

Why Her?
Adolf Hitler's Attraction to Eva Braun

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Introduction:

Adolf Hitler has notoriously been studied by a multitude of historians in hopes of understanding this enigmatic individual. Hitler was a charismatic figure who seduced millions, dazzling them as they watched his talent for letting his stronger enemies destroy themselves through their own mistakes.¹ Joseph Goebbels described him, "...Like a servant of God he fulfills the task which was given to him and he does justice in its highest and best sense to his historical mission."² Social Darwinism was a strong foundation for his ideologies; "The Nazi was expected to be hard and ruthless in obeying the dictates of the higher law of nature for the sake of his own people."³ Hitler's campaign for the Third Reich brought no pity for what Charles Darwin and many others would characterize as the "unfit." Hitler brought to life a deeply rooted Anti-Semitism that shocked billions, murdered millions, and took long-standing ideologies to a new level. He believed that war, an inevitable productive feature throughout history, served, win or lose, as 'the prerequisite for the natural selection of the strong and the precedent for the elimination of the weak. What seems cruel to us, is from the nature's point of view entirely obvious. A people that cannot assert itself must disappear and another must take its place. All creation is subject to this law: no one can avoid it.'⁴

However, this putrid, brutal man was thought by women to have a soft side. Many claimed to know him, but Hitler ensured his private life remained concealed from the public. In contrast, only a couple people actually knew the "true" Hitler. The individuals who could speak

¹ Sebastian Haffner, *The Meaning of Hitler* (London: Phoenix, 2011), 195.

² Ibid., 312.

³ William Carr, *Hitler: A Study in Personality and Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press Inc., 1979), 114.

⁴ Ibid., 114.

in favor of this claim spent copious amounts of hours with him on a personal level; these people were members of his cabinet, staff, or close acquaintances. Commonly, areas of study focus on Hitler as a war-lord, politician, or orator; however, a difficult but promising approach is to examine his thoughts about, and his interactions with, members in his personal life to determine private interests. Focusing more specifically on his relationship with Eva Braun, Hitler's mistress, there are a series of important questions that were revealed while trying to interpret Adolf Hitler: "Why was Hitler the way he was, what made Eva Braun so special to him, and what was the nature of their relationship?" Their relationship has largely been a mystery, approached with much skepticism, because he kept her locked away from the public for his own personal benefit. Braun left a very small historical footprint, with almost no primary source information. For this reason, parameters were applied on the research in order to gain a focus specifically on the relationship itself and weed through hearsay.

In terms of this research, Hitler was a heterosexual male (although some have characterized him as homosexual or bisexual). Anti-Semitism and deviant acts through the Holocaust were not a focus of this research. Political ideologies were only important for describing Hitler as a person to further draw conclusions about his relationship with Eva Braun. Although there has been speculation about this topic, discussion about his interest in sexual acts, or what he did or did not do in the bedroom, is not a part of this essay; discussion on this area of his life is entirely speculative. There can be no proof about what he truly liked, disliked, or chose to partake in; only he and his partner(s) can speak on that behalf. For this reason, it is without evidence to make claims about his intimate desires. The Hitler-Braun relationship was not what can be deemed as a healthy relationship. My working definition of a healthy relationship consists of when two people develop an emotional, spiritual, and/or physical connection based upon

mutual respect, trust, and honesty. The Hitler-Braun relationship can only be described as dysfunctional due to the pervasive lack of respect, trust, and honesty. It is only during the latter portion of their relationship, following Braun's second suicide attempt, that there are hints of non-dysfunctional characteristics. There were signs of physical infidelity throughout the 1930s which was a basic indication of disrespect. Hitler kept Braun on a tether at his beck and call, but he failed to engage her in any fulsome manner until the last days of their lives. Braun waited for Hitler to give hints of his desires and he frequently ignored her for months at a time. It was his interest rather than their interests, his calendar rather than their calendar, and his activities rather than their activities. He chose both whether and when he wanted to acknowledge her presence or engage with her. In his relationship, there was no give-and-take, there was only what Hitler wanted.

Adolf Hitler was shaped by his childhood experiences. Understanding his likely psychopathology, along with his beliefs about the character, appropriate roles, and innate identities of women in general, allows one to make informed inferences about the dynamic of his relationship with Braun. Hitler was drawn to Braun and continued their relationship because she fulfilled his insecurities in what can be called archetypal tendencies. Braun served as a surrogate mother figure, filling the void left after the death of his mother, Klara, and she exhibited unquestioning loyalty to him and accepted his unceasingly manipulative, conniving, and brutish behaviors. Her behavior and attitudes conformed almost entirely to his notions of what the ideal woman might be, and in return he gave her attention but only when he felt like it. He took, but only rarely gave. This behavior, over the course of their sixteen-year relationship, demonstrated the psychopathologies which can also be identified in other areas of his life.

Adolf Hitler: Wunderkind

Adolf Hitler has been characterized as an intriguing, and mysterious individual. Hitler described his career choice as being an artist first, then a political revolutionary.⁵ In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler described his younger self in terms that mirrored his desired political image; from a young age, Hitler branded himself as being the ring-leader of the group of schoolboys and excelling in school. In actuality, Hitler was merely domineering in school, acting arrogantly and asserting himself as superior not only with his classmates, but also his teachers. His teachers presented a very different picture from that of his beliefs regarding personal image: “Distinctly talented, if in a rather narrow sense, but he lacked self-discipline, being generally regarded as obstinate, high-handed, intransigent and fiery-tempered. It was obviously difficult for him to fit in at school. He was not a hard worker, for otherwise, with his undoubted gifts, he could hardly have failed to do well.”⁶

Supposedly Hitler only excelled academically through elementary school, but showed dismal performance upon beginning secondary education. His interpretation of his secondary education was that he had nothing to learn from school, hating it, and acting rebelliously, resentfully, and stubbornly. This mentality could be described as the classic egoist, displaying a circular assertion that since there was nothing to learn, there was no reason to make any effort. As discussed in *Mein Kampf*, he had specific interests in history and geography, but was always

⁵ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Houghton Mifflin Company: New York, 1971).

⁶ Werner Maser, *Hitler: Legend, Myth & Reality* (Harper and Row: New York, 1974), 33.

drawn to art as a future career choice. He claimed that early in life he began to ask questions most students did not. His focus was on unity and war.⁷

For the first time, though as yet in a confused form, the question was forced upon my consciousness: Was there a difference—and if so what difference—between Germans who fought these battles and other Germans? Why hadn't Austria taken part in this war [Franco-Prussian]; why hadn't my father and all the others fought? Are we not the same as all other Germans? Do we not all belong together? This problem began to gnaw at my little brain for the first time. I asked cautious questions and with secret envy received the answer that not every German was fortunate enough to belong to Bismarck's Reich. This was more than I could understand.⁸

If Hitler's personal narrative is analyzed with truth, it is evident that he was already wrestling with ideologies that many adults never thought of during their lifetime.⁹ Jean Piaget characterized this thought process as the formal operational stage of cognitive development. Piaget believed, "formal operational thinking, which includes the ability to think abstractly and to reason hypothetically, is the pinnacle of the Piagetian stage progression."¹⁰ Hitler's purported interest in sociological concepts and how history reveals characteristics about individuals set him apart from other children his age. This concept could be seen as a direct relation for explaining why Hitler thought the way he did. Later on in his life, these ideologies take root within his political principles. These thought processes could be explained as a causation from childhood

⁷ Claudia Koonz, *Mother's in the Fatherland: Women, Family Life, and Nazi Ideology, 1919-1945* (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1987), 56.

⁷ He was also very drawn to religion and religious studies. He was far more of a devout Catholic in his adolescent life than adulthood and this seems to attribute to his parents' death. Hitler "had a dream of becoming an abbot, and since his young manhood he had lived in an entirely male society." Many of his attributes that the world saw in his adult life were a direct correlation to his childhood experiences.

⁸ Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 6-7.

Although *Mein Kampf* is an incredible source, it must not be taken at face value. His autobiography may be incredibly skewed to the persona he would like to depict about himself. We must not use his autobiographical writing as statements of fact but merely assertions to infer about how he perceives himself.

⁹ The significance for the thought process on German/Austrian unification into one peoples is the age in which Hitler was wrestling with these ideologies. Although many people, German Nationalists, made this claim a huge topic of discussion, it sets Hitler apart because of his thought processes at such a young age. It can be inferred that during boyhood, Adolf had not been incredibly emerged into this topic of discussion.

¹⁰ Robert S. Siegler, Judy S. DeLoache, and Nancy Eisenberg, *How Children Develop* (Worth: New York, 2011), 141.

experiences. His social interactions were also key components in diagnosing childhood experiences as being a direct link to behavioral patterns within Hitler's relationships.

