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Affirming Psychosis

The Mass Appeal of Adolf Hitler

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In memory of Paul Matussek

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Preface

The reasons for Hitler's catastrophic impact in the public sphere have remained puzzling to this day. We still cannot grasp how this odd, provincial vagrant, who seemed doomed to failure from the very start, could have risen to power so abruptly and managed to initiate a human extermination program whose atrocity is beyond all comprehension.

Although the scholarly literature on Hitler has meanwhile grown to fill entire libraries, it has not yet gleaned many clues to this dark mystery. For want of an explanation, the boldest speculations have been, and continue to be, put forward. Serious scholars who wish to have no part in this tend instead to the resigned verdict that the causes of Hitler's hatred of the world and of humanity – as well as the reasons for the horrifying eagerness of his followers – must remain obscure. Radical evil, they suggest, is simply incomprehensible.

The present study, which grew out of an interdisciplinary collaboration between a psychiatrist, a cultural studies scholar, and a sociologist, is not content with the alternative between speculation and resignation. It investigates the reasons for the previous difficulties in the interpretation of Hitler and derives from these the necessity for a new psycho-historical approach, which it implements by analyzing the course of Hitler's mania as an interplay of biographical and socio-historical factors. In essence, the book discusses the following four theses:

1. Since its inception, the field of Hitler studies has been struggling with a dilemma: either the Hitler phenomenon is explained on the grounds of his psychological abnormality – which leaves open the question of how one individual could have had such tremendous public impact; or, Hitler's rise is explained on the grounds of the socio-historical circumstances of his time – whereby there is still no getting around the recognition that the mass murders would not have been possible without his pathological will to destruction. Although it is obvious that both approaches can only advance our understanding by mutually supplementing each other, they nonetheless continue to stand largely in unreconciled opposition. The "intentionalist" thesis "no Hitler, no Holocaust" (Himmelfarb 1984) and the "functionalist" thesis of the "cumulative radicalization" of the Germans (Mommsen 1997) have remained controversial to this day.

2. A new theoretical approach presents itself as a means of closing this ever-present gap between the socio-historical and the psychopathological orientations of Hitler studies. This approach has already proven fruitful in the investigation of

psychoses (Paul Matussek 1992, 1997). Essentially, it is based on the observation that every life history is marked by a polarity between public and private self. A pathological preponderance of the private self goes hand in hand with depression, while a schizophrenic structure arises out of a preponderance of the public self. Empirical studies have shown that the thematic complex of compulsions in the former group is focused almost exclusively on content of a personal nature; in the latter group, in contrast, this complex is characterized by the striving for a spectacular exceptional status within the contemporary historico-political field. This mark of a schizophrenic structure was extremely pronounced in Hitler.

3. With the help of this new paradigm, it becomes apparent that Hitler's development had tended from an early age toward a narcissistic fixation on a grandiose public self until not a trace remained of the private – including the emotional-self. A series of deep humiliations engendered an enormous need for compensation that escalated into a delusional relationship to his environment with all the characteristics of a paranoid schizophrenic psychosis. In fact, these characteristics have been often observed before; however, scholars were usually unable to make the appropriate diagnosis because it has been difficult to explain how a schizophrenic could operate with such a great degree of success. In the light of our model, on the other hand, it can be demonstrated that Hitler's pathologically hyperbolic mode of relating to the outside world escaped stigmatization because the historical arena he encountered affirmed his exceptional status. The great extent to which Hitler was accepted by the masses saved his mania from a complete break with reality, which would usually lead to clinical consequences in the case of acute psychoses. Investigations in the field of transcultural psychiatry confirm that allowing the idiosyncrasies of a schizophrenic the possibility for social integration leads to an abatement of symptoms—so-called remissions (Jablensky et al. 1991). In trance cultures, for instance, schizophrenics are honored as mediums possessing higher powers, and are thus stabilized. Something similar occurred in Hitler's case; however, the circumstances were such that the supportiveness of the social environment, which has a healing effect as rule, led here to a fatal intensification of the destructive drives. The "Third Reich" set the stage for the drama of a mutual validation of individual and collective delusions – and in this context, it was precisely the peculiar vacuity of Hitler's personality that made it particularly suitable for projecting superhuman qualities onto it. All cult objects owe their aura to just such a lack of individuality, which incites the recipient to a projectionary act of supplementation (Belting 1990, Peter Matussek 1998). In Hitler's particular historical and ideological context these supplementary fantasies were of course nourished predominantly by aggressive and paranoid impulses.

4. Hitler was thus able to achieve the realization of his delusional ideas only thanks to the social environment's affirmation of them. In order to comprehend this aspect of the interplay we must take a closer look at the contemporary cultural and socio-historical circumstances. The literature on this topic has also been extensive. We rely on recent findings without repeating them here in detail. Rather, we concentrate on aspects that have been previously neglected in the relevant scholarship. In the context of our analysis, this includes in particular the fact that the mass acceptance that stabilized Hitler's psychosis was rooted in a pathological accord between biographical and social motivations: in both cases, the desire to ward off feelings of shame. The "Führer" feared nothing more than turning himself into a laughing stock by his strange phantasms of grandeur, and his individual craving for compensation encountered at the end of World War I a people that felt shamed and humiliated in its inflated national pride. The personal grounds for Hitler's pathologically hyperbolic self-presentation were masked by the popular ideology of antisemitism, and it was this interplay that first led to the destructive concentration of forces that ended in collective mass murder.

We do not intend for these theses to imply that the Hitler phenomenon can be entirely rationalized. It would be an illusion to believe that the course of history is an event whose intellectual comprehension can escape the violence that according to Adorno "vitiates such thinking in real terms" (1951, p. 94). Conversely, the old maxim still holds: Whoever doesn't learn from history is condemned to repeat it. The misleading term *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* ["overcoming the past"] does not find its fulfilment in the final assessment of a bottom line, but rather only in the ceaseless efforts to enrich our remembrance of the past through interpretation, and so to remain on guard against the dangers of a recurrence of comparable processes.

In full knowledge that it is impossible to resolve completely the question of the origins of the Nazi terror, we nevertheless hope that our theses will open up a wider horizon for the discussion surrounding the remembrance of the Holocaust. Our new psycho-historical approach to the investigation of Hitler seeks to avoid the one-sidedness of a mode that is either purely social-historical or purely psychiatric, and aims to heighten the awareness of the above-mentioned interactions, whose cultural-anthropological predisposition makes it possible for them to recur at any time. The question of guilt is in no sense relativized by this approach; it is precisely the combination of a cultural analysis with an analysis of personality that eschews the erroneous consequence of minimizing the historical responsibility of the Germans with allusions to the diminished accountability of the protagonists. Why this is the case will be demonstrated extensively in the concluding chapter.

The object of our book, then, is not a pathography in the clinical sense. Psychiatric terminology is used only insofar as it is necessary to elucidate the interplay of individual and cultural factors, which we address in conjunction with the broad concept of "schizophrenic structure." But the origins of this analysis do go back to a psychiatric concern: the improvement of therapy for schizophrenic psychoses (Paul Matussek 1976). With the current, one-sided preference toward biochemical treatments, we are in danger of losing sight of those aspects of mental illness that relate to a patient's life history and circumstances. Ultimately, this also impairs the effectiveness of the pharmaceutical cure. And thus, the question of the psycho-historical factors of schizophrenia has prompted us to investigate it in the example of a particularly prominent case. The dynamic of Hitler's delusional career highlights particularly clearly the interplay of individual and social mechanisms.

I wrote the present study in close collaboration with Paul Matussek, using the psychiatric diagnostic models developed by him during his many years of clinical experience. Paul Matussek died in June of 2003, shortly after the publication of the German and Italian editions. In the days prior to his death he repeatedly expressed the wish that our book would also be made available to the English-speaking audience, so that it could be acknowledged as a German contribution to the international field of Hitler research. And thanks to the continued commitment of the Peter Lang publishing house, I am now in the fortunate position of being able to fulfill this quite literally final wish. Out of respect for our joint effort I have left the original content unchanged. This means that some four years of the most recent Hitler research have not been taken into account. However, in reviewing the current literature, I have ascertained that it tends to confirm rather than relativize the positions we have argued. Readers familiar with the field may judge for themselves whether I am correct in my assessment.

As before, we would like to thank the numerous colleagues and friends, witnesses and experts who stood by us throughout the course of the project with encouragement and constructive criticism. We are tremendously grateful to them – in particular, to Jan Marbach who provided preliminary materials relating to the socio-historical aspects of our subject; to Yvonne Kult, whose assistance during the research phase was invaluable; and especially to Anna Brailovsky for her great commitment and enthusiasm in the translation of our book. In addition we would like to thank John Becker, Hartmut Böhme, and Klaus Köhle for reading drafts of the manuscript as well as Jörg Bankmann and Bardia Khadjavi-Gontard of the *Stiftung für analytische Psychiatrie* for their generous support, without which this project could not have been realized.

June 20006 *Peter Matussek*

I. Introduction. The Hitler Enigma

No other figure in world history has been studied and described more extensively than Hitler. Hundreds of thousands of books and articles have been published about him, yet this seems to have only intensified the impression of his incomprehensibility. After fifty years of Hitler studies, Allan Bullock declares: "The more I learn about Hitler, the harder I find it to explain" (Ron Rosenbaum 1998, p. xv). But what baffles the scholars is not primarily the sudden ascent of a scorned loner to a rousing public speaker and finally unscrupulous mass murderer. The most important witness of Hitler's early years, August Kubizek, had already ascertained, in retrospect, that "there were always unfathomable secrets with him, and in many respects, my friend remained forever an enigma to me." (1953, p. 35). This assessment is not due to Kubizek's naiveté. Each new attempt at explication comes up against the stubbornly recurring realization that Hitler has "remained [...] an enigma in spite of all the biographical and analytic efforts of superb minds" (Eitner 1981, p. 7). The sheer incomprehensible monstrosity of the crimes perpetrated by him and in his name preempts the possibility of any other outcome. Thus, in a recent magazine article, the renowned Hitler biographer Joachim Fest confesses: "I must say that I have still not resolved this problem; I have not found a solution that would really convince me; the enigma remains" (2001, p. 77). And the atrocity of the Nazi murders casts a shadow over any attempts at intellectual comprehension. Whether one looks for the fault in personal motivation or in historical circumstances – any attempt at an explanation seems to end up inevitably in a vicious circle: by seeking to discover the causes of the inhumanity it simultaneously serves to reduce the gravity of the deeds to a comprehensible level.

In the following, we will explore this dilemma in more depth with the help of a commonly-made distinction between "intentionalist" and "functionalist" Hitler studies. We maintain nonetheless that resignation in the face of the Hitler enigma is an inappropriate response. Why this is so will be explained within the framework of a critical examination of one of the most important current Hitler monographs – the two-volume study by Ian Kershaw (1998 and 2000). We share the double perspective of historiography and biography set up in Kershaw's work, but precisely for this reason feel that it requires reinforcement from a psychopathological point of view. It is therefore essential to demonstrate how a diagnosis of schizophrenia – provided it is made on the basis of appropriate criteria –

may help to shed light on Hitler's delusions and the share his followers had in them, without this elucidation necessarily having to imply a mitigation of responsibility or of the role played by historical forces. And this determines the place of our own study in the Hitler literature: with its integrative approach, it belongs nominally to the "psychohistorical" branch of Hitler studies; but at the same time, its descriptive method allows it to maintain a distance from its speculative predecessors.

Hitler Studies between Intentionalism and Functionalism

A look at the two major currents in recent Hitler studies will highlight the dilemma one comes up against in the search for clues to the enigma of Hitler's catastrophic career. A typology common among historians characterizes the difference between the two currents in the following manner.

The "intentionalists" include those scholars who ascribe the decisive role in the politics of the "Third Reich," and especially in the systematic eradication of the Jews, to the will – and with it, the personality – of Hitler. Milton Himmelfarb identified this position succinctly in 1984 with the title of his essay, "No Hitler, No Holocaust." Such an assessment of the historical mechanisms necessarily comes down to tracking Hitler's monstrosity above all to the recesses of his psyche, thus making speculation unavoidable. For this reason, Ron Rosenbaum (1998) also describes the authors who seek to explain the Hitler enigma in this manner as theorists of "hidden variables" (p. 136).

The counterpole is represented by the "functionalists." For them, Hitler's politics and the calculated policy of mass murder appear primarily as a consequence of military, economic, and bureaucratic constraints, while the "Führer" tends to play the role of an irresolute equivocator, far more driven by forces than a driving force himself. Rosenbaum speaks of the proponents of this view – for whom Hitler's personality plays only a secondary role in an ensemble of influential factors – as "field theorists."

A radically functionalist position, in the above sense, was adopted by Daniel Goldhagen in his 1996 book, *Hitler's Willing Executioners*. In this work, he attributes the causes of the Holocaust to an "eliminationist" variant of antisemitism that was especially widespread among the Germans, who had a particular affinity for it. According to Goldhagen, anti-Jewish writings circulating in Europe since the nineteenth century landed in Germany on fertile soil: the historical development of the German mentality created conditions in which any arbitrary external impulse was enough to trigger a readiness for mass murder. From this perspective, Hitler appears exchangeable, as Rosenbaum sums up: "If not Hitler, some-

one *like* Hitler would emerge" (1998, p. 136). Rosenbaum finds this position problematic not only because it relativizes Hitler, but also because it simultaneously diminishes the historical responsibility of the collective: as soon as one goes along with Goldhagen in granting the post-war Germans that their mentality has been fundamentally transformed, the historical events recede into the distance of an unrepeatable past. On this account, any contemplation of the Holocaust in Germany and abroad would have a function that is solely memorial, and not at all prohibitive.

In opposition to this view, the intentionalists point out that it is entirely possible for individual fanatics, at any given time, to manage to incite the masses to violence against certain social groups. The psychological considerations in themselves therefore suggest that the chance of a recurrence of a Hitler-style fascism cannot be fundamentally ruled out.

A typical example of this position is the work of the historian Lucy Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews* (1975). In the disagreement between intentionalists and functionalists about the precise time when Hitler ordered the mass murders, Dawidowicz takes up the most assailable intentionalist position: namely, that Hitler had already decided on the Holocaust in 1918 during his stay at the military hospital in Pasewalk, when he learned about the capitulation of the German army and made the Jews responsible for it. Since that time, he had never lost sight of this aim; but for tactical reasons, he remained silent about it, or concealed it behind "esoteric" formulations that could only be deciphered by the initiates of the inner circles of power. It was only with the start of the war that Hitler allowed the mask to fall – at first in a number of public speeches, and then with the order for the "final solution."

