their children and their children’s children.” His words transformed expelling the Jews into collective decision, made by those who mourned Dorothea’s death. The film provided emotional validation for the eradication of threats to society in that it generated disgust and fear to its audience. Warming Germans to the idea of expulsion meant that over time, this idea became ambivalent. That is, when Jewish ‘removal’ from society became widely accepted, new ideas of ‘removal’ would be introduced.

Youth indoctrination was achieved in a variety of mediums that tapped into the pre-existing desires and values of young people. Books and education played a central role in Nazi efforts to indoctrinate German youth with an ideology based on the notion of a racially pure ‘national community.’ By celebrating emotion and de-intellectualising education, the Nazis aimed to preclude rational thought. Targeting youth would instil a future generation of obedient and devoted National Socialists. Young people were needed to secure the longevity of Nazism, and their militancy was pivotal to Nazism’s expansionist plans. The Hitler Youth exploited feelings of belonging, Rausch and excitement to produce a future generation of obedient, race-conscious, Germans who would sacrifice their lives for their Führer and nation.

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267 Harlan, Jud Süß, 1:23:00.
269 Harlan, Jud Süß, 1:25:00.
Conclusion

There can be no doubt about the role of propaganda as a major contributor to the rise of Nazism in the twentieth century. However, addressing meaningful gaps in the nexus between political propaganda and the history of emotions has provided insights to further account for this success. It has become apparent that effective propaganda is one that plays on emotions, reiterates a blatant cause and targets specific audiences who are vulnerable to outside influence. All of this works to ensure an intrinsic connection to the regime that support internal individual motivation for behaviour. Nazism focused on simplistic propaganda, targeted towards emotions of belonging, nostalgia, rapture, national esteem, disgust, hatred and fear, which have been identified as being more susceptible to manipulation. It is evident that both the interwar period and instability that followed produced profound suffering in Germany on an individual and on a collective level. The Nazis capitalised on existing fears and desperation from Germany’s uncertain future to amass enthusiastic support by passionately sharing in these hardships. Third Reich propaganda targeted nationalist groups, those disillusioned by Germany’s instability, German youth, anti-Semitists and the politically naïve to be audiences of their propaganda messages. In this case, it appears that the Nazis aimed to make Germans victims of their own emotions. Nonetheless, this was not always successful and large numbers of educated Germans rejected the messaging conveyed by Nazi propaganda, often becoming victims themselves of attack for their opposition.

Clearly Nazism did not only work on fear, hatred and visionary inspiration but also on another very powerful level of ‘rapture’ or what the Germans call ‘Rausch.’ Nazi gatherings effectively generated a collective experience of fanaticism and enthusiasm associated with the fusion of one body. The Nazis also used this unification to define the enemy of the state – the parasitic Jew. The NSDAP exploited and amplified existing and entrenched anti-Semitism in Germany. Emphasising feelings of shame across Germany following the outcomes of World War One and blaming the Jewish population to alleviate such shame, was a central part of the Nazi propaganda narrative. Third Reich propaganda played upon cultural beliefs of German privilege and anti-Semitism to establish a heightened and emotionally-charged sense of ‘us’ and ‘them.’ The radical disidentification with the Jews, and the evocation of disgust and anger in relation to them, facilitated their scape-goating as agents of Germany’s perceived socio-economic and political failures during the Weimar Republic. The perpetual reference to a revitalised Germany sought to evoke nostalgia, which also evokes a profound sense of loss.
These emotions, and the ideas to which they were tied, functioned as key motivators to eradicate the cause this loss. By generating fear and hatred of the ‘other’ who was responsible for Germany’s instability after the first World War, who was damaging to Aryan potential and who was orchestrating Germany’s demise, sanctioned the upcoming disasters for European Jewry. The significance of support from German youth has been identified, as they were needed to secure the longevity of Nazism, and their militancy was pivotal to the Nazi’s expansionist plans. Their thirst for action and adventure was used to indoctrinate them into militarism and state violence. Youth indoctrination was achieved in a variety of mediums that tapped into their pre-existing desires, values and emotion vulnerabilities. The Hitler Youth exploited feelings of belonging, ‘Rausch’ and excitement to produce a future generation of obedient, race-conscious, German leaders. From the 1920s, German youth became the target audience for Nazi propaganda. The Nazi party used radical appeals to freedom, national esteem and self-sacrifice to recruit German youth. Children and adolescents were conditioned by normalising anti-Semitism and self-sacrifice in books and education, extra-curricular activities such as Hitler Youth and League of German girls, and film and entertainment. By indoctrinating children in the early stages of their life when people are most susceptible to outside influences, this helped to ensure life-long devotion and emotional attachment to the regime.

It is the intimate relationship between propaganda and emotional manipulation that worked to harness fanatical support to the National Socialist Regime. The interdisciplinary study between the history of political propaganda and the history of emotions has sought to open new insights into the central role of emotional manipulation. This is a new mode of inquiry in the study of Nazi ideology that does not regard anti-Semitic ideology alone as sufficient explanation for genocide. By exploiting pre-existing emotions and values of targeted groups in German society, Hitler and the Nazi Party were able to use such passions as motivators to support the regime, and to later become complicit in the radical and vicious operations that were to follow.

270 Weaver, “Adolf Hitler’s account of the Nation and Nationalism,” 14.
271 Gottfried, Children of the Slaughter: Young People of the Holocaust, 30.
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