Hitler only mentions one specific childhood friend by name, August Kubizek, who is also discussed in the numerous biographies and analyses of Hitler.¹¹ In these accounts, this relationship was characterized by significant inequality. Hitler maintained dominance over Kubizek. The young Hitler can be said to have enjoyed spending time with Kubizek because he could easily play the role of a puppeteer and enforce rules within their friendship to please himself. Looking ahead to adult life, similar social patterns held true. Ian Kershaw believed that Hitler's, "inability to form deep personal relationships, the corresponding cold brutality toward humankind, and- not least- the capacity for hatred so profound that it must have reflected an immeasurable undercurrent of self-hatred concealed in the extreme narcissism that was its counterpoint must surely have had roots in the subliminal influences of the young Adolf's family circumstances."¹²

Hitler's inability to form close personal relationships was seen through interactions with both men and women. Throughout his life, his behavior was characterized by hate, brutality, and narcissism, which can be deemed as social coping mechanisms when interacting in interpersonal relationships. Norbert Bromberg described these relationships as being 'primitive;' Hitler's relationships were superficial, crude, and rudimentary. If everything was about him, why should he create anything more than a primitive relationship?¹³ He lacked the ability to have

¹¹ Additional information about Hitler and August can be found at: August Kubizek and Geoffrey Brooks, *The Young Hitler I Knew: The Memoirs of Hitler's Childhood Friend*, (Barnsley: Frontline, 2011). Or August Kubizek, *Young Hitler: The Story of our Friendship*, (Maidstone: Mann, 1973).

¹² Ian Kershaw, *Hitler 1936-1945: Nemesis* (W.W. Norton & Company Ltd.: New York, 2000), 6.

¹³ Emphasis of Hitler's egocentrism is dusted throughout various sources and historians works. A few examples of these references are in Norbert Bromberg and Verna Volz Small's *Hitler's Psychopathology*, Cate Haste's *Nazi Women*, and Joachim Fest's *Hitler*.

interpersonal connections that carried risk where he could become vulnerable to other people.

Hitler survived by exercising impulse control, just like an immature child.

Hitler tended to see people as part of groups or categories rather than as individuals.

There might be some slight space allowed for merit, talent, or genius, but abilities seemed to be largely determined by the common “racial” or genetic traits ascribed to those groups. Whether talking about Jews, Slavs, Aryans, or women, he accorded rank, respect, treatment, and opportunities according to where a particular group rated on the Nazi hierarchy. Hitler was not able to engage with very many people on individual, intimate levels.

Understanding Madness:

In order to understand his relationship preferences, Hitler’s psychology must be taken into account. Psychologists have diagnosed him with narcissistic-borderline personality disorder. Hitler was characterized in this fashion because of “...exhibiting narcissistic personality with paranoid features, functioning on a borderline personality level... .”¹⁴ Norbert Bromberg puts this psychological diagnosis into a narrower focus and discusses Hitler’s individual attributes to define him as having narcissistic-borderline personality disorder, exhibiting his inability to surmount psychopathy and childhood experiences. Bromberg defines Hitler’s distinct pathological syndrome when describes Hitler as, “he who represents himself as an omniscient simplifier of complex issues, who ignores obvious realities to promise the clearly impossible, whose oratory brims with rage, who charges one single enemy with responsibility for all

¹⁴ Norbert Bromberg and Verna Volz Small, *Hitler’s Psychopathology* (International Universities Press: New York, 1983), 8.

difficulties.”¹⁵ Hitler was a megalomaniac who was controlled by a deeply rooted egocentrism. Most children grow out of this egocentric mindset at an early age, but those who have a narcissistic personality remain motivated by egocentrism for the entirety of their lives. In Hitler’s case, he could not cope with the psychological abnormalities he possessed and turned to an augmented reality, outbursts of rage, and a projection of hatred for the ‘enemy’; when the enemy was truly himself.¹⁶

Both narcissism and borderline personality disorder played significant roles within the formulation of any relationship.

[Hitler] complains of a feeling of emptiness. He had little if any sense of humor. He tends to lie. Even if very intelligent, he can be most literal in understanding of concepts. He often had neurotic symptoms. Most importantly, the narcissistic personality cannot make significant relationships, being at most time arrogant, contemptuous, and denigrating, as well as demanding and exploitative. . . . His emotional life is shallow and his feelings are undifferentiated in quality; he may find these aspects of himself to be a deprivation, something to complain about.¹⁷

Hitler rejected reality, denialism, in order to cope with the discomfort of the truth. If Hitler had to face the truth, he would have had to process the death of both of his parents, lack of basic necessities, and the atrocities of war during his late adolescent life.¹⁸ Since he never grieved in a healthy way to overcome adversities, he used other people to regulate his emotional stability. His rage would spew out onto almost everyone he came in contact with, acting paranoid

¹⁵ Ibid., 3.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Waite used Hitler’s psychopathic projection as a means for hatred of Jews. He found attributes within himself that represented the Jewish population, whom he deemed inferior and placed the blame for his inferiorities upon these individuals.

¹⁷ Ibid., 10.

¹⁸ Ibid., 65.

As a young adult, age 20, he was a homeless beggar: pale, unshaved, sunken cheeks, and frail. He lived in a hostel and had not created truly any brotherhood like relationships. Waite believed that some individuals made fun of and others considered him fantastic. He served in the World War I army and truly enjoyed being a soldier. He finally had food and shelter, and enjoyed the war as a whole. This connection has been made previously about his fascination with war in early development.

and enraged throughout the majority of his life, fighting to control and manipulate both his acquaintances and his closest colleagues. Everyone has some level of inferiority; it is within human nature to have some aspect of oneself, whether physically or emotionally, that they are insecure. With healthy individuals, they would put these inferiorities in some kind of context, compartmentalizing them in other words and not allowing these insecurities to be the driving factor of one's behavior. However, Hitler was apparently incapable of this compartmentalization. Hitler seemingly denied his inadequacies and hid them behind the punishment and manipulation of others, his form of authority. All of his inferiorities were someone else's fault and no one could ever get close enough to him to get to know his authentic self. No one, except for maybe Eva Braun.

One can speculate that at least some of the narcissistic borderline-personality disorder stemmed from paternal abuse and maternal overcompensation. Hitler's father, Alois, was domineering and crude: he drank excessively; he mistreated his wife; he beat his children. Alois Jr., Hitler's older brother ran away from home because the abuse was so severe that he would rather live on the street than face the wrath of his father. Hitler got the brunt of the abuse after the departure of Alois, Jr. Alois, Sr.'s rage was so violent that, as Kershaw recounted, the dog even pissed himself because of being hit so hard. He described Alois as, "...an archetypal provincial civil servant—pompous, status-proud, strict, humourless, frugal, pedantically punctual, and devoted to duty."¹⁹ This very strict and impersonal man inflicted significant emotional baggage on his young son. For a child who witnessed it, brutality not only on his own person, but also on his mother, left a traumatic and long-lasting impact on the impression of gender roles. Hitler fell into this category of experienced trauma because of the behavior patterns

¹⁹ Ian Kershaw, Jürgen Peter Krause, Jörg Rademacher, *Hitler 1889-1936: Hubris* (Pantheon, 2013), 11.

he created for his mother and father, and male versus female roles. All of the lack of affection Hitler received from his father was made up in in the form of love from his mother. A peculiar thing happened though when he spoke about his father; "...In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler wrote about his father in reverent and respectful phrases, emphasizing only one, rather natural, disagreement between father and son."²⁰ He said, "I had honored my father, but my mother I had loved."²¹ One can argue that Hitler's lack of forwardness about his father's abuse and neglect was for two reasons: denial of reality and the sheer inability of becoming vulnerable with anyone to expose this inferior aspect of himself. Ian Sayer believed Hitler adored and worshipped his mother.

In addition, there is speculation that Hitler watched his father rape his mother. Children who experience trauma such as witnessing rape, experiencing abuse and neglect, and child molestation are prone to life-long emotional trauma. Such traumas normally develop a set of negative behaviors within children, including a constant yearning for power and control, and a high risk for exhibiting behaviors similar to those which they have experienced. Emily Bazelon, an intern for the New Haven Advocate, described such children with these experiences as being "more likely to develop a raft of emotional and health problems including depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and suicidal thoughts. As adults, they are unemployed, homeless, addicted to drugs, or alcohol, and alone."²² This would explain why Adolf Hitler was said to have anxiety and depression. Children experiencing these adversities need stability in their life and actively seek people or materialistic objects out in order to fill the void they experience.

²⁰ John Lukacs, *The Hitler of History* (Random House, Inc.: New York, 1997), 55.

²¹ Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 18.

²² Emily Bazelon, "A Question of Resilience," *The New York Times*, 30 April 2006, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/30/magazine/a-question-of-resilience.html?_r=0 (accessed 2 Nov. 2017).