It is of course in the nature of Dawidowicz's argumentation that she must substantiate her thesis by recourse to unspoken or ambivalent intimations of Hitler's purpose. But she takes precisely this lack of unambiguous evidence as grounds for assuming the existence of a hidden intention. In this way, the question of the manner in which Hitler managed to realize his malicious plans entirely escapes documentability.

This is particularly the case for those scholars whose province is the search for "hidden variables" in the human soul: the psychoanalysts. It is part and parcel of their profession to understand human behavior in terms of unconscious drives. In the case of Hitler, reports of sexual perversions, such as those circulated by later defectors from National Socialism like Otto Strasser, Ernst Hanfstaengl, or Hermann Rauschning, have been taken up in order to explain the monstrous aspects of his character (cf. Hayman 1997). Others seek the hidden variable in the psychic defects from which Hitler supposedly suffered owing to a purportedly missing testicle or his fear of possibly discovering Jewish ancestors.

Skepticism is called for in the face of such attempts to discover the solution of the Hitler enigma in the secrets of his inner life – and not only because of their speculative approach. By making psychic mechanisms responsible for the atrocities of Hitler and his followers, these attempts tend to efface the political and moral dimension of the deeds. It is no coincidence that Sigmund Freud – as an emigrant, himself a victim of National Socialism – rejected a psychoanalytical interpretation of Hitler. Where a psychoanalytic interpretation might lead is demonstrated by the example of C. G. Jung, who sought to deal with his Nazi sympathies by universalizing Hitler as a "shadow," an inferior portion of everyone's psyche (cf. Jung 1945). Such normalizing tendencies have played a major role in discrediting psychological approaches to the diagnosis of the Hitler phenomenon. And when, on top of that, such approaches are defined as "understanding" – like the hermeneutic psychiatry cultivated particularly in Germany – then an inappropriate empathy with the mass murderer seems to be pre-programmed into the process. It is indeed off-putting to read a statement like the following: "Anyone who wants to 'understand' Hitler must get a deep sense of his feelings, put himself in his place, in his life," to the point of "empathizing with Hitler" (Eitner 1981, p. 8). Such empathy is problematic not only from a moral, but also from a psychiatric point of view, since it leads to false diagnoses. Thus, for Eitner, empathy is, according to the classical doctrine, the decisive criterion on the basis of which he considers the diagnosis of schizophrenia as insupportable in the case of Hitler: "Even though it may be difficult and nauseating, it is possible for us to feel our way with empathy and 'understanding' into Hitler's delusional, non-schizophrenic ideas. And, therefore, from this point of view the diagnosis of 'schizophrenic delusion' must be ruled out in Hitler's case. It is significant, indisputable, and fundamental to our understanding of Hitler 'from within' that truly delusional states also exist outside of the realm of schizophrenic forms" (p. 228). This assessment has been met with widespread acceptance. And even one of the newest publications on this theme, Koch-Hillebrecht's *Psychogramm*, rejects the diagnosis of schizophrenia with a laconic reference to the purported comprehensibility of Hitler's "self-detachment" and coldness of feeling (1999, p. 126).

The extension of the concept of empathetic understanding to idiosyncratic reactions or inhuman behavior in itself demonstrates the limits of this approach. Thus, intentionalist investigations of Hitler have fallen into disrepute for wishing to reduce the incomprehensible down to a general, human degree. Whether one sees the "solution to the psychological mystery of Hitler," along with Friedrich W. Doucet for instance, in an archetypal "mother complex," or with Bromberg and Small (1983) in the lack of a testicle, or with Koch-Hillebrecht (1999) in the suppressed homosexuality of an "eidetic," these reconstructions amount to a

miniaturization into a mundaneness that cannot measure up to the terror Hitler initiated.

But as we have seen, the functionalist approach also has a tendency to exculpation in that it sets aside the question of individual motivations for the Nazi crimes and makes anonymous "circumstances" responsible for them. Thus, both the major currents of Hitler studies run the risk of solving the mystery at the expense of clear attributions of responsibility.

In the current discussion, there appears to be a renewal of a position that had already been expressed by Hannah Arendt – namely, "that there really is a radical evil [...] that can be neither explained nor understood by reference to evil motives of self-interest, greed, envy, craving for power, resentment, cowardice, or whatever else there may be, and in the face of which all human reactions are therefore equally powerless" (1951, p. 701). This assessment was repeated just recently by the Hitler biographer Joachim Fest (1999, p. 197). A ban has been imposed on the representation of the motives of Hitler and his aides so as not to reduce their monstrosity down to a level applicable to humanity at large.

But – as Rosenbaum, with reference to Emil Fackenheim, asks at the end of his book about the contemporary Hitler debate – doesn't precisely this resistance to the attempt at explanation amount to a "posthumous victory" of the mass murderer over his victims and accusers alike (1998, p. 390)? And one would have to add the question: How can a return of the Hitler phenomenon be prevented if one insists that his hatred of the Jews and the world must remain in the dark?

We cannot dispense with the search for either historical-functionalist or psychological-intentionalist explanations if reflection about the causes and possible preventions of the Nazi terror is not to come to stand-still. The objections to both currents of thought sketched out above are justified, but they are also surmountable if each respective approach is used to supplement the other instead of being taken as an absolute. And it is this double perspective that was recently considered by Ian Kershaw. Previously, the historian had always programmatically distanced himself from personality-centered investigations of Hitler, but in his last monograph (1998 and 2000) he has crossed over into an attempt to combine a structural analysis of the Third Reich with elements of biographical character analysis. Thus, on the one hand, he explains Hitler's success functionalistically in the historical context of his time. But on the other, he also in part agrees with the intentionalist view (1998, p. 720) and seeks to discover biographical factors for Hitler's murderous intentions. With his combination of both approaches, Kershaw has given new impetus to the debate about the enabling of the Nazi regime (Augstein 1998, Augstein and Raulff 1998, Herbert 1998, Mommsen 1998, Sattler 1998, Schirrmacher 1998, Ulrich 1998, Fest 2001, Spörl 2001). In the present study, we follow this double perspective, but consider it in need of supple-

mentation from a psychopathological point of view. The reasons for this need will be explained in more detail in the following sections, since our ensuing course of argumentation arises from them.

Psychopathology as an Element of Historiography

Kershaw's monograph proceeds from the thesis that the clues to the Hitler phenomenon can be found only by investigating the nature of his power. This power rested less on the qualities of Hitler's personality and rather more on his role as "Führer." And the Führer role, in turn, was supported primarily by the expectations of his followers, by the independent initiative of his collaborators, and by underestimation on the part of his opponents. For this reason, the attempt to explain how the Nazi regime came into being and how it functioned would have to concentrate less on Hitler, and far more on the concomitant circumstances that enabled his success. The fact, in particular, that Hitler was able to maintain power despite his anarchistic and indecisive style of leadership is read by Kershaw as clear evidence of his thesis. He supports it with the observation that the German population harbored the deeply anchored view that every individual and every office or organization was bound by duty to "work towards" the wishes of the Führer without first waiting for orders from above. Thus Hitler would only rarely have to issue explicit directives; he could wait it out with an astonishing degree of inactivity to see who would persevere in the contest to realize his aims (1998, p. 527ff).

In fact, even prior to Hitler's "seizure of power" – which might also be called a "handing over of power" (Köhler 1999, p. 19) – the German population had lost its orientation to such an extent that there was no need of a strong personality: a mere figurehead would do to unite in its person all the expectations of salvation. The stock market crash in October 1929, which ushered in a worldwide economic crisis, completely undermined the cliché of the Weimar "golden years." Under the pressure of economic hardship, society splintered into interest groups. The republic had lost all its political and cultural forces of integration. This increased its susceptibility to populist propaganda. Kershaw sums up the situation: "Germany had been throughout a society profoundly divided. The brief interlude of relative stability had done nothing to diminish the depth of the class and confessional fissures. [...] Culturally, the divisions were equally acute. Weimar avant-garde art forms repelled far more people than they attracted. [...] The sharply divided social milieus and 'sub-cultures' were reflected in a highly unstable political landscape." The following could be seen from the election results: "The increased KPD vote marked a shift away from democracy on the Left. The

liberal parties of the centre and centre-right had lost an alarming proportion of their support since 1919. Their disintegration and fragmentation reflected disillusionment with democracy and a rightward shift of voters, even before the Nazis made a significant electoral mark" (1998, p. 306f). Still, it would take some years before the NSDAP would become the strongest Reichstag faction, with 37.4%. And even with that, it could not yet claim to represent the majority of the voters. But it had in the meantime become strong enough to impress the political elite and to be promoted to a decisive player in the political power games. Above all, however, the frustration of the population – precipitated by the breakdown of cultural consensus – created an atmosphere of compliant readiness that came about largely without any pressure from above, even after Hitler's appointment as Chancellor on 30 January 1933. "Remarkable in the seismic upheavals of 1933-34," on Kershaw's account, "was not how much, but how little, the new new Chancellor needed to do to bring about the extension and consolidation of his power" The dictatorship was thus as much the result of a collective role attribution as of an individual will to power: "As the 'representative figure' of the 'national renewal', Hitler could for the most part function as activator and enabler of the forces rushing to implement what they rook to be his wishes. 'Working towards the Führer' functioned as the underlying maxim of the regime from the outset" (p. 436–7).

There is no question that this maxim developed its own dynamic, which functioned to a large extent without concrete instructions from Hitler. And the Reichswehr had also committed itself to the principle of obedience in advance of orders – at the latest, as of the moment General Werner von Blomberg, in accordance with the law of 1 August 1934, had all the soldiers swear a personal oath to Hitler after the death of President Hindenburg. And if the new source study by Dirks and Janßen (1999) is correct, even the planning and preparation of the Russian campaign immediately after the capitulation of France in late June 1940 was an autonomous action taken by Lieutenant-Colonel Bernahard von Loßberg. Above all, the intentions Hitler expressed in speaking to Heydrich, Himmler and Frank were apparently sufficient to induce them on their own authority to install a gigantic apparatus of deportation and mass destruction – whereby the underlings such as Eichmann and Höß, in turn, set about perfecting the cruelty and efficiency of the death machinery through their own inventions with remarkable ambition (cf. Hartog 1994). And in the general population, as well, the will of the Führer encountered such over-zealous interpreters that the system seemed to be virtually self-supporting.

Kershaw explains that as a consequence of such observations, "what has continued in the writing of the book to interest me more than the strange character of the man who held Germany's fate in his hands between 1933 and 1945 is the

question of how Hitler was possible" (1998, p. xii). In this, he expressly distinguishes himself from other Hitler biographers. He seeks to avoid the danger perceived, above all, in the work of Joachim Fest (1973) – namely, "of over-personalizing complex historical developments, over-emphasizing the role of the individual in shaping and determining events, ignoring or playing down the social and political context in which those actions took place" (Kershaw 1998, p. xxi). In this respect, Kershaw appears as a confirmed "field theorist."

Yet precisely for the sake of his own thesis, Kershaw simply can't avoid the concern with Hitler's "strange character." He himself describes it as a personal "irony" that, of all people, he – who had helped to achieve the breakthrough of the structural approach to the interpretation of the NS regime – had approached the genre "so to say, from the 'wrong' direction. However," he writes, "the growing preoccupation with the structures of Nazi rule and with the gulf in the divides on Hitler's own position within that system (if 'system' it can be called) pushed me inexorably to increased reflection on the man who was the indispensible fulcrum and inspiration of what took place, Hitler himself" (p. xii). Why does Kershaw arrive at this reorientation on the person of Hitler, which differentiates him from other representatives of a strict functionalism – such as Hans Mommsen and Martin Broszat, as well as Daniel Goldhagen? Is it a matter of an inherent contradiction, as Herbert (1998) claims?

In our assessment, Kershaw's concession to an intentionalist Hitler interpretation is an entirely consistent outcome of his structural approach. The formula of "working towards" in itself already presupposes a connection between the will of the Führer and that of his executors. In order to explain how both were able to interact, an analysis of Hitler's personality as an aspect of this interplay is therefore unavoidable. Why did men such as the chief of general staff Franz Halder – who, as part of a conspiratorial circle of officers back in 1938, wanted to have Hitler arrested on grounds of "mental illness" (Krausnick 1956, p. 348) – set out in 1940 on their own initiative to make strategic preparations for the realization of the delusional "living space in the East" idea? And when Heydrich made "a long pause" after his announcement to Eichmann that the Führer had ordered the "physical destruction" of the Jews (Lang 1982, p. 69), why was did this silence suffice to say everything to the latter? Why did large segments of the population place such trust in the will of the Führer that they could abdicate to him their own decision-making in matters of conscience and their own personal motivation for action? These questions cannot be answered adequately solely by recourse to an examination of the historical context of the Weimar Republic. It is true that, as a "republic without republicans" (Haffner 1978, p. 25), it created a general readiness to substitute faith in a "strong man" for the lost faith in democratic institutions. But to then concentrate this general readiness specifically on Hitler, of all

people, there must have also been enthusiasm for his person. What did Hitler have to offer that made it possible for him to emerge as the preferred Führer figure? Kershaw also sees himself repeatedly confronted with this question during the course of his historical analysis. That it has once again entered the discussion is due, not least, to his contribution. In order to emphasize the originality of his answer, it is illuminating to compare it to two other recent responses: The British politician and journalist Brian Walden explains Hitler's power to fascinate with the conjecture that it adequately addressed the need of the Germans of his time (1999, p. 83). And Joachim Fest writes: "Like no other demagogue of the century, Hitler revealed the craving of the 'lonely masses' for a domineering will, for community, drama, devotion, and in all, for a heteronomous existence" (1999, p. 197).

Walden and Fest thus assume the presence of a need that was precisely met by Hitler. What differentiates Kershaw from their explanatory attempts is the lesser significance he attributes to Hitler's intentions. This is more clearly demonstrated by Kershaw's representation of the decisive turning point in Hitler's biography. If the stylized self-portrait produced by Hitler in *Mein Kampf* is to be believed, his rise to power began with an act of will. At the end of the First World War, during his convalescence at a military hospital in Pasewalk – blinded by poison gas and dismayed by Germany's defeat – he saw his mission in a flash before his inner eye: *"I, for my part, decided to go into politics"* (Hitler 1925/27, p. 206). Kershaw – and Fest before him (1973, p. 83) – justifiably stresses that this self-representation is pure legend. In an effort to demythologize Hitler's person, he shows that it was not Hitler who came to politics, but rather politics that came to Hitler (1998, p. 159). Completely at a loss in bourgeois society, Hitler received recognition for the first time in his life in the form of military honors for dangerous missions; a demobilization would have once again placed him before an existential abyss, and his sole interest lay in remaining in the army. For this reason, he even cooperated with the Munich *Räterepublic* (a short-lived Bolshevik regime) during the time of revolutionary upheaval. After its downfall, he seized on the next opportunity to extend military service: he let himself be recruited by the press corps of the Bavarian Reichswehr as a *V-Mann* (an informant and propagandist). His tasks included denouncing revolutionary sympathizers and agitating against communist tendencies within the army. This was the detour by which Hitler arrived at the "speaker courses," in which he immediately drew attention to himself with his characteristically fanatical style. After his first, striking appearances as an agitator in the camp at Lechfeld, he received orders to report on a committee meeting of the *Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (DAP, the German Workers Party). On this occasion, he was courted to become a party member. It was thus through biographical coincidence, on Army orders, as it were, that Hit-

ler came to politics. In this respect, the functionalist perspective appears sufficient to explain what enabled his career.

Yet how could it have come about that a screwy corporal, whom war-time superiors did not even want to promote to the rank of sergeant owing to his flagrant lack of "appropriate leadership qualities" (Wiedemann 1964, p. 26), suddenly advanced to become the exalted savior of an entire people? Hitler's very first rhetorical performances – according to the reactions on record – had already created such an overwhelming impression that they even outshone the professional propaganda skills of the instructors in the speaker courses. It appears that structural and biographical elements had a joint role to play in this career move. On the one hand, only a transformation in the context can explain how Hitler suddenly gained the attention that had been denied to the gutturally monologizing oddball, as he had previously been perceived by his environment. On the other hand, it was those very same strange peculiarities of Hitler that made his oratorical excesses so incomparable. This point clearly exemplifies the necessity of a psychological supplementation to the analysis of the historical mechanisms. But Kershaw rejects such a supplementation. He plays the one approach against the other when he states: "The path from Pasewalk to becoming the main attraction of the DAP had not been determined by any sudden recognition of a 'mission' to save Germany, by strength of personality, or by a 'triumph of the will'. It had been shaped by circumstance, opportunism, good fortune, and, not least, the backing of the army" (Kershaw 1998, p. 128). The mutually exclusive alternatives of "personality" or "circumstances" do not, in our opinion, do justice to Kershaw's own thesis. Particularly if one wishes to distance oneself from Hitler's self-created myth that he became a politician on his own initiative, there is need of an additional reason to explain why an incidental change in his external circumstances should have such grave consequences for the way the public perceived him. If Hitler did not fascinate his audience with political convictions, then it must have been the unusual characteristics of his personality – the same characteristics that had previously provoked nothing but hostility and derision. A mere regurgitation of the ideological message taught by his mentors in the public speaking courses could not have helped Hitler to distinguish himself. He called attention to himself only in so far as he *departed* from what was normally expected of a politically motivated agitator. And this is precisely why Fest emphasized the "congruence between the personal and the social-pathological situation" (1973, p. 149) in Hitler's ascent to power.

What prevents Kershaw from drawing this conclusion is the peculiar vacuousness of Hitler's personality, which does not fit the usual image of the strongly dynamic demagogue. For that reason, Kershaw attempts to meet the need for psychopathological explanation with social-historical arguments: "There was

something strange about [Hitler]. He was a little odd, a little different; in the bourgeois Salons of the twenties, he was an exotic presence. Later on, he stylized himself, cultivated a steely look. His whole body language was studied: he played the 'Führer.' If his audience was impressed, this was of course also due to the power he had. People wanted to be impressed. Hitler in himself, without his office, wouldn't have impressed anyone" (interview with Augstein and Raulff 1998, p. 44). In the abrupt transition from the examination of the person to that of its function, both perspectives remain underexposed instead of mutually illuminating one another: Hitler's peculiarities pale into simple quirks, and what lends them their fascination is ascribed merely to an office. In this way, neither the private nor the public aspect of that which Kershaw, in connection with Max Weber, describes as Hitler's "charismatic" quality (p. 9) comes to the fore in its specific intensity. After all, even as an insignificant *V-Mann* without an imposing office, Hitler had already captivated his audience to such an extent that he rose to the status of star speaker within a matter of months. Nor do "religious-political" explanations (cf. Bärsch 1998) make it possible to fathom the persuasiveness of his early performances, which still made do without studied poses and cultic accessories. Rather, all the contemporary reports provide reason to suppose that it was precisely the psychotic traits of Hitler's personality – his screwiness, mannerism, and extravagance (*Verschrobenheit, Manieriertheit, Verstiegenheit*) to use the criteria of Binswanger (1956) – that made those around him sit up and take notice. Here, a misfit – who had for a long time awakened only feelings of hostility and, derided by others, had become more and more entangled in the web of his own delusions of grandeur – suddenly found his public.

It has been often suspected that Hitler was mentally ill and that he inspired astonishment and admiration through this very abnormality. Even Kershaw apparently can't avoid ascertaining in Hitler a "progressive megalomania" (p. xxviii) or a "paranoid anti-Semitism" (p. 64). But instead of taking advantage of the explanatory potential of these psychiatric terms and incorporating it into his account, he breaks off rashly and switches to the familiar perspective of the historian. Although he remarks that the "black hole which represents [Hitler] the private individual" contributes to his mysterious "aura" (p. xxv), at the same time he hurries to dismiss the investigation of this personality lack as of no significance for the explanation of Hitler's political success. In fact, a psychopathological investigation could further the historical analysis by demonstrating that what Kershaw correctly perceives to be the "emptiness of the private person" (p. xxv) is a symptom that is extremely closely linked with the motivation for a rigorous assertion of a delusionally inflated public self. But Kershaw categorically rejects such a consideration: "why [would] a complex society be prepared to follow someone who was mentally deranged, a 'pathological' case, into the abyss" (p. xxii).

Kershaw himself describes this as a "key question," yet he poses it only rhetorically, since for him it is *a priori* the case that a mentally ill person would not be capable of playing a public role to so successfully: "You cannot call Hitler insane, either by clinical or by ordinary standards. If you were to do so, you would have to take it a step further and ask how it came about that a society allowed itself to be ruled by a madman" (interview with Augstein and Raulff, p. 45). We believe that precisely this path of questioning is necessary and feasible; that is to say, the "key question" must be posed anew. However, there are some reservations that must be cleared out of the way first – reservations that result from the psychopathological mode of Hitler studies itself.

It appears to be in the nature of psychiatric investigations of Hitler that they tend more or less explicitly to come to the disastorous conclusion of ascribing diminished capacity for guilt to the Nazi criminals. In the past, eschewing this consequence was a not insignificant motivation for estimating the degree of Hitler's psychotic disturbance as far less severe than the symptoms suggested, since it was supposed that a diagnosis of schizophrenia must virtually automatically go hand in hand with an inability to take responsibility for one's actions. Gustav Bychowski, for instance, wrote: "The young Hitler was so far removed from reality that one might even suspect the beginnings of a schizophrenic process. I believe this would have been the psychiatric diagnosis that my revered teacher Eugen Bleuler, who shaped the concept of schizophrenia, would have made in the case of the future Führer. The young Hitler shunned all education, he squandered his time with pseudo-artistic activities and strove for a goal for which he was entirely unsuited and untrained, namely acceptance to an academy of fine arts or architecture. He avoided any kind of work or paid employment and withdrew from all human relationships, both to men and to women. In addition, there was his regressive, excessive dependence on his mother, who reinforced him in his vague fantasies of some sort of future greatness. In the end, Hitler's growing difficulties in adapting brought him down so low that he began to lead the life of a vagabond, sleeping in the wretched homeless shelters of the Austro-Hungarian capital and severing all bonds of friendship and family; here, the impression of real psychopathy is especially strong" (Bychowski 1948, p. 136). In terms of clarity, this account hardly leaves anything to be desired. And although Bychowski further ascertained clinically relevant elements of paranoia in Hitler's particular form of anti-Semitism (p. 137f), in the end he nonetheless comes to a negative conclusion: "The later development of Hitler's personality rules out the diagnosis of schizophrenia" (p. 136).

A similarly ambivalent position had already been expressed by Langer (1943). Although his "Psychological Analysis of Adolph Hitler" does find "many characteristics which border on the schizophrenic" (p. 246), it nonetheless tones

down the diagnosis to the assertion "that Hitler is an hysteric bordering on schizophrenia and not a paranoiac as is so frequently supposed. This means that he is not insane in the commonly accepted sense of the term, but neurotic. He has not lost complete contact with the world about him and is still striving to make some kind of psychological adjustment which will give him a feeling of security in his social group. It also means that there is a definite moral component in his character no matter how deeply it may be buried or how seriously it has been distorted" (p. 128).

Hitler's successful political career is justifiably taken as evidence that he possessed enough competence, discernment and control to be considered culpable for his actions. But does this minimal sense of reality represent sufficient cause to rescind the diagnosis of schizophrenia? Unfortunately the cliché of the feebleminded mental patient who isn't capable of knowing what he does has prevailed to this day – even in the medical profession. In this respect, one can't blame Kershaw for claiming that anyone who describes Hitler as "a lunatic" or "raving maniac" contributes to the "ridiculing" of his person, thus playing down the terror emanating from him and his aides (1988, p. xxii). That the historian's fears are not ungrounded is revealed by the analysis of Wolfgang Treher, one of the few psychiatrists to define Hitler unreservedly as a schizophrenic. At the end of his study, Treher comes to the completely unacceptable conclusion that "there was no moral responsibility on Hitler's part or on that of the German Reich, after 1933" (1966/1990, p. 249).

The error, however, lies not in the diagnosis, but rather in the false conclusions that are drawn from it. As we will show in what follows, the notion that schizophrenia and public success are mutually exclusive is based on a misconception. There is ample evidence to the contrary, and the reason for this may be found in an essential trait of this personality disorder: namely, in the loss of private self, which drives the schizophrenic to engage in an excessive self-presentation to the outside world. In so far as this self-presentation may, under certain conditions, appear convincing to its audience, it is entirely capable of creating a stabilizing feedback effect. Hitler is a paradigm – admittedly an extremely disastrous one – of just such a successful course of a delusional disorder.

We will develop this thesis more fully in the following chapters of our study. But first, by way of an introduction to the context of this problem, we will briefly outline its psychiatric implications.

Schizophrenia and Success in the Public Sphere

When someone is said to be a schizophrenic, many people – including, unfortunately, some professionals – still make the old associations with dementia and mental feebleness. These associations go back to the first systematic attempts to describe the syndrome. Their basis is the two-fold division of psychoses proposed by Emil Kraepelin. In the sixth edition of his textbook, *Psychiatry* (1899), he adopted the expression "Dementia praecox" – which was introduced by Morel in 1856 – as the umbrella term encompassing paranoid illnesses, hebephrenia, and catatonia. Kraepelin expressly emphasized that the common characteristic of all three syndromes was their rapid degeneration into "idiocy." And the term "schizophrenia" itself, originated by Eugen Bleuler in 1911, was hardly better suited to mitigate prejudice against the mentally ill. The "dissociative psychosis" constituted the general framework for the attempt to subdivide the symptoms into categories of basic and accessory. In his *Klinische Psychopathologie* (1939), Kurt Schneider picked up on this account and differentiated between "first- and second-order symptoms." The first-order symptoms, according to Schneider, included (auditory) hallucinations, delusional perceptions, and disordered reasoning.

Schneider's classification has persisted in the diagnostic handbooks to this day. Although these contemporary handbooks are distinguished by their efforts to formulate more verifiable criteria, even the most recent manuals, DSM-IV and ICD-10, basically perpetuate the old grouping of characteristic features. Thus, a distinction continues to be made between a paranoid, hebephrene, catatonic, and undifferentiated form of schizophrenia – whereby such standardized distinctions all to easily cover up the fact that the clinical picture continues to remain obscure. The assessment of Janzarik (1986) is as valid as ever: "An unambiguously defined illness called schizophrenia does not exist to date. The history of the concept of schizophrenia is not a history of medical discoveries. It is the story of the theoretical models on which psychiatry orients itself" (p. 681). That these theoretical models still, to a large extent, stand in the way a real understanding of the illness is documented by campaigns fighting discrimination against schizophrenics, as for example at the eleventh International Congress for Psychiatry in Hamburg (1999).

Thus, the history of modern medicine has contributed to the stigmatization of a type of deviant behavior through the use of the very categories that were intended to supply a therapy for it. But comparative studies across various cultures bear out that the negative consequences for the patient's prospects of recovery are avoidable. According to these studies, the severity of psychoses is considerably influenced by the reactions of the environment. The "Ten-Country Study" of

the World Health Organization, for instance, shows that five out of six schizophrenics in so-called developing countries have better chances of recovery than those in industrial nations (Jablensky et al. 1991). The following reason is given for this: "Here, the schizophrenic patient is able to act out his psychotic experiences, finds himself in a secure situation, [...] and is incorporated into daily activities" (Machleidt and Peltzer 1994, p. 5). Bateson and Mead (1942) had already observed that in the trance culture of the Balinese, persons with conspicuous behavioral patterns that we would describe as schizoid were integrated into the "setting" of cultural practices. Odd conduct and delusional perceptions that a western mind would pathologize as "bizarre" are here respected as a sign of a special calling – such as that of a medium (p. 4). This wards off the break with social reality that is the chief source of the schizophrenic's suffering, and the symptoms accordingly abate. New approaches in the field of "transcultural psychiatry" are attempting to implement these findings in an "integrative" renewal of the western treatment of psychoses (cf. Hoffmann and Machleidt 1997).

Admittedly, such approaches encounter their limits when they collide with the post-traditional concept of man. The daily routine of industrial society generally provides no place for trance mediums, visionaries or holy men. Instead, they are placed in clinics where, in the best case scenario, those who share their fate might provide them with a forum that recreates the stabilizing mechanism of social acceptance. Thus, the psychiatrist Otto Fenichel observed: "The most common security provision for paranoid personalities consists in having 'disciples.' As long as others believe in them and their mission, the patients continue to have a hold on reality. But if the other men say, the man is crazy, they break down" (1997, p. 352).

Yet even outside the asylum walls, our cultural sphere offers schizophrenics the possibility of escaping complete psychotic breakdown through the recruitment of supporters. The mass media function as the modern equivalent of a stage for eccentric rituals in which the interest of the audience in oddities and the interest of the oddball in finding an audience mutually supplement each other. In this way, delusional ideas may be concealed under a surface of public acclaim. A good example from the annals of recent history is the "Kremlin Flyer" Mathias Rust, who caused a great media uproar in 1987 with his spectacular landing in Red Square in Moscow and was only recognized by psychiatrists as a borderline schizophrenic much later, after he critically injured a nurse.