Hitler's possible witnessing of his mother's rape solidified the hate for his father and created lasting effects on his feelings towards women and sex in general.²³

As a result, paternal abuse, witness of sexual assault, and mother's personal attributes hindered Hitler developmentally. Klara, Hitler's mother, coddled him throughout her lifetime and sought to protect him from the anger of his father, rather than helping him to develop as an independent person. Waite stated that "...Klara was the product of a peasant culture dominated by males who expected her to accept as natural behavior what a more sophisticated woman might not have tolerated."²⁴ Klara was an obsessive cleaner. She busied herself within the house, and cared for her children in order compensate for her deep depression that was caused by the deaths of her children, and lack of affection and attention from her husband. Klara found companionship within the family. Because Hitler was the only male she had left in their family line, she clung to him and fixated over his health and well-being.²⁵ She described him as a sick child and continuously fought to keep him alive. Bromberg and Small referred to her as being obsessive-compulsive about his health and pushing him to overindulge in every aspect of life. Psychiatrists from Waite's studies within *The Psychopathic God* noted that, "by loving Adolf so thoroughly, Klara could combat resentments she may have unconsciously felt toward a child imposed by her brutish husband who 'enslaved her, sucked her dry, and crippled her with never-ending demands'."²⁶ The enslavement that Hitler placed on his mother created a long-lasting spiral of depression for Klara and an innate tendency for Hitler to seek maternal comfort from

²³Robert G.L. Waite, *The Psychopathic God: Adolf Hitler* (Basic Books, Inc.: New York, 1977), 162.

Waite refers to rape and sexual interactions between parents potentially unlocking incestual desires and fears.

²⁴ Ibid., 139.

²⁵ Ibid., 172.

Hitler is said to have had survivor's guilt for being one of the few children to live. Waite in *The Psychopathic God* claimed that psychologists believed Hitler was terrified of death, therefore he never maturing and remaining childlike for his entire life.

²⁶ Ibid., 141.

the female sex. This yearning for control and deeming individuals as “good” as long as they made him feel good and to punish them when they did not, was described by psychologists as narcissistic children punishing their mothers’ for not fulfilling their every need.

The Oedipus Complex

One could argue that the relationship with his mother stemmed from an Oedipus Complex. Oedipus Complexes normally develop during childhood and are shown through an unconscious sexual desire for the parent. Historians like Waite, Bromberg, Small, and Carr claimed Hitler’s attraction for Klara resulted in extreme hatred for Alois. Alois was away from the house for the majority of Hitler’s childhood and, “We speculate that the closer little Adolf felt toward his mother, the more anxiety he felt about his father; the more he feared his father, the more he clung to his mother—and the circular anxiety of the Oedipal conflict was intensified.”²⁷ The clinging to Klara created a perpetual cycle of coddling, using Klara for protection, and then experiencing a more intensified rage from his father. Infantile characteristics can result from not experiencing the demands of growing up.

These characteristics could result in a life-long search for a woman just like his mother. Hitler’s childhood experiences and Oedipus conflict created a strong sense of companionship, protection, and love for his mother; thus, shaping his attitudes, expectations, and treatment of women. During an interview Hitler described his thoughts about sex during his adolescence, “In those days, I felt that the whole sex business was an unclean act, best consummated with a

²⁷ Ibid., 162.

member of an unclean race.”²⁸ These views were probably associated with the witnessing of rape during his childhood and the overall revulsion for the act to have been done to a mother-like figure. For this reason, his one true love was his mother. The search for a woman like his mother ended when he met Eva Braun. She was extremely similar to Klara and direct comparisons can be made between his parents’ relationship and his relationship with Braun.

What Women Are

In addition to assessing Hitler’s state of mind, his interactions with and attitudes about women, and the conventional social views about the roles of women in Germany in the early twentieth century are notable. Separate sphere ideology was pervasive in the late nineteenth century and extended into the era of the Third Reich. Although not new, it is noteworthy for this discussion. Its importance is through the correlation we see between women’s roles, Hitler’s views on women, and the relationship between Braun and Hitler.

A woman’s place was in the house, where a woman was imposed to take care and participate in three things: *Kinder*, *Kirche*, and *Kuche*, meaning kids, kirk [church], and kitchen.²⁹ Young women were surrounded by domesticity in an attempt to prepare them for their ultimate duty; motherhood. There was considerable resistance to women who attempted to chart a course which did not involve those three k’s or that trespassed into what was deemed to be the sphere of men. Even in academia, women’s education focused solely on the duties of womanhood. Women were crippled by this dominant social view that defined them as being

²⁸ Ian Sayer and Douglas Botting, *The Women Who Knew Hitler: The Private Life of Adolf Hitler* (Carroll & Graf Publishers: New York, 2004), 11.

²⁹ Richard Grunberger, *The 12 Year Reich: A Social History of Nazi Germany 1933-1944* (Canada: Rinehart and Winston, 1971), 251.

dainty, soft spoken, and child-bearing, submissive individuals. Their main concern, child-bearing, aided in the construction of the body image that women were supposed to have—women were told not to worry about their figures, for being skinny was not good for child-bearing.³⁰ Plump women were seen as being more attractive.³¹ Their body images being morphed into this ideal type of femininity was mentioned directly in Grunberger's *The 12 Year Reich*, producing women specifically to become the ideal: "broad hipped figures, unencumbered by corsets, radiant bloneness, and hair arranged in a bun or braided into a coronet of plaits."³² In addition, women were publicly scolded for smoking. There was a societal belief that smoking damaged the ovaries and affected a woman's ability to bear children.

In the public sphere, women were not to compete with men. There was an idea of "natural community" where women should work together with men for the achievement of national goals and the welfare of the German people as a whole.³³ Ideally women were to take domestic jobs such as teachers, musicians, and actresses.³⁴ Thus, women were able to participate within the public sphere, but only for the benefit of the male and within their sector. The notion that women's primary activity was motherhood, and that everything else should be secondary, was generally held common wisdom; the Nazi's postured boldly and loudly as protector of women and mothers. Failing to note the limited shelf-life of Nazi attentions, many women found comfort and security in this attention from the Nazi Party: "Women basked in Nazi public esteem between marriage and the menopause, after which they imperceptibly declined into a

³⁰ Ibid., 263.

³¹ Waite, *The Psychopathic God*.

Hitler complained frequently about Eva's weight. He would say that she was beautiful when they had gotten together but is becoming too slender. He would make a point to mention her eating habits during dinner.

³² Grunberger, *The 12 Year Reich*, 263.

³³ Matthew Stibbe, *Women in the Third Reich* (London: Hodder Headline Group, 2003), 1.

³⁴ Many saw acting as being immoral or unvirtuous for women to partake in. Actors were morally suspect, but there was a general sense that suspicious morality was more dangerous for women than for men.

twilight condition of eugenic superfluity.”³⁵ Their duties as Nazi Party activists gave women purpose and these activities acted as a positive organization for women’s involvement that received the approval by the majority of German men. Although women could not hold office, one in ten women were affiliated with the National Socialist German Workers' Party, NSDAP.³⁶

Discussing their involvement, Stibbe stated, “Nazi propaganda sought to appeal to women by inducing them to celebrate their ‘natural’ domestic role as housewives and mothers, leaving the ‘harsh’ world of politics and work to men.”³⁷ However, women began taking control of propaganda and started making their own.

This, focused on ‘to nurture the idea of motherhood and the family’, with advice on child-rearing, questions to do with the preservation of the national heritage, and the promotion of the health of the nation. 2nd: ‘rational’ deployment of female labour power according to feminine nature and the requirement of the *Volk*, but more particularly on influencing patterns of consumption . . . Women were made aware of their potential power. The propaganda insisted that it was their patriotic duty to act in the best interest of the *Volk*, the welfare of which should always come before both individual and family.³⁸

The idea was to increase the happiness and collectivity of the German race in order to drive the birthrate and exploit women for their child-baring purposes.

Hitler’s belief of a woman’s place was similar to that of societal views expressed within traditional, nationalist German culture, yet, “he regarded women as inferior beings and yet at the same time dangerous entrappers of men and thought wives to be impediments to warriors.”³⁹ His opinions about women were inconsistent, but Hitler was certain about their duties; “Whereas he usually speaks of them in derogatory and contemptuous terms, he often poses as the defender of motherhood and the sanctity of womanhood because he wants to appear wise, heroic, benign, or

³⁵ Grunberger, *The 12 Year Reich*, 262.

³⁶ Lynn Abrams and Elizabeth Harvey, *Gender Relations in German History: Power, Agency, and Experience from the Sixteenth to Twentieth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 191.

³⁷ Stibbe, *Women in the Third Reich*, 40.

³⁸ Abrams and Harvey, *Gender Relations in German History*, 196-197 and 201.