As long as Rust held the attention of the public with his bizarre notion of getting past the heavily armed guard posts of Soviet airspace, the psychotic background remained latent. The admiration of the public allowed the trainee pilot to reconcile his inflated self-image with social reality. And when he issued abstruse statements after his arrest declaring the Kremlin flight to be a mission for world

peace, his "heroic feat" still received great acclamation, which continued to preserve his delusional system from irritation. It was not until the later knife attack on the Hamburg woman – with whom Rust couldn't "land" with his boastful self-presentation as the "flyer from Moscow" – that made it apparent to everyone that they were dealing with a pathological case. Only then was the aggressive act recognized as the consequence of a development that had began much earlier: with a childhood that conferred upon him a crown prince role he was not able to fill. The increasing need to compensate for the humiliations he suffered through the falsification of his inflated self-assessment drove him to further and further extravagances, which he could finally substantiate only by means of a bizarre flying adventure.

The supposed mission of world peace was certainly just a masking of hidden motives. Like many young people, Rust had problems with the pubescent development in which a teenager takes the step from "I" to "you," and with it to social coexistence with others (cf. Erikson 1950). Teenagers normally succeed in this step after going through several crises; however, in Rust's case, the development was blocked by a hopeless constellation: he wanted to approach a girl, but considered it out of the question to simply reveal his desires. His pathological fixation on a grandiose public self demanded that he impress the opposite sex with a heroic deed of suitably great dimensions. The flight lessons – which he took as a simple bank trainee – were in themselves an attempt to prove his exceptional status. But since he was also avoided as weird and "strange" at the flight school, he had to impress the others all the more. He planned the impossible: a flight over the iron curtain to Moscow. This plan succeeded not because the Soviet anti-aircraft defenses dozed off – Rust's Cessna appeared on all the radar screens and was also recognized by fighter planes; it succeeded because the observers were bewildered by the absurdity of the act. After the daredevil landing in Red Square, Rust was not handed over into psychiatric care but was instead presented to the public as a "star." And so, in all their astonishment, they forgot to inquire about the mental health of the object of their admiration.

As long as the environment reacted with acclamation, Rust appeared stable. He took his incarceration calmly, especially since it, too, was extensively covered by the press. With his newly won popularity he hoped to bridge the gap that had previously separated him from the opposite sex. After his release he remained the strange outsider, but now used his world-famous image to meet girls. With every "come-on," as the psychological evaluation has it, he introduced himself as the "Kremlin Flyer." The addressants of this line were however rather put off by "the funny guy." For him, their rejections represented an unbearable injury, for they were directed at a person who was completely consumed by the awareness of his

irresistible greatness. He attempted his gimmick a few more times – and was deeply humiliated by the lack of success.

Mathias Rust belongs to the roughly 0.5 to 1.5 per thousand schizophrenics who react to injuries with a violent act of externally directed aggression (Böker and Häfner 1973, Lindquist and Allebeck 1990) – and one must add for the sake of clarity: are capable of reacting aggressively. Rust went for the knife.

What does such a case have to do with Hitler? More than a merely psychiatric or merely historical perspective would encompass. Hitler represents the monstrously inflated form of a schizophrenic structure stabilized by public affirmation, which releases an excessive potential for violence whenever it is called into question. Like Rust, Hitler grew up with the sense of a special elect status that was nourished by his mother but repeatedly disturbed by his paltry achievements. Like in the case of Rust, these humiliations led to compensatory overreactions. Hitler, too, obstructed the pubescent step toward the opposite sex through a grandiose public self, which led to his further exclusion from social intercourse with others. According to Erikson (1950), this plays a central role in the pathological features of Hitler's ideology. Certainly, the need for recognition with which Hitler overcompensated for the humiliations of his self-image was incomparably greater and more unsparing in its execution than in Rust's case. Hitler's was no crime of passion; rather, he was a mass murderer who proceeded according to plan. Kershaw's intimation is therefore fundamentally right: "If the domineering traits were signs of a deep inner uncertainty, the overbearing features the reflection of an underlying inferiority complex, then the hidden personality disorder must have been one of monumental proportions" (1998, p. 344). Indeed, it must have been so if our hypothesis is correct. It is therefore necessary to make clear that the dynamic of Hitler's success proceeded from a vulnerability of psychotic dimensions that was acted out through the proclamation and ultimately brutal realization of messianic delusions of grandeur. And it is necessary to show that the acclamation of the environment – just like in the case of Rust, but on a historical scale – led to the stabilization of the psychotic structure.

We will pursue this interplay in more detail later with reference to the specific form it took in Hitler's case. For the time being, we note only that – contrary to the assessment commonly made to date that schizophrenia is in every case accompanied by a complete break with reality – it is entirely possible for someone to be schizophrenic *and* successful; indeed, *especially* a schizophrenic might carry off an exceptional career because he must demonstrate something outstanding in order to secure for himself the popular approval he needs. Despite a clear disposition to psychosis, a mental breakdown can be forestalled for a long time, or may be avoided altogether, if the peculiarity of schizophrenic delusion, its extreme fixation on the external world, is offset by the latter's reaction. This

rare circumstance occurred, for instance, in the case of Glenn Gould, Martin Heidegger, Axel Springer, and C. G. Jung, as described in our previous publications (cf. Matussek and Matussek 1992 and 1997). All these men were also groomed early on by their mothers for a crown prince role that their extraordinary talents later allowed them actually to play. Thus, they induced in their audiences a fascinated admiration of their mannerisms and eccentricities, which preserved them to a large extent from any loss of reality or clinical isolation.

Hitler's breakdown was deferred for a long time in a similar manner. This is the flip side of the findings put forth by transcultural psychiatry, and we shall have to clarify what differentiates this adverse form of social integration from a therapeutically helpful one. Although Hitler was not an exceptional talent in the intellectual or artistic sense – his failure in school and his artistic dilettantism are far more significant here – he nevertheless possessed such a rhetorical intensity that he could spellbind his listeners and bring into play the feedback mechanism described above. What began as nothing more than paranoid and megalomaniacal self-presentation met – the moment a suitable forum presented itself – with such a strong resonance that the psychosis became increasingly systematized without coming into too blatant a conflict with the socio-cultural reality. Hitler escaped institutionalization because he operated within a milieu that confirmed his delusion. Where this acceptance did not already exist, he created it. For it is not simply the case, as Bychowski writes, "that with the seeds of madness, Hitler adapted himself to events and impressions" in order to reinterpret these "in accordance with his twisted view of reality" (1948, p. 138). In addition, we must consider what Langer had already stressed in 1943 in his Psychological Analysis: "The great difference between Hitler and thousands of other hysterics is that he managed to convince millions of other people that the image is really himself. The more he was able to convince them, the more he became convinced of it himself on the theory that eighty million Germans can't be wrong. And so he has fallen in love with the image he, himself, created and does his utmost to forget that behind it there is quite another Hitler who is a very despicable fellow (p. 134). On Langer's account, then, Hitler was preserved from mental illness by his ability to convince others that he was what he pretended to be.

This lead must be pursued with the help of new findings and methods in order to shed more light on what John Lukacs calls "Hitler's perhaps most astonishing success": that he managed to adapt the circumstances to his bizarre ideas (1997, p. 102). The answer to Kershaw's "key question," therefore, lies precisely in the interaction between the collective situation and the individual pathology. Hitler needed the masses for the confirmation of his compensationally inflated public self; and the masses needed Hitler because this inflated self served their own demands for compensation. The need to rise out of a state of deep humiliation cre-

ated a bond between the Germans and the madman they made their dictator. The personal humiliations experienced by the latter, who felt pursued by the derision of classmates and fellow denizens of men's shelters, corresponded to the national disgrace of the "ignominious treaty of Versailles" and the common man's paranoid fear of the economic and intellectual superiority of the Jews. In this constellation, Hitler was able – precisely because he suffered from delusions of grandeur – to fascinate his public to such an extent that it finally played into his hands the means of political power he required to realize his delusional ideas. It would be a grave omission if the lessons of German history did not also lead to the recognition that such interactions exist. The ability to take preventive measures against the risks of their recurrence necessitates the incorporation of psychiatric approaches into the analysis of historical processes.

The position of the present work within the field of Hitler studies may now be outlined with this in mind.

The Aims of the Present Study

If in the course of setting out our arguments we seek to make clear that Hitler's political career was substantially furthered by his psychotic structure and its interplay with the public sphere, we do not do so with the intention of suggesting that Hitler and his aides were not responsible for their actions. On the contrary, we want to show that a psychiatric complement to the historical investigations into the enabling mechanisms of the Nazi regime is a particularly suitable means of countering the relativization, revision, downplaying and suppression of this most terrible chapter of German history. Since our thesis posits that the individual and the collective Hitler-manias acted as mutually stabilizing forces, a conscious and extensively controlled agency was possible on both sides, making a plea for diminished capacity out of the question.

Naturally, every psychiatric evaluation of a historical personality is marked by the lack of precision of a "diagnosis from afar." It cannot gain an immediate impression, but is rather dependent on extant eye witness reports, which must in turn be interpreted as subjectively colored perceptions, or even attempts at a cover-up. Admittedly, it is no different for the writing of history in general; the historian must also, as a rule, begin by interpreting the documents in order to establish the facts. But it would be irresponsible and – as demonstrated by the case of David Irving – downright disgraceful to deny realities that emerge on the basis of unambiguous circumstantial evidence. The fact that the "Final Solution" was ordered on the Führer's command can be reconstructed even without the existence of a corresponding document. In the context of the secretive strategies em-

ployed in the deportation and murder of the Jews, the very lack of such a document itself becomes a piece of circumstantial evidence if the psychological background is taken into account. Our study hopes to make a contribution in this respect as well.

With its combination of psychopathological and social-historical explanatory approaches, the present work is situated in a field of research generally described as "psychohistorical" (cf. the seminal work of de Mause 1989 and 2000, and – representing a critical position – Hans-Ulrich Wehler 1971 and 1978). The proponents of this approach within Hitler studies include authors such as Langer (1943), Kurth (1947), Bychowski (1948), Erikson (1966), Fromm (1973), Binion (1976), Stierlin (1975), Waite (1977), Carr (1978), Eitner (1981) and Bromberg and Small (1983) – to name just the most significant. And parts of the book by Redlich (1998) may also be classified under the psychohistorical rubric. Hitler scholars of note view this current with skepticism (e.g., Lukacs 1997, p. 43f; Kershaw 1998, p. 13), and do so on the basis of entirely understandable objections. Nonetheless, we believe we are in a position to refute these legitimate objections by grounding the description of psychotic structures in a new theoretical foundation that takes as its starting point the polarity of private and public aspects of the self. This new paradigm does not depend on speculation about hidden agencies within the human soul, but is rather based on cultural-anthropological findings that are amenable to empirical study. Thus, the psychopathological perspective incorporates from the outset the interactions between individual and society.

The relevant Hitler monographs on which we in essence rely – Bullock (1957), Deuerlein (1969), Fest (1973), Hamann (1996), Joachimsthaler (1989) and Kershaw (1998, 2000) – have demonstrated that the biographical approach does not inevitably have to lead to "personalizing and trivializing" (cf. Wistrich 1985, p. 19) the Nazi regime. For biographers, by virtue of their narrative approach, must always keep in view what pure structural analysis is in danger of neglecting: the complexity of a lived situation. Thus, when we turn our attention to Hitler's personality, this precisely does *not* mean that we dispute its connection to the social tendencies. Because our premise is that Hitler's psychosis was spared its clinical consequences due to the socially integrative reactions of his environment, the question of what led to this collective affirmation of a delusional condition becomes indispensable to the personality analysis itself. Conversely, we believe that the personality analysis would provide a complementary contribution to any attempt to elucidate how a system of mass murder can emerge.

The guiding principle of our work, therefore, does not consist in understanding the individual in order to exonerate the collective. Rather, what is at stake for

us is the reconstruction of a fateful interplay and its acceptance as the negative property of the Germans – as Gravenhorst (1997, p. 27) put it following Améry. Although this interplay may have been unique in its horrifying historical form, it nonetheless cannot be eliminated as a cultural-anthropological possibility. If an individual manages to attain the pinnacle of power in a "cultured nation" not just despite but precisely because of his delusions of grandeur and paranoia, this has to provide us food for thought thereafter. The explanation of the Hitler enigma does not lie merely in an "unlucky" historical constellation. It lies in the continued remembrance of what human beings are capable of.

II. Appeal for a new diagnostic model. Hitler as exemplary case

In this chapter, we will begin by giving an account of the pathological features that have been chiefly put forth in the literature to date as the underlying causes of Hitler's abnormality – whereby we pay particular attention above all to the psychopathological findings. Because somatic illnesses are also repeatedly invoked as the ultimate source of the problem, we must take them into consideration as well. However, we view the explanatory value of such investigations with a skeptical eye. Much remains on the level of speculation, and what has been collected in terms of medical fact allows for few conclusions about the "Hitler phenomenon." Nonetheless, we must briefly go into this material here in order to make palpable the necessity for a paradigm shift.

This paradigm shift has its empirical basis in observing the differing delusional content of the two major variants of endogenous psychosis, depression and schizophrenia: while in the former, the gaze is predominantly directed inward, an excessive outward orientation is characteristic of the latter. In order to embed this general observation in a theoretical foundation, we reformulated it in the socio-psychological terms of "private and public self" (Matussek 1992, 1997). It will become evident that the criteria derived through this approach – which originated in clinical studies – also allow for a significantly more appropriate analysis of Hitler's personality than that of the traditional psychopathological procedure. The case of Hitler thus becomes a precedent pointing to the necessity of redefining the concept of schizophrenic psychosis.

Speculations about physical causes

Hitler's history of illness, when it comes to physical injuries, defects, and complaints, has been the object of many publications – Recktenwald (1963), Röhrs (1965), Heston and Heston (1979), Schenck (1989) and Gibbels (1988, 1994), to name just a few. Redlich (1998) also dedicates a portion of his book to the somatic aspect. But what sort of explanatory power do illnesses of this type – to which we can also add the Parkinson's syndrome that Hitler developed in the last two years of his life – actually have? Redlich's summation may suffice to answer this question: "The salient question in Hitler's case is whether illness contributed to his mistakes and crimes. All of his major illnesses – the neurological, cardio-

vascular, and digestive illnesses, and the vasculitis [...] – were of moderate severity. As such illnesses always do, they cased lassitude and fatigue, as well as impairment through pain. A high-ranking private executive or public servant in a democratic society who had similar symptoms would be retired [...] Hitler did not function optimally, although no serious dysfunction can be detected because he was so highly motivated to pursue his mission. [...] Hitler's crimes and errors were not caused by illness." (1988, p. 253).