³⁹ Bromberg and Small, *Hitler's Psychopathology*, 236.

commanding.”⁴⁰ Their place was to uphold domestic life and their calling was marriage. Women seemed to be pawns that Hitler and the Nazi Party strategically used in order to create the perfect Aryan race. For example, there were efforts to limit pre-marital sex out of concern that such sex might disturb subsequent pregnancies and female nurses to euthanize babies that were not “pure bred.”⁴¹ Hitler explained that, “‘The German girl [will] belong to the state and with her marriage become a citizen.’ As an afterthought, he added that women who did not marry might not qualify for citizenship, but only if they performed important services for the nation.”⁴² One of these services would be the participation in the Nazi Party, part of a lifetime commitment to carrying out the Führer’s desires for the nation. Although their primary calling was to marriage, women were extremely attracted to the Nazi Party because the party gave women the opportunity to step outside their limited domestic roles and influence women’s issues, making the party appealing to many women. Still, “women were not born with rights; men conferred them.”⁴³

Although Hitler’s strict leadership and push for women’s conformity seemed to diminish the female sex and compartmentalize them, Hitler believed he was doing the proper thing in order to uphold the importance of women. He could not trust women and “believed they were hypocritical, fickle, and false. He believed they were inferior to men (pure) and would insult them publicly. He used to do the same for Braun. She gave him her full loyalty and to that he said, ‘a highly intelligent man should take a primitive and stupid woman’” . . . once comparing women to a circus audience— “juvenile, naïve, and susceptible to thrills.”⁴⁴ On many occasions, he spoke negatively about women and wished they would be pure and innocent. In fact, he hated

⁴⁰ Ibid., 20.

⁴¹ Stibbe, *Women in the Third Reich*, 76.

⁴² Koonz, *Mother in the Fatherlands*. 55.

⁴³ Ibid., 55.

⁴⁴ Waite, *The Psychopathic God*, 53.

when women smoked and sold their bodies [prostitution] because he believed it was ruining their temple. Others described Hitler's preference to the company of women, but he only appreciated and approved a very narrow range of female activity. Hitler believed women should be sheltered and cared for by men. In order to do so, men should immerse themselves into the "dirty acts" of politics so that women did not have to and could continue being cared for by the men. He thought his actions and policies preserved women's innate innocence, although feminists and others point out that such "protection" prevents women from fully taking part in civic life, submitting to control.

Others noted Hitler's views and engagement with women. One of his colleagues, Joseph Goebbels, described Hitler isolation of women from politics as evidence of his respect for women.⁴⁵ In a post-1945 interview, Getraud Traudl Junge, one of Hitler's secretaries, recounted, "He had an old-fashioned opinion of a woman's place. Not especially Austrian, you understand, but more due to the feelings he had about himself. For instance, he thought it was his right to possess any women he wanted..." "... He was very charming, Hitler. As a man to a woman, that is. He had a nice way of flirting. So it was a contradiction in his personality, in a way."⁴⁶ Junge recalled that he was very paternal and fatherly. He treated her like a father would his children, comparable to how he interacted with children in public. Women were never to be considered equals or his partner in anything.⁴⁷ Hitler enacted the same childlike treatment with Braun during their relationship.

⁴⁵ Abrams and Harvey, *Gender Relations in German History*, 190.

The National Socialist Movement is by nature a masculine movement. "Instead, German women should identify and pursue a new complementary feminine ideal, and win back the respect that was due to them and that had been lost by trying to compete in masculine world. Women's political duty was defined in terms of their activity in the private sphere (and by extension to those activities in the public sphere of waged labor deemed to be expressions of feminine, maternal attributes)."

⁴⁶ Gerald McKnight, *The Strange Loves of Adolf Hitler* (Gary's Inn Road, London: Sphere Books Limited, 1978), 17.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 18.

Thou Shall Not Marry

Although he vigorously sought to promote marriage and nationalism among that so-called Aryan population, Hitler did not follow his own protocol. He characterized his leadership of Germany as a sort of devout marriage. He claimed that his love was Germany and he was married to (all) the women of Germany.⁴⁸ Hitler's form of marital unity was empire-like and was centered around his "calling" for German preservation of the Aryan race. Hitler believed "The destiny of this state is so much bound up with the life and development of all the Germans that a separation of history into German and Austrian does not seem conceivable."⁴⁹

His bride was Germany. Marriage brings rights and claims to attention. Hitler did not desire to marry because his concerns were in, "...social mobility, better housing for workers, modernizing industry, erecting a welfare system, sweeping away the reactionary privileges from the past; in sum, building a better, more up-to-date, less class-ridden, Germany society..."⁵⁰ Hitler saw his vocation as rebuilding Germany, transforming Europe, and dominating the world; he did not have energy to spend time on something so mundane as marriage, which the common folk engaged in.

Proof for this was when he stated, "If I were to marry, I could have a genuine marriage. But it would be a link to another direction that the one which my mission lies. One or the other would have to suffer—yes, one would even have to be put in second place."⁵¹ . . .

⁴⁸ Sayer and Botting, *The Women Who Knew Hitler*, preface.

⁴⁹ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 13.

⁵⁰ Kershaw, Krause, and Rademacher, *Hitler*, xxiii.

⁵¹ Otto Wagener and Henry Ashby Turner, *Hitler: Memoirs of a Confidant* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 223.

Marriage makes sense only if one wishes to establish a family. The family *is* the meaning of marriage. (Hitler said to Wagner at Deutscher Hof (hotel) in Nuremburg)⁵²
Any time he described Braun, he always said how lovely she was but he would never marry her. Instead, he would say that his love is Germany and he is married to it. Hitler always deemed his country as his duty, which received precedence over marriage to any single woman. Marriage was never an option for Adolf, until he would be able to complete his duties as chancellor.

The question that follows is: why did he marry Eva Braun? The answers have been speculative. Kershaw claimed that, “The marriage now cost him nothing. He did it simply to please Eva Braun, to give her what she had wanted more than anything at a moment when marrying him was the least enviable fate in the world.”⁵³ A portion of Kershaw’s theory was true, the marriage cost him nothing; however, Hitler did not simply give her what she wanted. Hitler was able to marry Braun because he no longer had the stress of marriage interfering with politics. Hitler also was inevitably going to die and the public versus private life arguments were irrelevant at this point. In conclusion, he married Braun because he felt that he wanted to marry the woman who was devoutly loyal to him [for the entirety of her adult life] before they perished. Judging by his defiant personality not only towards his father, colleagues, and political involvements, but towards women in general, Hitler would never marry to simply please someone. Given the arc of his life, it is difficult imagining him doing much of anything that centered on another individual. Therefore, the idea that Hitler had become a widower in April 1945 is more persuasive. Germany was dead and his marriage to Germany was over. For the man who blamed Germany’s military losses and every other setback on others, this marriage was a way finally to admit to everyone that the war was over without actually saying “my leadership

⁵² Ibid., 33.

⁵³ Ibid., 820-821.

has failed”; “the Third Reich is no more.” He had become an ordinary man and thus the façade of success was no longer needed. One can go for as to speculate that perhaps, for the first time he had become an adult. Hitler was no longer the Führer and was free from the need to live a front staged life.⁵⁴

His actions imply that he may have denied marriage because he was too afraid to become attached and never found the true connection with anyone until late in his relationship with Braun, or that he believed his duty to his country was far more important than that of marriage. Based upon patterns in relationships and his previous traumatic childhood experiences, Hitler’s rationale for resisting marriage was a conglomeration of things. Hitler had a megalomaniacal dream—the sort of dream that seems more appropriate for a pre-teen, than an adult. He yearned to change the nation and create a “pure” and newly defined German state. This required countless hours engaged in planning, work, and campaigning in order to achieve his goals. In addition, he had a lot of childhood baggage. He had not found any woman that he saw as anything more than a pastime, and did not see the importance of marriage. Germany, in fact, took precedence. Finally, one can conclude he had wrestled with the idea of marriage to Braun for quite some time. She continuously brought up marriage, and he shut it down; however, it was not until he believed his duties with Germany were coming to end that he openly granted her wishes.⁵⁵ The most rational answer seems to be that Hitler waited until his time commitment to

⁵⁴Robin Cohen, and Paul M. Kennedy. *Global Sociology* (New York: New York University Press, 2013).

Life is characterized by both front and back stage life. Front stage is where the individual is always “on”. They maintain a professional presence and provide a façade or a demonstrate their best qualities during life in the front stage. Back stage is where the individual can be their true selves. It is a casual relationship where they can joke and show a different part of themselves that they may not in a professional setting. Hitler continuously lived a front stage focused life. Even in his home, he continuously had someone watching him and writing down everything he said. Hitler was notoriously a performer within his lifetime. After the death of Germany, he finally had the ability to relax and express his authenticity.

⁵⁵ John Toland, *Adolf Hitler* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976), 237 and 375.

During the beginning of their relationship he became very fond of her and would bring her flowers and candy. Early in their relationship she spread a rumor that she was Hitler’s mistress and he was going to marry her. She almost

the war effort was complete to devote himself to Braun. However, this marriage would have no hopes or expectations of happily ever after. The newly-weds were condemned to a bitter end, a suicide in which Hitler drug Braun so that he could be featured as the center of their story. In terms of suicide, it seemed as though his devotion was far too much.