Nonetheless, Redlich belongs to the large circle of authors who hold the physiological defects or impairments indirectly responsible for Hitler's psychodynamics by speculating about mechanisms to overcompensate for organic inferiority or drug-induced personality changes. In particular, there has been much said about deformations in the genital area and the abuse of amphetamines. We do not believe that these speculations can contribute anything essential to the clarification of the "Hitler phenomenon." But since they persistently maintain their place in the discussion, it is necessary to go into them briefly here – whereby it will become evident that such explanations are faulty both in their method of psychological inference and the factual basis on which the method rests. Our examination of these discussions contributes to our theme only to the extent that it makes the limits of a psychosomatically-oriented Hitler interpretation clearly visible.

There are two forms of genital deformation that appear predominantly in the literature: most common are speculations that Hitler was missing a testicle (monorchism); occasionally, there are reports of a congenital misplacement of the urethral opening on the underside of the penis (hypospadia) in conjunction with a partial opening of the vertebral canal (spina bifida occulta).

The chief source for the postulation of Hitler's monorchism is the autopsy of the charred corpse undertaken on 8 May 1945 by a group of Russian pathologists under the direction of Faust Josefovitsch Schkeravski, professor for forensic medicine, and his deputy, Nikolai Alexandrovitsch Krayevski, professor for pathology (cf. Besymenski 1968). This report was classified until 1968, when it was first published in English (reprinted in Redlich 1998, p. 374ff). It's truthfulness is disputed. While Waite (1977, p. 420) and Bromberg and Small (1983, p. 216–222) view it as credible and derive a whole set of Hitler's behavioral anomalies from it, others – including Maser (1972, p. 525f), Rosenbaum (1999, p. 140f) and Redlich (1998, p. 219) believe the report has been falsified.

Let us assume the report is authentic – what might be derived from it? Bromberg and Small (1983, p. 218) cite studies according to which kryptorchid (temporarily monorchid) boys suffer from emotional problems if the relationship to their parents is also disturbed; then, from the point of view of the child, the mother is held responsible for the physical defect. Possible consequences listed

by the authors include: hyperactivity, learning difficulties, indecisiveness, lying, and tendency to dangerous play, as well as bisexual identity and symbolic compensation of the missing testicle through objects or other body parts. According to Bromberg and Small, almost all these symptoms were present in Hitler's case – in his hyperactive war games in grammar school, the learning difficulties in the upper school, and the disregard for danger in the First World War, in his indecisiveness as a political and military leader, as well as in the strong tendency toward lying and exaggeration. As a symbolic ersatz for the missing testicle – the authors further assume – Hitler took recourse to various strategies of displacement and substitution: for instance, the displeasure with his own defective body was displaced onto Hitler's interest in architecture; this gave rise to a life-long obsession with criticizing the buildings around him and the manic compulsion to change them. The substitution through body parts was effected by Hitler above all with his eyes. Indeed, Hitler's fixed, piercing gaze had been noticed early on by others – such as the mother of his friend Kubizek (1953, p. 29). Later, he would systematically train this gaze before the mirror and try it out in aggressive staring contests at his dinner table. According to Bromberg and Small, what Hitler unconsciously wanted to express with this was "See, I do have two powerful (potent) testicles, and I can penetrate others" (p. 220).

Equally a part of this complex of symptoms on the Bromberg and Small account is Hitler's belief of enjoying divine protection as the arm of providence (p. 221). After all, they argue, Freud had already ascertained that persons with congenital defects or chronic afflictions in childhood come to hold the view that they have suffered enough through no fault of their own to earn them the right to eschew any unpleasant duties in the future and to seek their own advantage without scruple. Hitler's feeling of the fundamental legitimacy of his actions, which allowed him to set himself above any social customs, rules, or norms, is for Bromberg and Small an expression of this response pattern. A further consequence of Hitler's monorchism on this account is a deep-seated castration anxiety. This was supposedly expressed, among other things, in the fact that although Hitler tended to exhibitionism, he resisted any thorough medical examination of his body (p. 222).

These cursory indications should suffice to demonstrate the highly speculative character of the inferences drawn from the purported organic defect. They contribute far more to the dissemination of a legend than to a fathoming of the Hitler phenomenon. After all, the rumor that Hitler was missing a testicle had already become a permanent component of public gossip by the 1930s (Rosenbaum 1998, p. 140). And during the war, American soldiers sang "Hitler has only got one ball" as a marching song. The motivation is understandable: it was an attempt to ascribe Hitler's monstrosity to an unusual defect – not least so as to banish its

terror by means of a simple and ridiculous explanation. Even the Russian autopsy report might play a part in the formation of this legend. For it has in the meantime been shown that the findings were manipulated in order to "present Hitler as a coward with a sexual defect" (Redlich 1998, p. 229).

But Redlich's supposition that Hitler suffered from hypospadia and spina bifida occulta (p. 230) equally dispenses with a secure grounding. It rests on an entry in the diary of Theodor Morell, Hitler's personal physician since 1937. The entry reports of a conversation that took place on 28 October 1940: Hitler had asked for details about infections in the pelvic region, open spinal columns, and anomalies of the urinary tract. Redlich considers it probable that Hitler was interested in finding out more about the defects from which he himself was suffering. He believes his suspicion to be corroborated by two pieces of evidence: firstly, by the fact that following a radiological examination Hitler categorically declined any further x-rays of his pelvis; and secondly, the statement of Henriette v. Schirachs, according to which the urology professor Kielleuthner revealed to her after the Second World War that Hitler had been one of his patients. Without providing any more definite information about the nature of the complaint, Kielleuthner reported that he had not been able to help Hitler because the latter had come to him too late. Since hypospadia may be cured by a timely operation performed during childhood, Redlich assumes that Hitler had sought out the urologist on this matter (1998, p. 128, 230).

The effects of the purported organ anomaly on Hitler's personality and actions are, on Redlich's account, in particular shame and fear of self-exposure. Furthermore, he considers it possible that Hitler believed his genital problems to be the consequence of a syphilis infection contracted by his father and – insofar as he feared that his unknown grandfather may have been a Jew – interpreted it as an indirect hereditary burden passed on by Jewish ancestors. This, according to Redlich, might have provided an additional impetus for Hitler's initiatives to sterilize and murder the mentally ill, and ultimately, for the Holocaust.

Even if Redlich's suspicions about Hitler's physical anomalies were correct, his conclusions would remain not particularly revealing. It is, for instance, evident that Hitler's psychodynamics were marked to a considerable extent by defensive mechanisms to ward off shame (we will document this more extensively later) – however, an argument that traces the origins of this shame to a physical source simplifies the phenomenon instead of grasping it in its full complexity.

The same thing may be said for the second major strand of the explanations of Hitler's psyche on physiological grounds: the thesis of the dictator's supposed Pervitin addiction. On Redlich's account, certain conspicuous traits exhibited by Hitler after 1939 speak for the abuse of the amphetamines prescribed by Morell (p. 239f). The drugs were originally developed as appetite suppressants; how-

ever, their stimulating effect was soon recognized, and deployed above all in the armed forces to combat fatigue, increase attentiveness and enhance feelings of inner vigor. Among the minor side-effects are restlessness, excessive talkativeness, tension and headache. In severe cases, there may also be outbreaks of rage and anxiety, stereotypical attitudes and the temporary appearance of hallucinations, delusional notions, and schizophrenic-like psychotic episodes.

The conspicuous traits that Redlich links to Hitler's purported amphetamine addiction include, above all, his growing aggressiveness and unscrupulousness with respect to political and military decisions as well as flight of ideas, philosophical digressions (so-called "eureka statements"), and a sense of being particularly clever (p. 242). As a representative piece of supporting evidence, he cites the report of the Swedish industrialist Birger Dahlerus about two encounters with Hitler on 27 August and 1 September 1939. The meetings were set up on the initiative of Göring, who wanted to exploit Dahlerus' contacts in London in order to prevent Great Britain from entering the impending war. At the first meeting, Hitler restlessly paced up and down the room speaking – in staccato phrases and with cracking voice – of his intentions in the case of war, whereby "his face [was] rigid and his movements [...] strange," so that he made "the impression of a completely abnormal person" on his interlocutor: "'should there be war,' he said, 'then I will build U boats, build U boats, U boats.' His voice became more indistinct and finally one could not follow him at all. Then he pulled himself together, raised his voice as thought addressing a large audience and shrieked: 'I will build airplanes, build airplanes, airplanes, build airplanes, airplanes and will destroy my enemies.'" His gaze, Dahlerus continues, "became glassy again and his speech unnatural as he went on: 'If there should be no butter I shall be the first to stop eating butter, eating butter. My German people will loyally and gladly do the same [...] if the enemy can hold out for several years, I, thanks to my power over the German people, can hold out one year longer. Thereby I know that I am superior to all the others" (Dahlerus 1939, p. 69f). During the second meeting, Hitler excitedly threatened to destroy the Polish nation. Waiving his arms, he shouted in Dahlerus' face: "If England wants to fight for a year, I shall fight for a year. If England wants to fight for two years, I shall fight two years. If England wants to fight for three years, then I shall fight three years, and if necessary, I shall fight for ten years" (p. 135). Indeed, these statements fit the description of the above-mentioned side effects. But does this necessarily mean they are evidence of a causal connection between Hitler's thought patterns and drug abuse?

The most thorough evaluation to date of the notes of Hitler's personal physician Morell – which, in addition, relies on personal knowledge of Hitler's most immediate entourage – is the study by Ernst Günther Schenck (1989). Although Schenck considers it indisputable that the "gold vitamultin tabs" Morell had pre-

pared especially for Hitler were taken by the latter "daily, and in not insubstantial amounts," he emphasizes that the dose of Pervitin these tabs contained was not sufficient to produce a chronic intoxication (p. 447ff). But even if we grant with Redlich that Hitler, without the knowledge of his doctor, took significantly more of the fortifying substance labeled "S.F." (Sonderanfertigung Führer=special preparation, Führer), it still remains fallacious to derive from this the ultimate source for the impulses behind his actions – such as the aggression in the forefront of the attack on Poland (1998, p. 243). The abuse of amphetamines may at best explain certain impairments in Hitler's speech and behavior, but not the underlying psychological dynamics of these aberrations.

Thus, with respect to investigations into physiological causes for Hitler's character traits, we can sum up that this approach produces speculative conclusions on the basis of uncertain facts and describes at most a superficial complex of symptoms. Psychiatric and psychoanalytic Hitler interpretations – to which we now turn – come closer to the deep-seated structures of the personality, but are generally no better substantiated.

Psychopathological diagnoses

The suspicion that Hitler was "mentally ill" had already been expressed often during his lifetime – even within his most intimate circle. Hitler's mentor Dietrich Eckart, for instance, apparently spoke of a "megalomania half-way between a messianic complex and Neroism" (in Hanfstaengl 1970, p. 109). And the strategic deliberations of the Allies also took into consideration the possibility that they were dealing – in the words of the British Ambassador, Henderson – with a "psychopath or madman" (Krausnick 1956, p. 350). Accordingly, the American secret service endeavored to collect statements from people who were personally acquainted with Hitler in order to obtain a better picture of his conduct and be able to predict his actions (OSS 1923–43). Not infrequently, the diagnosis of insanity was also related to the motivation of legitimizing resistance to Hitler. Thus, Halder's plan of action for the military coup of 1938 included the intention to have Hitler "put away as a mental patient" on the basis of psychological evaluation (Krausnick 1956, p. 348). After the war, however, another motive came to the fore: in order to avoid diminishing the responsibility of Hitler and his helpers with the suggestion that they were not of sound mind, the tendency became to downplay the gravity of Hitler's personality disorder.

This reservation is present almost universally in the psychohistorical Hitler interpretations as well. The fact that Hitler was apparently capable of consciously controlling his thoughts and affects – which is contrary to the commonly known

clinical picture of schizophrenia – leads to moderate diagnoses that fall in the marginal area between neurotic and psychotic disorders. We have already cited the corresponding evaluations of Bychowski (1948) and Langer (1942), which speak merely of the "beginnings of a schizophrenic process" (p. 136) and of a personality "on the verge of schizophrenia" (p. 142), respectively. Ever since the publication of Knight (1953), the so-called "borderline" syndrome has presented itself as the appropriate category for such marginal cases; it has become the key category for this slippery group of personality disorders, in particular through the works of Grinker and Werba (1968), Kohut (1971) and Kernberg (1984), and was ultimately applied to Hitler as well. By way of a representative example, we once again refer to the Bromberg and Small study (1983):

The authors describe Hitler as a "narcissistic borderline personality with paranoid features," (p. 8) in which they follow in the tracks of Waite (1977). In support of their diagnosis, they present a catalog of 25 symptoms, each of which is illustrated with examples from Hitler's biography: general anxiety; poor impulse control; ego weakness; anger, hate, and cruelty; grandiosity and omnipotence; megalomanic self-image; risk-taking; hunger for praise; hypochondria; exhibitionism and voyeurism; control and manipulation; demandingness; envy; contrived kindness; lack of enjoyment; low self-estimates; contradictions; splitting and reversals; primitive denial; projection and paranoia; poor relationships; underdeveloped superego; acute depressions, sexual deviations (Bromberg and Small 1983, S. 157–202). In a second step, those symptoms that are of central significance for the diagnosis are then interpreted in psychoanalytical terms. Whereby the closest attention is paid to Hitler's supposed tendencies to sexual perversion as well as to the role of shame and guilt in his biography. In accordance with classic analytical patterns, both are traced back to Oedipal conflicts, or conflicts of the superego.

Thus, Bromberg and Small see the causes of Hitler's perversions – the way these were reported by not necessarily reliable "witnesses" (cf. our extensive discussion of this in the section on Hitler and women in Chapter 3) – in traumatic early-childhood observations of his parents having sex (p. 249f). As proof, they point to the "basement apartment passage." In this passage, Hitler describes the cramped spatial, psychological, and social conditions in which the child of a (fictional) seven-member working-class family grew up (1925/27, p. 32). Formulations such as "*if this mutual quarrel takes the form of brutal attacks of the father against the mother, of drunken beatings, is hard for anyone who does not know this milieu to imagine" and "At the age of six the pitiable little boy suspects the existence of things which can inspire even an adult with nothing but horror"* had already led Gertrud Kurth (1947) to the conclusion that here the author was giving a slightly veiled account of his own memory of a violent sexual episode be-

tween his parents. But even if we assume that the young Hitler had been witness to such "primal scenes," it is entirely lacking in stringency to derive a tendency to perversion from this. A brief reference may suffice to demonstrate the analytical arbitrariness of such an inference: according to a report about Hitler's relationship to his niece Geli, he initially achieved arousal by a precise examination of his partner's vagina, and at the climax, demanded that she urinate or defecate on him (Strasser 1940, p. 285 and OSS 1923–42, p. 919). Bromberg and Small offer a whole palette of analytical templates with which to decode the hidden meaning of these practices: a) curiosity about the fate of the father's penis; b) the desire to discover the hidden phallus of his mother, whom he experiences as castrating; c) masochistic self-castigation due to identification with the castrating mother; d) self-castigation to prevent the mother's hostile reaction to his sadistic impulses toward her; e) vicarious repetition of the primal scene as observer and participant simultaneously (1983, p. 248ff). Where these interpretations do not directly contradict one another, they are at least characterized by a high degree of arbitrariness. At the same time, they must also serve to provide a psychoanalytic explanation for Hitler's hatred of the Jews. For on the account of Bromberg and Small, a further consequence of the traumatizing primal scene that returned symbolically in perverse practices was its precipitation of vengeful feelings toward his father in response to the oedipal defeat. The early childhood hatred toward the cause of the narcissistic injury was then transferred onto the Jews by means of the following chain of associations: father was an Austrian official and an admirer of the Habsburg empire; Vienna was its capital and at the same time peopled by Jews: thus, the father is identified with Jews, in whom he is to be combated by substitution (p. 251f).