Eva Braun

Turning to Eva Braun, the obvious question is, *what made her so special?* Braun was born in 1912, making her 23 years old when she met Adolf Hitler. Braun came from a devoutly Catholic family that was a strong cohesive unit. Their family was highly recognized—her father, Friedrich, for his impeccable morals and her mother, Franziska, for her beauty. Her parents described Braun as a fun-loving mischievous child who brought joy to their family during war. Braun would never back down from a dare and was once reprimanded during her time at the convent for putting on a “private dancing” exhibition for a group of girls while they were supposed to be studying. She was the trouble maker of the three girls (Eva, Gretl, and Ilse), and was seen as a problem within formal education. Her mother once stated, “She has a graceful figure, holds herself well, and has a fine disposition, she told her husband, but she’s too frivolous to study hard. She will only learn as long as she’s being amused.”⁵⁶ Because of her boisterous behaviors; sneaking out, chasing boys, and violating the “typical” Catholic lifestyle prescribed for young girls, her parents imposed strict restrictions on her, trying without success to corral

got fired from her job at the Hoffman’s photography shop for spreading this rumor. He also never entertained talk about marriage. On her twenty-first birthday, he bought her matching earrings and ring and bracelet. Toland stated that they would never stay together for appearance sake. Eva was losing hope he would ever marry her. “As the head of the Third Reich, he told her, he must devote himself to the nation with no family distractions”

⁵⁶ Glenn B. Infield, *The Private Lives of Eva and Adolf* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1978), 5.

Braun. Her sisters often tattled on her, telling her father that she was simply too rambunctious for the convent. Her mother's goal for her was to become a well-known dressmaker or marry a wealthy man so that her social status would rise above theirs. Braun did in fact rise in social status, but it was not by the means by which her parents had envisioned. The question becomes, why did such a seemingly "normal" girl become the mistress of the most atypical man known to history?⁵⁷

Eva Braun and Klara Hitler were quite similar. Hitler's attraction to Braun came from a strong foundation in attributes shared by both women. To begin, both women were at his disposal, meaning; they catered to his every need, remained loyal through every fit of rage and absence, and loved him unconditionally. Only Hitler was allowed to treat them poorly. He loathed his father for treating Klara abusively and neglectfully. However, Hitler failed to treat his mother with respect and his treatment of Braun was insensitive, indeterminate, and manipulative. Yet, he scolded any man who spoke negatively of Braun; only he could insult or condescend her. In other words, he "protected" both of them from the outside world.

Hitler had a strong relationship with both women and saw them as inherently dainty and innocent; therefore, he sought to shelter them from the world. Klara died before the young Hitler could provide any actual shelter and comfort, but in his imagination, he was her protector. He built a home specifically for Braun, but she was to never go out in public without his permission.⁵⁸ Hitler also came to the realization that he had not been supportive of Braun after she attempted suicide, in August of 1932. Following the incident, he briefly made more of an

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ A question to address is, why would this "trouble maker," outgoing girl be submissive to Hitler? It seems that both Eva's age and the fatherly like relationship Eva and Hitler shared was a large contribution to her submissive behavior. She was treating Hitler like a substitute father in terms of loyalty and obedience, and was still rebelling against her biological father by being with Hitler.

effort to be present and bask in her loyalty. Only after he faced the prospect of losing her did he make some attempt to consider her feelings and desires, abandoning his monovision of what the relationship could do for him. A noteworthy component to this claim is that he relapsed on his attentiveness to Braun and her needs. It took a second suicide attempt and his move to Berghof to prompt him to make her a priority for the remainder of their lives. The move to Berghof was significant because he was forced to see Braun on a daily basis due to their living arrangements and was pushed to be more present in their relationship. In addition, the pace of war involvement diminished following his move, allowing for more free time to be devoted to her.

Albert Speer described Braun as, a “very feminine... a man’s woman, incredibly undemanding of herself, helpful to many people behind the scenes—nobody ever knew that—and infinitely thoughtful of Hitler. She was a restful sort of girl. And her love for Hitler was beyond question.”⁵⁹ Klara fell in the same category as Eva; she was suited for Hitler. These women were part of the very few women to which he ever spoke kind regards.

Braun was loyal to Hitler even before their relationship had fully begun. In the beginning stages, she immediately grew very attached to him and wanted all of his attention. Braun had always been a bit of a wild child: testing boundaries, exuberating extreme sex-appeal, and aggravating her father. However, she kept their affair a secret for over a year. She was emotionally captivated by him and “Hitler paid Eva compliments, thus arousing her interest”.⁶⁰ Hitler and Braun went on weekend excursions. Her unusual interest in Hitler terrified her father. In fact, he wanted her to have nothing to do with Hitler. Angela Lambert points out that, “Her father made Eva feel miserably guilty by his fierce opposition to her liaison. Much of his anger may well have been based on wounded pride and the offense to his paternal duty. His daughters

⁵⁹ Cate Haste, *Nazi Women* (London: Channel 4, 2001), 55.

⁶⁰ Guido Knopp, *Hitler’s Women* (Routledge: New York, 2003), 9.

were his *property* until they married, when they would become their husband's property, but until then he had an obligation to preserve their virtue."⁶¹ Her father was disappointed because she was no longer a virgin and could only preserve her virtue by marrying Hitler. Thus, Braun decided that it would be most beneficial for her to move out and live with Hitler. She abandoned her family, moved in with the Führer of Germany, and had limited contact with any of her family members except for her sister Ilse, following both her second suicide attempt and her move into a villa in Bogenhausen. After the move Hitler had tighter control on Braun and their relationship began developing.

Dissecting the Attraction

Hitler was attracted to Braun and vice versa because they were archetypes of each other. Carl Jung describes archetypes as the origin and the self as the presence.⁶² "Because 'the world exists not merely in and for itself, but also as it appears to me', and because 'no two people see the same object in the same way', their interaction involves both objective and subjective factors. Thus, on the intersubjective level, Jung develops a theory of gender relations based on the premise that one partner offers a form of unconscious compensation for the attitude of the consciousness of the other."⁶³ According to Carl Jung, archetypes are universal. They are what form our motivational structure. Archetypes are, 'customary or habitual ways of dealing with critical situations', and so 'in any crisis in life, this archetype or another is constellated', since it is 'a sort of typical mechanism, or typical attitude, by which one settles typical problems.'⁶⁴ They

⁶¹ Angela Lambert, *The Lost Life of Eva Braun* (St. Martin's Press: New York, 2006), 130.

⁶² Ann Casement, *Carl Gustav Jung* (SAGE Publications, 2001), 211.

⁶³ Paul Bishop, *Carl Jung* (London: Reaktion Books, Limited, 2014), 139.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 140.

manifest themselves in relationships through what individuals wish to see within others. This perception is how we relate to others. Categorization of personality is based upon archetypal principals. When looking for a romantic partner, we try to complete ourselves. *Anima* is the feminine side of men, tenderness and vulnerability, and *animus* is the masculine side of women. As Paul Bishop summarizes Jung's theory, "For when the heterosexual man looks at the woman, he engages with her on a conscious and on an unconscious level: consciously he sees a woman, but unconsciously he is becoming aware of another aspect of himself; his (gendered) (unconscious) 'other', his animus, and her own anima."⁶⁵

The attributes that Hitler lacked within himself he found in Braun. Haste characterized them as opposites, "Eva smiling and laughing, excited and lively; Hitler never smiled, was stiff, awkward, and preoccupied."⁶⁶ Her outgoing, charismatic personality made up for his negative, desolate personality. Bromberg stated, "Eva's very triviality (lack of seriousness or importance, insignificant) seems part of what made Hitler comfortable with her. Like his chosen cronies (close friends or companions), Eva possessed no troubling distinction. He often described her as the ideal woman, as an adoring and undemanding doll."⁶⁷ His compulsive behavior was compensated by her ability to ground him and see the bright in every situation. Braun provided a strong support system for Hitler during the war and was the only optimistic individual when the Third Reich came to a close. She provided him comfort and was truly the only woman, aside from his mother, that he ever trusted. Nerin Gun described Braun as fulfilling her essential role of, "comforting Hitler by her physical presence, by the constant assurance of her devotion, by the simple fact that she was the one person in whom he felt he could put complete trust."⁶⁸ She

⁶⁵ Casement, *Carl Gustav Jung*, 146.

⁶⁶ Haste, *Nazi Women*, 59.

⁶⁷ Bromberg and Small, *Hitler's Psychopathology*, 116.

⁶⁸ Nerin E. Gun, *Eva Braun: Hitler's Mistress* (New York: Meredith Press, 1968), 166.

expressed unconditional loyalty to Hitler. For years, his loyalty centered only to his deceased mother and Germany, so Braun's dedication served as an emotional fulfillment for him.