Hitler's indeed remarkable inability to accept blame, accompanied at the same time by overwhelming feelings of shame, is also attributed by Bromberg and Small to the originary Oedipal conflict – this time with the reverse argumentation that the father was not combated, but rather internalized in a process of "identification with the aggressor." This apparently allowed Hitler to become an unscrupulously aggressive person who showed no consideration whatsoever for the feelings of others – not even his highly moral mother, although he actually loved her (p. 262f). This form of overcoming castration anxiety also ultimately explains why he lived in permanent fear of self-exposure: in order to conceal his underdeveloped sexuality from others, he covered it up with a brutally exhibited masculinity (p. 268f).

The chief problem of such diagnoses, as we said, consists in their arbitrariness. An unresolved Oedipal complex can be demonstrated in the same way in many biographies without there being even a hint of the kind of consequences present in Hitler's case. This lack of specificity is a fundamental shortcoming of

all borderline diagnoses, and is also rejected as inadequate in the more recent Hitler study by Redlich (1998). His solution of the problem deserves consideration, since it helps to make the necessity for a paradigm shift plainly felt.

Like Bromberg and Small, Redlich also views Hitler as a marginal case between schizophrenia and neurosis, but considers the categorization of the narcissistic borderline disorder as it is defined in the DSM-IV (301.81) not particularly helpful since it does not allow for sufficient differentiation from other personality disorders. Accordingly, he dismisses Bromberg and Small's catalogue of symptoms as a "laundry list" that leaves unclear what criteria are decisive for the diagnosis (Redlich 1998, p. 301). In order to define Hitler's pathological specificity and to demarcate it from the narcissism that can be found in many other prominent personalities – including "moralists" and "saints" – Redlich characterizes him as a "destructive and paranoid prophet" (p. 335). What he means by this term is, following the preliminary study by Robins and Post (1987), a powerful, demonic figure who puts into action what his followers do not dare to do. Such figures produce historical change at the cost of enormous destruction. The destructive content of their message outweighs all constructive aspects. That they manage nonetheless to rouse their followers is due to their charisma – the aura of the wrathful redeemer who acts in the service of higher truths (p. 295).

By calling the attention of the pathographic gaze to personality characteristics that have a certain impact in the public sphere, Redlich provided the psychohistorical school of Hitler studies with a decisive impulse to innovate the field. For phenomena such as excessive aggression and callousness, denial of guilt, and defense against shame remain unspecific if they are described merely as the effects of unconscious primal conflicts. Their dynamics can be concretely captured only in the context of the individual biography, which always progresses in constant interaction with the environment. However, with its categories of the demonic, charismatic and prophetic, Redlich's conceptualization departs from the territory of clinical diagnosis. The consequence is that – as we have already described in the previous section on physiological findings – in the absence of an appropriate psychoanalytic model Redlich falls back on traditional notions about organic origins of mental illnesses in order to substantiate his Hitler interpretation. Thus, assumptions about inherited anomalies, amphetamine abuse, autoimmune disorders, and fear of syphilis stand side by side with, and in no apparent connection to, his central thesis of the destructive, paranoid prophet (p. XV).

In the following we would like to point in a direction that leads out of this dilemma. Our discussion will reveal that the severity of Hitler's psychological disorder more than justifies the suggested diagnosis of schizophrenia only tentatively proposed by Langer (1943) and Bychowski (1948) – albeit for reasons

other than those given by Wolfgang Treher, to which Redlich also rightly objects (1998, p. 333).

The extroversion of schizophrenic delusions

As we tried to make clear in the previous section, the analysis of the Hitler phenomenon is in need of a new psychodynamic theory that incorporates private as well as public aspects of the personality. We will now present an appropriate paradigm. In order to illustrate this paradigm, we will explain the central concepts of the psychodynamic model introduced by Paul Matussek (1992) and make reference to certain traits of Hitler's personality. Because at this point we are concerned only with demonstrating the categorial suitability of the model, the biographical context of the examples will not be considred in this chapter. Of course, the new approach attains its full psychodynamic explanatory potential only in conjunction with a biographical analysis, which we will undertake in Chapter 3.

For the sake of clarity, let us once again outline the hermeneutic problem we are dealing with here. Most of the psychiatrically trained scholars are in agreement that a callousness of a degree demonstrated by Hitler's murderous antisemitism and his unconditionally destructive prophesizing points to a severe personality disorder that goes far beyond any form of neurosis. Only an individual driven by paranoid fears and delusional notions of his own greatness is capable of translating into action with such brutality and utter disregard of all human values his contempt for the world. At the same time, the psychohistorians generally eschew the diagnosis of a schizophrenic psychosis since this seems incompatible with the fact that Hitler obviously possessed a good enough sense of reality to assert himself successfully in the public sphere. The borderline diagnosis offered a way out of this dilemma by combining psychotic and neurotic features. But as the proponents of this diagnosis themselves admitted, the resolution was obtained at the price of specificity, making it impossible to trace the features back to a coherent pathological dynamic. The crucial question, then, is whether there is really no alternative to this problematic solution. Does an extreme orientation on the public sphere as it existed in the case of Hitler necessarily imply the presence of an exclusively non-psychotic capacity for realistic social relations? Or could not precisely the reverse be true – that only a psychotic loss of private feeling can make a person capable of pursuing his own need for recognition in such a brutal and ruthless manner? We have already indicated in Chapter 1 that schizophrenia and achievement in the public sphere do not have to be mutually exclusive if the content of the delusions is confirmed by the reaction of the envi-

ronment, thus preventing a complete break with social reality. We will now explore why this is possible and to what extent this mechanism helps to shed light not only on the special case of Hitler, but on the fundamental structure of schizophrenic psychoses in general.

According to the traditional understanding of the disorders, contact with reality is severed in the case of both schizophrenic as well as depressive psychoses. Schizophrenia, in particular, has always been considered as a turning away from the world, which led Eugen Bleuler (1911) to cite autism as one of its fundamental symptoms – along with disturbances of association and affect. Sigmund Freud joined him in this assessment, on the basis of which he also considered psychoses untreatable through analytic therapy. About "forms of schizophrenia," he wrote, "we know that they tend to culminate in affective apathy, that is, in a loss of any interest in the outer world" (1924, p. 335). The first doubts regarding the general validity of this assessment were expressed by Heinrich Kranz (1955). He was bothered by the fact that – contrary to their "autistic" label – schizophrenics did not in the least demonstrate disinterest toward their environment, as can be observed in the case of depressives. In the schizophrenic's delusionally distorted perception of reality, according to Kranz, it was rather an excessive concern with the outer world that came to the fore: they feel watched by others, persecuted, and influenced or elected by mysterious powers and forces. In order to test his hypothesis empirically, Kranz examined the case histories of patients with endogenous psychoses with a view to the question: to what extent is the content of the respective delusions drawn from perceptions of the concrete environment. To obtain a random sample, he chose records from three different years a generation apart from one another – 1886, 1916, and 1946 – and ascertained that the respective contemporary circumstances were present almost exclusively in the delusional content of the schizophrenics while they played practically no part with the depressives: "The case histories of the schizophrenics from these three very different epochs read like a cultural almanac of the time. Peace, war, and post-war circumstances, political and social ways of life, societal and economic structures, everything of significance in culture, art, civilisation and technology, scientific and religious currents, prominent personalities – in short, everything that marked the three chosen periods of time – constitued the respective sources that nourished the delusional content of the schizophrenics. Their experience always turned out to be closely interlinked with the world in which they lived. With the depressives all that is out of the question. With them, the same images of delusional themes and formulations are repeated at all times with an almost tiring monotony. The local color of the time barely comes through. The kaleidoscopic variety of the schizophrenic's experiential satiation, marked by reference to the contemporary time and the world, stands in contrast to the practically rigid immu-

tability of the depressive's contents, which are turned nearly exclusively to the patient's own interiority and take virtually no notice of the world 'out there.' It thus makes relatively little difference whether we read a depressive case study from 1886, 1916 or 1946; a blind test would generally make it impossible to attribute the case to one of these three epochs, which would pose no difficulty in the case of the schizophrenics. Even concerns with impoverishment – which one might most readily expect to demonstrate some relation to the respective life circumstances – are statistically distributed with exact regularity among the depressives of all three epochs, which are charectarized by such different levels of 'prosperity'" (Kranz 1962, p. 61f).

In brief, Kranz's observations can be boiled down to the conclusion that schizophrenics rely significantly more heavily on the public sphere in their delusional themes than depressives, who fall back entirely on their private world, chiefly on their health, possessions, and guilt. The interpretative force of this realization for the diagnosis and therapy of endogenous psychoses has, however, been long overlooked. The established reference to schizophrenic autism was defended by Bürger-Prinz and Schorsch (1969) with the argument that it would be "confusing" to "depart from traditional terminology" (p. 455). This is all the more disturbing because in their critique of Kranz the authors likewise detect "strong links with the external world" in schizophrenics; nonetheless, the indications of the schizophrenic's inability to maintian social relations is sufficient for them to continue to consider the fundamental symptom of autism as a given (p. 457). Although Kranz responded to these objections, he did not succeed in differentiating the schizophrenics' "remarkable orientation toward [their] environment and fellow men" (1970, p. 561) from their concurrent unsocialbility with enough clarity to convince his critics. This unattained desideratum provided the chief occasion for our reconstruction of analytical psychosis theory, which we undertook in the early 1990s and have illustrated since then in various model analyses (Paul Matussek 1992, 1997; Paul Matussek and Peter Matussek 1992, Peter Matussek and Paul Matussek 1997). The first step was to define more precisely the essential pathological features of Kranz's findings. For intro- and extroversion are attitudes that may be found in every person. They become the criteria for a personality disorder only when one of the roles establishes itself to an extreme extent. While a mentally healthy individual is in a position to adjust his concern with the outside world in accordance with the situation – for instance, by behaving in a manner appropriate to his public role in a television interview, and as a private person in the company of his family – the outstanding characteristic of psychotics is that they are restricted to just one variant of self-presentation: the depressive remains reticent and withdrawn in public as well; in contrast, the schizophrenic conducts himself even in the most intimate surroundings as if he

had a large audience before him. The self-image of the former is thus fixated on whatever he perceives when he looks deep into himself; that of the latter is concentrated entirely on his surface – indeed, he *is* his surface, devoid of all sense of self.

That Hitler is an exemplary – if drastic – case for the second category is evident even to non-psychiatrists. Kershaw, for instance, writes that his biography deals with "an 'unperson,' one who has as good as no personal life or history outside that of the political events in which he is involved [...] There was no 'private life' for Hitler [...] There was no retreat to a sphere outside the political, to a deeper existence which conditioned his public reflexes." And he elucidates: "It was not that his 'private life' became part of his public persona. On the contrary: so secretive did it remain that the German people only learned of the existence of Eva Braun once the Third Riech had crumbled into ashes [...] Hitler's entire being came to be subsumed within the role he played to perfection: the role of 'Führer'" (1998, p. xxv-vi). These characteristics did not first appear with Hitler's entrance into politics. In Chapter 3 we will describe extensively how the biography of the dictator had already been shaped from an early age by the dominance of the public over the private as it was observed by Kranz in the delusional content of schizophrenics – from the schoolchild who played the "little ringleader" (Hitler 1925/27, p. 6) and had his classmates address him with the formal "Sie," through the pubescent self-presentations before his one-man audience Kubizek, in which he unfolded grandiose visions as master architect and redeemer of Germany, the political-philosophical tirades in the men's home, the identification with the general staff as a private in the First World War, and finally to his actual emergence in the public role of speaker and party leader. In Chapter 1, we had already expounded the thesis that the psychopathological reading of Hitler's biography offers a much-needed reinforcement to the historical-structural analysis of the Nazi dictatorship. In the present chapter, we will now introduce the conceptual apparatus with which the efficacy of our theory may be demonstrated. For in order to better understand how Hitler's personality could have become completely subsumed in his public role, some preliminary clarification of the terminology is necessary.

Private and public self – an alternative to the psychoanalytical approach

When Sigmund Freud began to develop his concept of psychoanalysis, he did not initially draw a distinction between the concepts of ego and self; he used both synonymously to express the entirety of the person. Even in the famous structural model of the ego, id, and superego, which he drew up in the 1920s, he dispensed

with the adoption of a separate structure of the self – the development of the personality, on his account, was effected solely through the conflict between the demands of the unconscious drives and the control of these by the superego, the mastery of which conflict gives rise to an autonomous, self-aware ego. It was Lacan (1949) who first made sufficiently clear that precisely this self-awareness must necessarily introduce a split into the ego. The common observation that babies begin at around 6 months to react with joy when they look in the mirror is interpreted by Lacan as pleasure at the acquisition of identity, which comes into being by means of self-alienation: in the mirror image of his figure, the child recognizes himself for the first time as a corporeal whole; this lends him a previously unknown feeling of unity, identity, and continutiy that he could not have had in his infantile dependence on his mother. The flip side of this joyful occasion is the spatial fixation that goes hand in hand with it, for the mirror banishes the inner fluctuation of the original desire to an external medium. This leads to that paradoxical primal experience that Lacan later expressed, quoting Rimbaud, in the well-known formula: "Je est un autre" (Lacan 1954–55, p. 14) Accordingly, on Lacan's account, the concept of an autonomous ego must be relinquished; for it owes its homogeneity precisely to the very thing with which it is not identical: the imagination of a unity that compensates for the fundamental experience of lack in self-awareness. The stronger the experience of lack, the greater is the narcissistic identification with the external mirror image. Of course, this is not only meant literally. With "mirror image" Lacan means any form of ego-confirmation through an external medium (1949, p. 66). In the further course of childhood development, this includes above all language. In order to be able to present himself to others as a self-sufficient person, every individual has to learn forms of expression that bring his inner world in line with the environment's rules of communication; that is, he must identify himself through something that does not belong to himself – a "squaring of the ego equation" (p. 67) that runs through the course of every life as a fundamental conflict.

The realization that the aquisition of personal identity at the same time always involves a process of self-externalization is naturally an old one. Persona means "mask" according to the antique tradition and Roger Caillois, from whom Lacan borrows the concept of "heteromorphous identification" (p. 66), even perceived in this a legacy of the natural history of human social behavior (Caillois 1937, 1958). In any case, it turns out to be difficult to differentiate the "actual" core of the personality from an identity that is only presented to the outside world. Thus, distinctions such as the one drawn by Winnicott (1952, 1985) and Laing (1960) between the "true" and the "false" self must be seen as a problematic construct, particularly in view of Ludwig Wittgenstein's argument (1953) that there can be no "private language" in the strict sense because even the most intimate self-

perception is dependent on verbalization in generally comprehensible words, that is, it is principally always linked to public communication. Suggestions regarding how one might nonetheless distinguish between the two aspects of the self have come in particular from the field of sociology: G.H. Mead (1934) differentiated between the "self as agent" ("I") and the "self as object" ("me"), which incorporates the perspectives and demands of one's fellow men, especially those people to whom the individual relates most strongly. Goffmann (1963) considered the ego to be constituted by the two components of "personal identity" and "social identity."

These sociological attempts at differentiation have ultimately found their way into psychoanalysis. Thus, Mitscherlich (1966), for instance, speaks of a "personal ego" and "social ego." But the most influential psychoanalytical model to date in which the difference between the aspects of the ego has been clearly brought out is Heinz Kohut's concept of the "bipolar self" (1971, 1977). Similarly to Lacan, Kohut also elucidates the process of ego-formation with the aid of the mirror metaphor as the result of an externalisation: in order to be able to perceive oneself as self at all, the developing individual must see himself reflected in the reactions of his environment, that is, he must objectivize himself. For the infant, this function is fulfilled by the sparkle in his mother's eye; for the adult, the confirmation of the self may also be served by symbolic forms of expression. In addition to this need for self-reflection, however, there is also the need for idealization: the subject does not want to see its identity as dependent solely on the reactions of others; rather, it also wishes to found this identity on the experience of living up to one's own values. On this account, the one pole of the self is constituted by ambitions – that is, the desire to be liked by others; the other pole is constituted by values and ideals – that is, whatever a person feels in his innermost being to be his calling. Clearly, it is entirely possible for the two poles to come into conflict with one another – say, in the case of a successful businessman who is unhappy because he cannot give expression to his artistic streak; or, conversely, an artist who is denied public recognition. Accordingly, there are psychopathological conclusions that may be drawn from Kohut's model – for instance, in that it demonstrates how a pathological development "compensates the weakness at one pole of the self through the fortification of the other pole" (Kohut 1977, p. 21). However, serious disadvantages are revealed as soon as one attempts to examine the bipolarity of the self in a historical context, as is the interest of the present study. To a large extent, the model remains trapped in a static, spatial conceptualization of the human psyche that, despite a highly complex and abstract terminology, is ultimately accessible only by means of empathy and "vicarious introspection" (Wolf 1988, p. 207). The talk of "self-objects" tends to a reification of psychic processes, the dynamics of which would be significantly

more comprehensible if they were described as modes of perception and behavior. For that reason, we prefer a conceptualization that does not proceed from the (metaphorical) assumption of inner psychological "divisions", but rather from perspectives in which an individual is seen by others and by himself. Such a conceptualization is offered by the paradigm of the public and private self.

This model developed in the seventies out of a critique of the distinction between an "inner" and an "outer" self, which had been popular up to that time. While the latter distinction continued to promote the misleading picture that the human psyche was made up of layers like an onion, with only the uppermost layer visible to the eye, the discussion of "private" and "public" self takes into account the fact that *both* of these are constituted in relation to social contexts, and may be described in the terms of such relations. For even that which is considered to be private is subject to historical change, as has been shown above all by Ariès and Duby in their *A History of Private Life* (1985–87): the study deals with the sphere of life – in each respective era – that is not accessible to public control. This sphere, which first became the province of the private in the stricter sense toward the end of the 17th century (Goffman 1971; Ariès 1976), has grown in the course of our cultural history; but in the modern era, this phenomenon is accompanied by the contrary tendency to drag the most intimate details into the limelight, so that privacy itself becomes, in turn, a public matter (Sennett 1976).

Thus, as a start, we can adopt the following definition from Baumeister (1986): "The public self is the self that is manifested in the presence of others, that is formed when other people attribute traits and qualities to the individual and that is communicated to other people in the process of self-presentation. The private self is the way the person understands himself or herself and is the way the person really is – even if other people fail to recognize it" (p. v). Whereby we should keep in mind, with Wittgenstein, that a person's notion of the way he "really" is is not principally unrecognizeable for others, since even to his own self, he can only describe his privateness, down to its corporeal traces, in the context of public modes of communication. It is therefore fundamentally up to the individual's own discretion whether he will allow others a glimpse of his own self-conceptions and states of mind. Every person has the capacity to learn how to orient himself on the expectations and norms of his environment without revealing to others everything that he thinks and feels. The space of the private that is created in this way enables the mature individual, in special cases, to follow the dictates of his own conscience instead of the expectations of the environment. The "public" aspect of the self, in contrast, encompasses attitudes and behaviors that the individual exposes to the general gaze by conducting himself accordingly (Tedeschi 1986, p. 2).

Hogan and Briggs (1986) suggest further ways of making this model more precise. They draw a distinction within the sphere of the private self between the self-image and self-esteem in order to emphasize that the way someone sees himself is not the same as the way he evaluates this. With respect to the public self, the authors speak of a public self in the stricter sense whenever personal perception of one's own public self is meant, and of a public "reputation" whenever the perception of the person through the eyes of others is meant (p. 179). The clinically relevant question is how these two aspects of the self relate to one another. It is obvious that both mutually influence one another. Thus, experiences that an individual has in the public sphere have an effect on his self-image and self-esteem. Converseley, the latter determines the way in which he conducts himself in public. The ideal case is undoubtedly where the two can be brought into balance; that is, if an individual is capable of alternating between the two aspects of the self in accordance with the situation – for instance by expressing intimate thoughts and feelings in a partnership and playing a public role in a political speech. Of course, our media society often demands the reverse: the audience of a talk show expects that famous actors present themselves in public as "private people"; but anyone who is allowed, say as the winner of a prize, to spend the day "in private" with a star would feel cheated if the latter did not live up to his public media image. But as a rule, the situation-contigent switching between the aspects of the self is unproblematic; most people are capable of learning it.

Of psychiatric interest, however, are those cases in which this switching goes wrong. This can happen if an individual is mistaken about his public reputation (Martin 1985, Tedeschi 1986) and is confronted with the self-deception. So, for example, an individual convinced of his own greatness will become confused if his listners begin to yawn or leave the room while he is giving a talk. Conversely, a shy person who is used to accepting such reactions as the confirmation of his low self-esteem would feel equally disturbed to reap unexpected applause from his audience. Such ruptures between private self-image and public reputation are described as "cognitive dissonance" (Festinger 1975, Wicklund and Brehm 1976). As a rule, people resolve their cognitive dissonances either by correcting their own self-image ("I'm getting old!" or "Apparently I'm not that unattractive after all!") or by questioning the perception of the envirnoment ("Ignorant audience!" or "They underestimate me!"). Naturally, every individual is usually at pains to filter out the negative feedback of the environment from the outset: by attributing it to any unfavorable circumstances of self-presentation, to limited freedom of choice regarding the means of presentation, to external pressure, etc. Certain qualities of the personality can also serve to mitigate dissonance; among these, a high level of self-complexity, which allows the individual to dismiss negative stimuli as trivial and to focus attention on contextual moments. In some

cases, however, these coping strategies cease to function. Two extremes are conceivable in this regard: on the one hand, an exaggerated fixation on the private self, which is receptive to signals from the public sphere only insofar as they confirm this self-image; and on the other, an exaggerated fixation on the public self, which dissociates all private feeling.

It is quite apparent that both of these extreme types correspond to the two main groups of endogenous psychoses differentiated by Kranz on the basis of their delusional contents. Thus, in the case of a depressive, all his thoughts revolve around his inner life; accordingly, he takes in only such environmental signals that confirm his tendency for withdrawal – derogatory public responses are not experienced as cognitively dissonant but are instead accepted as belonging to one's own self-image, while positive feedback is bracketed out as unsuitable (cf. Rhodewaldt 1986, p. 127). For the schizophrenic, the reverse is the case: because his attention is always turned to the outside world and he is only capable of perceiving himself with respect to its reactions, cognitive dissonance is produced primarily in situations where demands are placed on him as a private person. The capacity for intimacy is not given him, however; he will continue to play his "public role" – whether it is real or delusionally presumed. In situations of attention from his environment, on the other hand, he sees himself thoroughly confirmed in his self-conception. This confirmation can be produced by hostility (say, as affirmation of paranoid delusions) as well as by positive feedback – which in the case of delusions of grandeur tends, of course, to be perceived as insufficient and results in an intensification of efforts to increase one's own reputation.

In Hitler, we see an exemplary case of the schizophrenic mode of coping with cognitive dissonance. His unsociability and simultaneous orientation on large audiences was striking. Throughout his life, he had no friends but continually sought and ultimately found the acclaim of the masses. In his psychological analysis, Langer had already ascertained: "As Hitler's personal world becomes smaller he must extend the boundaries of his physical domains. Meanwhile, his image of himself must become evermore inflated in order to compensate for his deprivations and the maintenance of his repressions. He must build bigger and better buildings, bridges, stadia and what not, as tangible symbols of his power and greatness and then use these as evidence that he really is what he wants to believe he is" (p. 136). The greatest crises of dissonance loomed for him in cases where the delusions of grandeur brought to successful fruition in the Führer cult threatened to collide with revelations about his dubious past. In those instances where he could not avoid such collisions by means of an extravagant strategy of concealment, he chose a method unusual for himself: self-deprecation. Here, two of the rare examples:

When demand for the postcard pictures painted by the young Hitler in the men's home skyrocketed after 1933 and a "real Hitler" brought in as much as 10,000 RM, Hitler remarked to his personal photographer Heinrich Hoffmann: "*These things shouldn't cost more than 150 or 200 RM today, either. It's crazy to spend more money on them. I didn't want to be a painter; I only painted these things so that I could make a living and study*" (record of conversation of 12 March 1944; Bundesarchiv Koblenz, NS 26/36).

And the ovations that accompanied Hitler's visits to the Bayreuth Festspiele also made him uneasy. According to Henriette von Schirach, Hoffmann's daughter, Hitler had the following announcement circulated in Bayreuth in the form of visiting cards: "*Political ovations do not belong in the theatre! 1934.*" The following demand was issued in writing to the festival audience: "*On order of the Chancellor! The Führer requests to refrain from singing the Deutschland or Horst Wessel Lied or from making political pronouncements at the end of the performance. There is no clearer expression of the German spirit than the immortal works of the master in themselves*" (Schirach 1983, p. 41).

One might wonder why a person who could never have enough confirmation of his peerless greatness should object to such signs of self-aggrandizement. The reason is certainly not modesty, but rather the opposite. In both of the above cases, Hitler must have feared being found wanting with respect to the grandiose image that he presented to the public eye. The aura of his unmatched genius was threatened if he allowed the obviously inferior quality of his painting to be ascribed to him. And since he lacked any means to justify the public ovations through creative achievements on the level of a Richard Wagner, here too, he had to take recourse to a prohibition in order to avoid a situation that would have suggested the comparison.

But the primary means with which Hitler preserved his extreme extroversion from cognitive dissonance was the dissociation of the private – the fundamental symptom of a schizophrenic psychosis, the most significant individual aspects of which we will now go on to describe.

Defensive self-enhancement and dissociation of affect

Our reconstruction of Kranz's findings (1962) within the paradigm of the public and private self has shown that the excessive concern with the outside world contained in the delusional themes of schizophrenics has a continually self-reinforcing inner dynamic. For with every step taken to present an exceptional persona, the individual risks increasing the cognitive dissonance with respect to his actual qualities. He is therefore compelled to insulate his private self even

more hermetically against falsification – through internal as well as external perception. This observation coincides with the findings of experimental psychology, which have ascertained a marked tendency toward "defensive self-enhancement" in schizophrenics. This refers to a response mechanism in which the patient blocks the awareness of lacking talent or poor self-esteem by ascribing to himself qualities that are far superior to those of others but are untestable (Garfield et al. 1987). These qualities, then, must draw public attention to the schizophrenic on the one hand, but must not be easily perceived as presumptuousness on the other. This is expressed, for instance, in the following formulation from one of the self-esteem questionnaires developed by Garfield: "No matter how great the pressure, no one could force me to hurt another human being" (p. 231). Likewise, delusions of origin or invention are very difficult to verify in view of the inaccessibility of the contents. Here, the delusional patient operates within a sphere that guarantees him the necessary protection and cannot be put to the test of objective validity. That is also why it is not possible to have a record-setting delusion in an athletic field.

The following episode taken from clinical practice may serve to illustrate the mechanism of schizophrenic self-enhancement (oral report of Paul Matussek): "One of my patients was admitted to the clinic with religious delusions of grandeur that culminated in a hallucinatory vision of the Mother of God. It proved difficult to conduct a dialogue with her as the doctor responsible for her treatment, since she declared me to be the improper authority. A theologist, on the other hand, a man like Romano Guardini, for instance, would certainly understand her. She could not have suspected that I myself had studied theology and knew Romano Guardini personally. When I offered to arrange a meeting for her, she accepted this with excitement. Of course, the conversation with Guardini took a predictable course: at first, the delighted patient appeared exalted by the famous man's visit. But very soon, her mood darkened; she found more and more occasion to criticize the psychologically-trained theologian – especially when he attempted gently, and with reference to a passage in St. Paul, to make clear to her that visions as such are not a sign of chosenness in themselves but rather have to be substantiated in the eyes of the community by corresponding deeds. The encounter finally ended with her disdainful assertion: 'You don't understand a thing about theology!'"