Intellectually, Hitler needed a woman to counteract his extreme intelligence, manipulative tendencies, outbursts of rage, and political consumption. Kershaw recounted that Hitler believed Braun 'was just an attractive little thing, in whom, in spite of her inconsequential and feather-brained outlook—or perhaps just because of it—he found the type of relaxation and repose he sought.'⁶⁹ Braun was a very relaxed individual who never seemed to be focused on any stressors in life. She sought zest and distraction. Her whimsical behavior helped to offset his manipulative propensities and eruptions of rage. She submitted to his wishes and remained supportive during his fits of anger. Braun had no interest in politics whatsoever, which had to have been helpful in their relationship because he was able to step away from the role of the chancellor for small moments in time and simply enjoy her company. Joachim Fest stated, "She was a simple, moderately attractive girl with unpretentious dreams and thoughts that were dominated by love, fashion, movies, and gossip..."⁷⁰ Her limited rage and varied interests helped in the gradual evolution of their relationship, from unhealthy to healthier. Her acts of positivity and loyalty created a strong bond between Braun and Hitler. However, their separate drives to be the center of attention and frequent descents into depressive states created tensions within the relationship. Some of these tensions can be directly explained through the shared attributes between Alois Hitler and Adolf Hitler.

⁶⁹ Kershaw, Krause, and Rademacher, *Hitler*, 352.

⁷⁰ Joachim C. Fest, *Hitler* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1974), 524.

Like Father, Like Son

Hitler described himself as being very similar to his father— stubborn, high-handed, dogmatic, and hot-tempered. *Mein Kampf* alluded to significant arguments between Alois and Adolf. Many of these arguments were about what Alois believed Hitler should be and pursue for his future career. Alois wished that Hitler would become a “civil man” like himself. By this he meant a governmental official or something with politics. Hitler hated this idea because of the unheroic duties of the position, and fought with his father through a large portion of his life about attending school, what to study, and which career path to take. It was not until he was in complete desperation, living in poverty and barely supporting himself, that he chose to pursue his father’s intended career path, politics. However, politics took a different form in the eyes of Alois versus that of Adolf. Adolf Hitler had little interest in entry level positions and held a fantasized view of authority and delusion within his political realm, whereas Alois held a view of more regularity and hard work. For Hitler, “His impoverishment and residence in homeless shelters began only a year after his arrival [in Vienna] and after he had frittered away a generous inheritance left by his parents and rejected all arguments of surviving relatives and family friends that he embarks upon a career in the civil service.”⁷¹

Both Hitler and his father experienced humbling life experiences. They lived destitute due to extenuating circumstances during various portions of their lives. However, what each man did with these humbling experiences varied widely. Alois found sufficient identity, security, and authority in his civil service identity—although one might question whether he ever found happiness or even contentedness. Hitler’s time on the streets apparently fueled his fantasies and

⁷¹ "Adolf Hitler: Early Years, 1889–1913," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007430> (accessed 14 Nov. 2017).

areas of hatred without persuading him to pursue any elements of a conventional lifestyle. Where Alois seemed to cling to convention, Adolf had little regular employment, his daily routine was entirely self-centered, and he was surrounded by sycophants.

Both men had similar tastes in women. They were attracted to younger women. Kershaw stated, “like his father, he [Hitler] preferred women much younger than himself—girls he could dominate, who would be obedient playthings but not get in the way.”⁷² Braun was twenty-three years younger than Hitler, just as there was a significant age gap between Alois and Klara. Wagener and Turner described this infatuation and attraction to younger women to be driven by Odic force/Od rays/ Od energies.

This concept is what they believe causes attraction; if it is true that people with similar Od rays are attracted to each other, then of course that applies not only to men and women, but also women among each other and men among each other. And if it is true the healthy young body has an urge to give off its excess in Od energy to older ones, who can utilize it for their own performance, it is understandable that not only will younger women and girls feel attracted to such a man, but so will young men and boys⁷³

Odic ray ideology provides a framework for why Hitler and Alois were attracted to younger women. Their attraction for this type of woman fulfilled the need for both control and power. Many times, younger women are submissive, they do not know exactly what they want in life and are more willing to go along with whatever the person playing the dominant male role, their partner, in their lives is telling them to do. In other words, these women are still naïve, making them easier to control. Historically, women fawn over powerful, distinguished, rich men. A sense of helplessness is exuberated within these interactions and the male reaches a sense of fulfillment knowing that she will follow his every command. There is also something empowering about having a cute, young girl with a tight body to show off to other men. Younger

⁷² Kershaw, Krause, and Rademacher, *Hitler*, 284.

⁷³ Wagener and Turner, *Hitler: Memoirs of a Confidant*, 103.

women are more fun; they are not yet tainted by the world and men obtain a huge ego boost by having a young woman on their shoulders. Young women allow them to pretend they are not as old as they are.⁷⁴

Similar, But Different

On the topic of young women, a parallel can be drawn from the relationship between Braun and Adolf, and Klara and Alois. Each relationship was characterized by a dominant male-submissive female pattern. Both men took charge of and controlled their partners, forcing them to cater to their every need. Each of the two women can be categorized as being charismatic, outgoing, and chipper individuals who morphed into submission when their partners walked into the room. They were forced by both men and societal normality, to play the part to fulfill the voids within their partners. Hitler controlled Braun by keeping her away from the public in absolute isolation. An example of Alois control was when he refused to let Klara go to the funeral for Edmund. He believed she would embarrass him. So, they went on a trip while young Hitler stood at the unmarked grave site, which the parents did not supply, and watched his brother be put into the ground.⁷⁵

Women were like toys for the men, used as pawns to fulfill their desires for that given day. In the context of healthy and dysfunctional relationships; in a healthy relationship, each partner brings skills, insights, and attributes that make both people better as a whole. In contrast,

⁷⁴ Another attraction older men have to young women—the best way to ensure your genes will be passed on is by dating and marrying a younger woman. These women have more years to try for children and are also believed to be more fertile.

⁷⁵ Waite, *The Psychopathic God*, 170.

a dysfunctional relationship is dominated by one partner only receiving and never reciprocating. The relationships above are characterized as dysfunctional.

Neither Hitler nor his father seemed to consider women as partners or even helpmates; women had value so long as they made the men shine brighter. Hitler behaved in ways similar to both Alois and Klara. To begin, Hitler had women at his disposal. Like ice cream, he chose women for flavors of the month. He would have a new woman during any given time, but would still keep Braun as his foundation; like an ice cream parlor debuting new ice cream flavors and cycling through them frequently. Although Hitler did not actively seek out new women, they threw themselves at him. Alois had similar behavior. McKnight described Alois as, “a man who treated women as other men treated clothes. They were flattering adornments, comforting and warm company, but ultimately discardable when they had lost their shape.”⁷⁶ Both Klara and Braun were virtually replaceable to their partner. Adolf only differed from Alois in the sense that he eventually discovered Braun’s worth and made himself solely devoted to her for their last hours together. The relationship dynamic was similar for both couples. The men treated the women similarly, overly domineering and possessive.

In contrast, Adolf Hitler treated Braun in the way that his mother cared for him. He urged Braun to eat excessively, like his mother’s desire to overfeed him. He was nervous that she was not eating enough, almost compulsively commenting on her weight. Hitler also treated Braun like a child in terms of nicknames, behaviors, and conversations. Hitler, “...expressed intimacy and endearment, but in the way a mother would talk to her baby”⁷⁷ Most couples have pet names, but the portion of the terms of endearment that is noteworthy was that the names were demeaning to her status as an adult. His word choice was representative to that of a small child.

⁷⁶ McKnight, *The Strange Loves of Adolf Hitler*, 26.

⁷⁷ Waite, *The Psychopathic God*, 229.

Despite his negligence within the relationship, he continuously tried to shelter her from the world. This coddling behavior was represented within his tone and word choice whilst speaking to her.

The Happy Couple

The Hitler-Braun relationship from start to finish had a distinct timeline of four phases. Initially during the first phase (1929- August 1932), Braun was nothing more than a plaything. This portion of their relationship was very one-sided. At the end of this phase was the culmination of Braun's depression, resulting in her first suicide attempt. The second phase of their relationship was from August 1932 until May 1935 marking her second suicide attempt. During this phase, Hitler showered her with care and affection as to prevent her from additional self-harm. His efforts dissipated and thus resulted in an additional suicide attempt in May 1935. This marks the beginning of the third phase of their relationship, which will last until the day they marry, April 29, 1945. Their relationship had a dynamic of equality, one never witnessed by any of his colleagues. In fact, she was the first and only woman who ever attended or took part in any dinner parties and meetings Hitler hosted. They openly teased each other.⁷⁸ She would criticize him for his actions and he would give it right back to her. It was a kind-hearted, open, and equal environment. Both Hitler and Braun knew their roles within their relationship and it somehow worked. The final stage of their relationship only lasted from the moment Hitler and Braun said their vows until the second they both perished, thirty-six hours.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 153.

Mention of their relationship began in 1929. There were multiple stages in Braun and Hitler's relationship that make their longevity fascinating. The continuous cycles between Braun being the apple of Hitler's eye and then being neglected is noteworthy. Hitler's neglect lasted for long spans of time, such as a three-month window when Braun became quite certain his absence was for the interest of other women. She recorded her distraught feelings in her diary. On February 18, 1935, she wrote that she was, "racking [her] brains to find out why he left without saying good-bye to [her]." ⁷⁹ She believed his leaves of absences were characterized by his lack of interest in her because of politics and new "replacements," or other women. Unfortunately, it is not clear as to how intensely the situation was influenced by her feelings of insecurity as opposed to his philandering. The women Braun had in mind included "...sisters of friends (like Erna Hanfstaengl), sisters of employees (like Jenny Haug, whose brother was Hitler's one-time chauffeur) and local ladies like Ada Klein (an attractive young Munich cabaret dancer who did her best to seduce him) and Suzi Liptauer (who tried to kill herself in a Munich hotel room, but unlike some of Hitler's other ladies, did not succeed)." ⁸⁰ Sayer and Botting continued the list of women above onto an additional page with names of women who were thought to have engaged in some sort of a relationship with Hitler. These women included: actresses, singers, film stars, and more. The list seems to be endless. Joseph Goebbels, the Reich minister of the Nazi Propaganda, close associates, and public enlightenment, did an exceptional job of continuing to introduce Hitler to more women, while well aware of Braun, the mistress stuck at home. Hitler's time was spent mostly in Berlin, campaigning for chancellorship, during this time and even when Hitler did visit, he usually ignored her. His time at home was preoccupied with dinners with cabinet members and party officials, and filled with talk of politics. There was little evidence

⁷⁹ "Eva Braun - The Diary," <http://www.evabrain.dk/evabrain6.htm> (accessed 19 Oct. 2017).

⁸⁰ Ibid., 105-110.

found for Hitler ever devoting much time to Braun away from his work during the first phase of their relationship.

Hitler's views about the female sex translated into his relationship with Eva Braun. Women could say things to him he would have men shot for, and do things at his presence (like smoke) that men- senior ministers included- would have been thrown out of the room for. He was forever kissing and patting their hands, bowing them first through doors, and murmuring endearing Austrian diminutives at them.⁸¹ He referred to women as 'my little princess,' 'my little countess,' and 'my little sweet dumb cluck.'⁸² Braun received similar treatment, being called 'my pet' and 'my honey-bun,' and is said to have gotten away with absolutely anything she wished while Hitler sat back and never said anything. This proves that although Hitler often ignored Braun and had long spells of apparent absence, his affection and endearing feelings about her came to the surface when they were together. In conclusion, a direct correlation can be made between the intimacy and love that Hitler felt for Braun, unlike any other woman, with his passive acceptance of her behaviors.

Focusing more specifically on Braun, during all phases of the relationship, the time they did spend together and even during his leaves of absence, she had little to no boundaries. Previously mentioned was his lackadaisical mentality of women's behavior. However, Braun was allowed to do more than even he believed a typical woman should do.

Haste mentioned in her text that, 'She was allowed to sing, to dance, to paint her nails with red paint, and she was even allowed to smoke a cigarette outside. Meanwhile, we had to go to the loo to smoke. (said Reinhard Spitzzy) 'And there I met Generals and Ministers and with a towel we pushed out by the window the smoke, because Hitler had a very good nose, and it was forbidden to smoke. But Eva Braun was allowed everything'.⁸³

⁸¹ Pauline Kohler, *I Was Hitler's Maid* (London: John Long Ltd., 1940), 55-56.

⁸² Sayer and Botting, *The Women Who Knew Hitler*, 32.

⁸³ Haste, *Nazi Women*, 56.

Although Hitler repeatedly alluded to being embarrassed by her, she still held a special place above cultural normality for women in the Third Reich as well as distinct from his generally anti-feminist beliefs. This aspect of their relationship could be characterized as normal, maybe even healthy. Historically and currently we witness individuals in relationships who overlook the flaws and limitations of their partners and place them above the standards they hold for other individuals' due to their love-struck mentality towards that person.

Hitler bounced from female to female, completely unattached from them. He simply ate them up like candy and moved on to the next. They all seemed to be pastimes, but he just could not get away from Braun. Following Braun's first suicide attempt, while he was away from her, he still sent her gifts and allowed her to spend more money than was healthy during the war. He was always very kind to her within private, intimate settings; knocking on her bedroom door before entering and asking if she was decent. The situation was a bit baffling. Yet in contrast, "He acted towards her as if he was ashamed of this affair with a convent-educated young miss whose blonde head contained little outside of fashion, clothes and a feminine, indeed feline, jealousy of any rival for Hitler's erotic attention."⁸⁴ McKnight continues on to say that, "She was forced to live in the shadows like a caged animal, enjoying the sunshine of her lover's presence (as she saw it) only when he felt need of her company" . . . "Eva unquestionably adored and was morally, physically, and spiritually tormented by him"⁸⁵ Her role was that of a pet or a palace ghost. There was a huge range of contradictions within the relationship. He wanted her, but wanted other women; he yearned for her to be faithful to him and cater to his every need, yet he wanted nothing to do with her most days and; he held strong ideologies about women, but let her behave how she pleased. Why would Hitler be engaging with all of these other women when he

⁸⁴ McKnight, *The Strange Loves of Adolf Hitler*, 179.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 179-180.

deeply cared for Braun and could not seem to let her go? The only rational conclusion for understanding Hitler's behavior is deeply rooted with understanding him emotionally through archetypal perspectives, Oedipus tendencies, and narcissistic personality.

It was difficult for Braun to deal with the lack of attention, and thus she searched for ways to make Hitler notice her.⁸⁶ She began acting out like a child, and when those efforts were not successful, she tried to commit suicide. During her first attempt, Braun used her father's First World War pistol and shot herself in the chest. She missed her jugular vein and was found by her younger sister.⁸⁷ This attempt resonated with Hitler because Braun's attempt was merely two years after Geli, his niece, committed suicide. Their relationship changed briefly, but sadly Braun was once again left feeling unimportant. Therefore, in 1935 Braun designed her second suicide attempt. She wrote a letter explaining her extreme dissatisfaction with her life and pleading for attention. She took twenty Vanodorm and was found yet again by her sister Ilse.⁸⁸ The second suicide attempt served as another a wake-up call for Hitler; this call had lasting effects though. He immediately began putting Braun's needs in the forefront of his mind, and making an effort to show her how important she was to him by trying to balance private life and politics. The dynamic of their relationship changed greatly.

The shift resulted in the relationship most know: allowing Braun public involvement (established member of his household), Hitler speaking highly of her, and behaving like a young couple cooing over each other. He lavished her with wealth and they entered the final stage of

⁸⁶ Sereny, *Albert Speer*, 109.

'He hid her from everybody except his most intimate circle but at that point, even there, denied her any social standing and constantly humiliated her. It was a painful thing to see. She was really a very nice girl, young, shy and modest.' It was not just Eva who witnessed Hitler's lack of affection. Speer easily picked up on Hitler's neglectful tendencies, thus resulting in her continual search for attention.

⁸⁷ Lambert, *The Lost Life of Eva Braun*, 134.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 142-143.

their relationship which lasted until the moment they both took their last breaths. Her suicide attempts were extremely childish and attention seeking. However, for the first time their relationship could be deemed as healthy with both Hitler and Braun valuing one another. “By 1944 Eva and Hitler had matured and so had their relationship. She had become a wise if sometimes melancholy woman, lacking the exuberance of a young girl but kinder and more thoughtful, with a real concern for others.”⁸⁹ Their relationship transitioned into a level of comfort and admiration. Hitler completely entrusted her and used her as a comforting mechanism. With Braun, “He was very tender and he was friendly and fatherly to her. And he admired beauty and he admired the female sex. But I think it was not erotic. Not very sexual.”⁹⁰

The relationship had a solid foundation of mutual respect in order to flourish, allowing Hitler to truly value Braun, moving beyond physical attraction. He was already attracted to her physically. In fact, his first impression of her was regarding her legs. Hitler described the young Braun’s, “good legs, firm breasts, and well-rounded bottom.”⁹¹ They wrote lovingly to one another in letters during Hitler’s campaign for both chancellorship and the war effort. They each had a purpose during all phases of their relationship: Hitler’s was to provide for her material well-being and Braun’s was to fulfill his personal needs. In fact, she was the only woman he ever came home to. Although their purposes seemed hierarchical, much love and affection occurred in the latter part of their relationship. “One of the best foundational systems established in their relationship was Eva’s extreme loyalty to him. Regardless of the atrocities and mass genocide that Hitler conducted, Eva stayed with him...”⁹² Not to mention that while Hitler was merely using Braun as a mistress to Germany, she continued to stay loyal to him, until he returned home

⁸⁹ Ibid., 374.

⁹⁰ McKnight, *The Strange Loves of Adolf Hitler*, 22.

⁹¹ Sayer and Botting, *The Women Who Knew Hitler*, 11.

⁹² Ibid., 90.

three months later. In her abiding loyalty years later, Braun willingly ended her life in order to perish with Hitler. Braun was willing to make the ultimate sacrifice to show her incredible sense of love and loyalty with her long-time lover and husband, Adolf Hitler.

Braun's submission was extremely interesting within their relationship. How could such a care-free whimsical girl submit willingly? Her submission could have been characterized by her desire to be loved. Her diaries continuously mentioned her need to be noticed and cared for by Hitler, thus submitting to whatever was asked of her so that she would receive attention. Submission was likely to also have been caused by the superiority within the relationship. It was a very father—daughter like type of relationship. Ultimately, she was still able to do what she wanted most days but would always submit to his authority because of the status he had over her. In addition, a male-dominated household could have also contributed to her submission. Although she did have a bold personality, culturally Germany was still characterized by a male dominated society where females were unequal. Her submission may have simply been her fulfilling her duty as a woman; although she still maintained small parts of independence through smoking, photography, and premarital co-habitation.

Braun's submission may have generated Hitler's dependence upon her. Over the course of their relationship he came to rely on her regardless of the cause. It seems that she was the first person he grew attached to and reliant on since his mother died. "Little by little Hitler was becoming dependent upon her- at least in that tiny enclave of his life that could be called private life."⁹³ They were the complete polar opposites, but he found comfort in her. She never discussed politics, actually hating it. Braun truly only talked about music, clothing, jewelry, and her involvements in the cinema. Sayer and Botting continue to further their point about Hitler's

⁹³ Ibid., 133.

dependency by saying, “Her physical presence was a comfort to him, her devotion and trust a constant reassurance in an unsure world. She was the perfect opposite that complemented the other partner.”⁹⁴ Hitler’s dependency upon Braun shows a glimpse of weakness. It was a rare sight that Hitler ever showed any sign of weakness despite seeking to impose his rule on everyone and everything and then gradually seeing all of his efforts crumble. He always presented himself in an extremely professional and well conducted manner, so it is very interesting to find someone that Hitler was passionate about. Hitler was truly only passionate about three women: his mother, Geli, and Eva Braun. This aspect shows the soft, genuine, and humane portion of Hitler. His relationships with these women, especially Braun, cracked the façade of Hitler’s opaque slate.

Conditional suicide was a central part of the last phase of their relationship. Their planned suicide was a grotesque way of sealing their love for one another. Merely thirty-six hours before their coterminous deaths, Hitler and Braun married. In every source I discovered, Braun seemed apprehensive to commit suicide with Hitler. She was concerned with dying while looking pretty and not being a pool of blood and brain matter. The character shift is quite interesting to look at. Thus, her previous suicide attempts had been attention-seeking devices and featured irrational logic. In April 1945, she was freshly married and wanted to celebrate their unity. “The bride was so excited that she started signing the wrong name on the marriage certificate.”⁹⁵ She had waited almost sixteen years for Hitler to agree to marry her, while she most likely wished to rejoice endlessly, it was not to be. When they both were about to die, each author changed their writing styles; the lively upbeat word choice or continuous stream of events and emotions seemed to stop. During those last moments, Hitler kissed her on the mouth in front of his colleagues after

⁹⁴ Ibid., 133.

⁹⁵ Guido Knopp, *Hitler’s Women*, 49.

she expressed loyalty to him. Braun was the only woman with whom he had ever shown any public display of affection. This act was shockingly ordinary and yet revolutionary for his character; he became the gentle, loving, and “human” Adolf. All of the hustle and bustle ceased to exist in this very moment because this couple has reached the culmination of their lives and now it was only about the two of them. It was as though their earthly purposes had been completed and death was the only thing remaining for them. Hitler knew the war was lost and the Third Reich was over. “He had no more to offer her, except the death she had so often risked for his sake”⁹⁶ Their suicide represented the upmost love and respect for each other.

Why Him?

Historians have an abundance of information about Hitler, but Braun’s records remain thin and filled with speculation. The available primary sources provide information mostly about his public life, and here much is based on Hitler’s hatred and desire to control his image. Thus, much about Braun’s thoughts and love about Hitler is speculative. “Alois Winbauer believed that after the near-disaster of her attempted suicide [second attempt], Hitler didn’t only make concessions; he really began to love her. In the private family memoir, he claims: ‘[while] the unsophisticated and malleable Eva Braun saw in Adolf Hitler, not perhaps her ideal romantic figure, but the epitome of the man her destiny demanded.’”⁹⁷ Her call for attention from attempted suicide, may have allowed her to maintain the status she had yearned for: mistress of the household. This was a level of conventional rank that satisfied the rambunctious young

⁹⁶ Lambert, *The Lost Life of Eva Braun*, 438.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 134-135, quoted in Alois Winbauer, *Eva Braun’s Familiengeschichte* (personal account written in 1976 on request of his niece Gertraud Weisker and typed up by her in October 1992).

woman. Most likely, she enjoyed the very genuine, yet unconventional, affection that she received during the years of their relationship. The end of their relationship was certainly characterized by a type of normality in terms of partnerships, so she may have even found comfort and fulfillment within his affection, charisma, and flirtation.⁹⁸

Braun may have also been trapped within the relationship. She may have believed there could have been extreme consequences for leaving their relationship and worried that something could happen to her if she chose to walk away. Hitler had almost unlimited power, so there was some possibility that she felt obligated to stay with him out of fear; although there is no evidence of this. More persuasively, one can assert the results of comfort in the relationship. The longer the relationship goes, the more custom and routine life becomes. After 1935, Braun felt increasingly secure within the relationship and simply got everything she ever wanted. She was consistently lavished with wealth, she was accepted as “mistress of the household,” and she could do largely whatever she pleased. Was there any reason for her to leave Hitler since he provided for her and fulfilled all her desires? The comfort and security Braun received from being with a distinguished man, the luxury he supplied, coupled with the affection and respect presented to her was strong motivation never to leave his side.

Das Ende

Hitler and Braun had an extremely multi-faceted relationship, outlined by a broad array of emotions. Initially, Braun seemed to be a toy or a diversion, but gradually the relationship shifted

⁹⁸Infield., *The Private Lives of Eva and Adolf*.

When they first met, Eva did not even know who Adolf was. She was attracted to him because of his flirtation and charismatic behavior.

to something characterized by mutual gratification. This fulfillment could be analyzed through Carl Jung's archetypal perspectives; Braun's attributes completed Hitler's area of deficit within his personality and vice versa. Background knowledge and understanding of Hitler through both his psychopathology and past experiences with emphasis on childhood, created the ability to draw a conclusion for why the relationship was the way it was and determine the causation for a shift in the relationship following Braun's suicide attempts. In short, Braun was unloved at the beginning of their love affair. Hitler showed little affection for her as anything more than a sexual object. Over time and through her repeated attempts at proving her love by means of both loyalty and attempted suicide, Hitler developed love for her. After her continual outcries for his affections and the success that followed – the entire relationship dynamic changed from an obviously one-sided emotional sentiment, to a meaningful, interactive mutual appreciation. As an end result, both lovers ended their lives in a display of utmost devotion. “‘Death matters little to me,’ she [Eva] said. ‘I know the end that is in store for me. Hitler has forbidden me to return. But nothing can stop me. My place is with *him!*’”⁹⁹ Although Hitler did not record his perspective on these last days, his actions suggest that, in those last hours, he might have also said, “my place is with her.”

Hitler was a complicated character. It is difficult to understand his thoughts, motives, and actions. The most logical explanation for his crass behaviors with women lie deep within his childhood experiences. Hitler adored and worshipped his mother. This love manifested itself in the excessive and awkward chivalry he expressed towards women. He had lived in a household with an abusive, drunken father and a vulnerable mother; Hitler had witnessed his father rape her. From a young age, he was conditioned to not be weak and he developed a contradictory

⁹⁹ Sayer and Botting, *The Women Who Knew Hitler*, 166.

perspective regarding women. They were inferior creatures of limited and specific capabilities while at the same time, they were also alluring beings. This would have been confusing to a young man or even to a man with stunted emotional development. Sayer and Botting point out that there is no record that young Hitler ever had any significant encounters with a girl. The trauma he experienced as a child witnessing his parents' relationship, in addition to his father's behavior, likely caused Hitler to be both distant from and attracted to women. Thus, it seems more realistic for Hitler to have small, superficial flings with dinner companions, attracted by his substantial wealth and political power, than to engage in a long-term committed relationship. Yet, there was still something that drew Hitler to Braun. "Hitler's relationship with Eva was about coming home. He also wanted sex, probably; love, maybe; but he chose her mainly because she was the perfect woman to come home to."¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ Lambert, *The Lost Life of Eva Braun*, 191.

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