The schizophrenic must fear coexistence with others, for it represents a permanent threat to his fantasies of grandeur. Although he continually needs a forum for his enormous desire to impress, he must keep his audience at a safe distance so as not to risk any investigation into his delusional notions. And if the fictive nature of the pretended greatness does become exposed to view, the only alternative is a radical break of all relations. Just as the shamed patient turned away

from Guardini, so did Hitler keep away, until his political rise, from any people who might have been able to sound out his delusions of being a brilliant painter and master architect – such as the set designer of the Vienna Hofoper, Professor Roller, to whom he had been recommended, or the Munich artistic circles whose cafés he frequented. The story of Hitler's life might be told as a continuous series of defensive self-enhancements – with the macabre twist that the pretension to superhuman abilities beyond earthly measure ultimately found its confirmation in making a murderous nightmare come true. As a representative instance in the present context, it should suffice to refer to the stylized self-portrait that Hitler drew of himself with *Mein Kampf*. The work, with the indicative working title "A Four and One-half Year Struggle against Lies, Stupidity, and Cowardice," is a deliberate attempt to create a legend consisting of unverifiable pronouncements of the type in Garfield's questionnaire – such as the already-mentioned Pasewalk "decision" to go into politics, which conceals his actual lack of prospects at the time. The Führer cult at the height of Nazi propaganda was also buttressed by similar strategies of obfuscation. Even the titles of the photo albums published later, in six-digit print runs, by Hitler's personal photographer Heinrich Hoffmann – such as "Hitler as no one knows him," "Hitler, away from the everyday," or "Hitler in his mountains" – are in themselves indicative of the intention to disseminate the aura of a genius far removed from the world. We see Hitler, surrounded by reverent admirers – bent over blueprints, in a sculptor's studio, gesticulating at the side of a model, or sketching in the gravel with his walking stick – as the bold designer and man of ideas enveloped by the aura of an unattainable, and equally nebulous, greatness.

The primary cause of defensive self-enhancement is the dissociation or limited diversity of affect, which has been considered to be the central symptom of schizophrenic psychoses since Bleuler (1911). Garfield et al. (1987) were able to show in affect recognition tests that, in comparison to depressives and normal individuals, schizophrenics have a significantly poorer ability to appropriately interpret the feelings expressed by faces in photographs. These results are further supplemented by Krause et al. (1989), whose study found, in accordance with expectations, that the schizophrenic's ability to convey his own emotions through facial expression is also greatly reduced. Primary private feelings such as happiness, satisfaction or pleasure were virtually not at all expressed; what predominated instead were affects directed at the environment, such as annoyance, disgust and contempt, which were also indicated only by the upper half of the face. Moreover, the authors were able to show that schizophrenics generally only tended to exhibit speech disorders when confronted with private statements.

The mask-like stiffness of Hitler's facial expression is amply documented. We call to mind here only the staring contests with his subordinates. And the fol-

lowing episode demonstrates how easily even the slightest emotional gestures could make him speechless: In 1923, Hitler attended a private New Year's Eve party given by Heinrich Hoffman, to which many other people, including female photo models, were also invited. In the luxuriously decorated apartment, Hitler happened by chance to stand under a mistletoe. Henriette von Schirach, who was present on the occasion, reports: "Now it's an old custom that one is allowed to kiss the person standing under the mistletoe. Hitler didn't know that. But Else saw it. Else was one of the most beautiful girls, with a gold-fringed dress and the first silk hose. Full of purpose, she approached the young Hitler, who watched her unsuspectingly. She embraced him and kissed him tenderly on the mouth. The people standing around looked on. They found it very funny that Hitler – whom everyone already knew back then and about whom there were no love affairs to report – was kissed so openly. It would have been the most natural thing then if he had kissed the girl back, but he didn't do that. When she let him go, he looked at her earnestly, turned around and got his trench-coat [...] He took his black hat and went out without a fare-thee-well into the night" (1983, p. 243f).

A basic symptom that goes hand in hand with dissociation of affect, and that may be defined more specifically within the paradigm of the public and private self, is the so-called thought disturbances. In order to investigate the dynamics of these disturbances more closely, Payne et al. (1959) designed an experiment in which the participants were confronted with an unsolveable task. They were able to observe that schizophrenics experienced striking difficulties with ceasing the activities upon the recognition of their unsolveableness. They were evidently not capable of withdrawing from the external demand into their own private self, as people normally do. This is also one of the reasons for the incessant flow of speech with which the delusionally ill tend to comment on themselves. In Hitler's case, this manifested itself in his penchant for hour-long soliloquizing. He had to talk on constantly, for any interruption would have confronted him with his inner lack of privateness. The life-long preoccupation with monumental architectural projects, which he pursued all the more obsessively the slighter the chances of their realizability became, is a further sign of the compulsion to actionistically compensate for his own poverty of feeling. This compulsiveness finds its ultimate Neronic expression in the formulations with which Hitler looked back on his life shortly before his suicide: "*Thus we were condemned to war. The only thing I could still decide myself was the choice of the most advantageous moment. But there was no going back for us. [...] Come what may, we will hold out in this fight to the death*" (Hitler 1945, p. 47f). For him, the war had also become one of those tasks he recognized at some point as being unrealizable but had to go on pursuing nonetheless, since to break it off would have confronted him with the

emptiness of his private self – an inner vacuum that had long since found its correspondence in the devastations of the external world.

While non-psychotic people experience satisfaction with their public successes, so that they are occasionally able to lean back, relax, and inwardly enjoy their external recognition, the schizophrenic lacks this private halcyon zone. He can find narcissistic satisfaction only in reference to the outer world. But because he is not capable of being with others – in the sense of emotional bonds – he must stand above them. This traps him into a vicious circle. For the probability of rejection by others grows with every enhancement of the public self; and in order to compensate for the threatening cognitive dissonance, the schizophrenic has no other choice but to attempt to profile himself even more spectacularly, so that he continually puts himself more and more into the limelight. We might illustrate this with a concrete clinical case: The patient described his coronation as the German king and Roman emperor. When his attention was drawn to the contradictions with his real situation, he countered by outdoing himself – he was not only the German Kaiser, but also the greatest of all saints and the greatest explorer. Of course, this is seldom the onset, but rather usually the apex of a psychotic development (cf. Paul Matussek 1992, p. 128).

We will show in our discussion of Hitler's hate propaganda that this recursive dynamic of outdoing oneself also played a part in the process of radicalization that ultimately culminated in the murderous consequence of the "final solution to the Jewish question." The higher public expectations rose in the face of the initial successes in the war, the more Hitler felt compelled to prove that he was capable of even greater things; and when this began to fail on the military field, he offered the proof in the form of unsurpassable atrocity.

This atrocity stands at the end of a development the basic origin of which lies in the dissociation of the private self and of the emotionality associated with it. The testimonials to Hitler's emotional poverty since his youth are legion. Albert Speer, for instance, muses: "Sometimes I asked myself: what was I actually missing that prevented me from describing Hitler as my friend? I was constantly in his presence, practically at home in his private circle, and on top of that, the primary collaborator in the field most dear to him, architecture. Everything was missing. Never in my life have I met a person who so seldom showed his feelings, and whenever he did, he clammed up again immediately. During my time in Spandau, I talked with Heß about this peculiarity of Hitler. According to our common experience, there were certainly moments in which one might imagine having come closer to him. But the feeling was always deceptive. If you cautiously took up his heartfelt tone, in the very next moment he would defensively erect an insurmountable wall" (1969, p. 114).

A similar sentiment is expressed by Joachim von Ribbentrop: "He had something in his entire being that kept one indescribably at a distance [...] Hitler's unapproachability was not willful, but rather given by nature" (1953, p. 45). Indeed, the schizophrenic's avoidance of emotional relationships is not a freely chosen one. The fixation on the public self prevents all private self-expression. But how does the dissociation of affect come about? This, too, may be explained in terms of our paradigm's descriptive conceptualization, without the recourse to the speculative psychoanalytical theories of psychological agencies and representatives.

Shame in place of guilt

One of the chief causes of a narcissistic fixation on the public self accompanied by the simultaneous suppression of private affect is humiliation. For shame brings the individual into an ambivalent position: one would literally like to sink into the proverbial ground or crawl into the proverbial hole; yet it is in the very nature of humiliating predicaments that just such a retreat is impossible. For example, someone who has said something embarrassing in a live interview cannot simply leave the television studio; he has to gloss over the situation, pretend as if nothing had happened, or – as proof that his faux pas does not signalize weakness – even put his foot in it again. This is only possible if the private sensation that makes the conflict with the public self-presentation uncomfortably palpable is suppressed as much as possible. Schizophrenics are masters at fending off shame. This is demonstrated, among other things, by the fact that they very seldom exhibit that tell-tale signal of the private sphere – the blush. The following example from clinical practice makes clear what price they pay for their immunization against the undermining of the public self:

"A 16-year-old goes on a school trip to Paris with his class. After a few days, he becomes psychotic. The usual clinical examination ascertains merely that the boy's first trip abroad overtaxed him and, given the concomitant vulnerability, he therefore became ill. In the psychotherapy, further details emerge, which however could not have been evaluated without an appropriate theory. These details have to do with the biographical context of his trip; in particular, a single achievement prior to the holiday that had given the patient the impression of being something special: he had become the top student in his class – albeit, having summoned up every last effort to do so. This achievement would not necessarily be viewed as spectacular from an objective perspective, but precisely because of the required energy expenditure, the boy considers it unrepeatable and in this respect unique. Starting with the departure from Würzburg, he already experienced himself as

something special, not only as the first among his classmates, but moreover as a 'world traveler' – a feeling that he now claimed for himself alone, although the others would have had every right to feel the same. In Paris, however, he was overcome by home-sickness to a degree he could not cope with. He cried and was inconsolable, although he was in good hands with his hosts. Finally, they made some disparaging comments, or, to be more precise: comments that he felt to be disparaging – something along the lines that a boy shouldn't be homesick so much. In a flash, the tears dried; they dried up. And with the tears, every feeling was also gone. The phenomenon of fragmentation appeared here in the form of depersonalisation. He was not a person any more, and the environment was no longer strange to him, but rather unreal" (Paul Matussek 1992, p. 134f).

The dissociation of affect resulting from the defense against shame also has an effect on the experience of guilt. This can best be elucidated from the opposite side, the perspective of the depressive: In his narcissistic fixation on the private self, the depressive tends to ascribe to himself all the responsibility for an unsuccessful public appearance; he wallows in self-reproaches and sees the incident as just another reason to withdraw from the world. In the extreme case he will develop the delusion of being the cause of the disaster. The case of the schizophrenic is different. In so far as the contents of his delusion have anything at all to do with guilt, then in the sense of a fate imposed from without, as in the reincarnation of Christ or a great martyr – whereby what stands in the foreground is interest in being admired by others and not the feeling of private transgression. In short, the concern of the schizophrenic is directed at the possibility of being humiliated, and not of being guilty.

Hitler is an extreme case of this schizophrenic peculiarity. It has frequently been overlooked that when he spoke of guilt, he actually meant, without exception, shame. Some of his statements have been falsely interpreted as expressing the awareness of guilt – such as:

"*I bear this, my lot, with the grateful thanks to a providence that has considered me worthy enough to have to take over the work that is as hard as it is crucial for the history of our nation*" (Domarus 1962/63, p. 2186).

"*If, then, providence awards life as a prize to the one who fights for it and defends it most bravely, then our nation will find mercy at the hands of the righteous judge who has always granted victory to those who were most deserving of it*" (p. 2076).

The sentiment that speaks out of these quotations is not a feeling of moral responsibility, but rather the satisfaction of having luckily escaped possible humiliations. In contrast, the way Hitler reacted to reproaches that attempted to appeal to his sense of guilt emerges in an exemplary fashion in an episode reported by Henriette von Schirach. On a trip to Holland in 1943, she was witness to a

nighttime transportation of Jews and afterwards felt like an "accessory to a crime" (Schirach 1983, p. 248). Thinking along the lines of "if the Führer only knew!" she approached the Führer personally about it shortly afterward: "'I wanted to talk to you, I have seen terrible things, I can't believe that you want this [...]' He looked at me with astonishment: *'It is war,'* he said. 'But there were women, I saw how poor, helpless women were led away, transported away to a camp. I don't believe that they will come back, they took away their property, their families no longer exist [...]' – *'You are sentimental, Frau von Schirach!'* Hitler stood up and stood at my side. *'What concern of yours are the Jewish women of Holland!'*" For him, the question of guilt was only relevant as an image problem, whereby only the German public was important. He spoke insistently to Henrietta von Schirach: "'*You must understand, every day ten thousand of my precious men fall, men who will not exit anymore, the best. The balance isn't right anymore, the equilibrium in Europe isn't right anymore. For the others aren't falling. They are alive, the ones in the camps, the inferior ones are alive, and what will it look like then in Europe in a hundred years? In a thousand? My responsibility is only to my people, and to no one else*'" (p. 249f).

Hitler's "concern" was with the spectacularity of the deed, and not it's moral assessment. If he suffered at all from self-doubts, then these revolved only around the incessant fear of humiliating himself or making himself ridiculous. In Chapter 3, we will demonstrate how the motif of defense against shame shaped the course of Hitler's life from an early age. Even after Hitler had attained a position in which he could no longer be dismissively mocked or felt sorry for, the fear of embarrassment was in no way exorcised. On the contrary: particularly as the "Führer," he was plagued by the paranoid fear that the mask of his public persona might begin to slip. Signals from the repressed private self – such as the stubborn problem of flatulence – that did not easily fit into with the glorious ideal of the redeemer who would save the world from the Jewish "*plague*" (Jäckel and Kuhn 1980, p. 1242) were combated most energetically. The most conspicuous symptom of Hitler's psychotic defense against shame is the notorious delusional notion of the mockingly "*laughing Jews*," which returns repeatedly in the war-time speeches. We will examine this symptom in greater detail at the end of Chapter 3, but for the moment, we turn our attention to another symptom that is closely linked to it.

Aggression in the face of exposure

If schizophrenics express any feelings at all, then these are usually of the negative kind, and are directed "extrapunitively" against the environment, that is, with the

tendency of making others pay for one's own faults. This does not have to go hand in hand with violent acts – indeed, open aggression is actually extremely rare in schizophrenics (Böker and Häfner 1973, Lindquist and Allebeck 1990). With Hitler, however, we have just such a special case. To what extent he still exhibits the general traits of the schizophrenic dynamic is made clear in the following observations.

In his autobiography, the Munich historian and Nazi sympathizer Karl Alexander von Müller describes an encounter with Hitler in the 1920s: "[...] through the open door, one could see how he greeted the hostess in the narrow corridor with almost obsequious politeness, how he put aside the riding whip, velour hat and trench-coat, and finally unbuckled a belt with a revolver and also hung it up on a coat hook. This appeared odd, and was reminiscent of Karl May. We all did not know yet how precisely each of these trifles in his clothing and conduct had already been calculated for effect, just like the conspicuous, short-cropped little mustache that was thinner than the nose, with it's unattractively wide nostrils. [...] his gaze already conveyed the awareness of public success: but something awkward still clung to him, and one had the uncomfortable feeling that he sensed it, and resented the fact that one had noticed it" (quoted in Schuster 1993, p. 125).

Whoever presents himself to others as something special must necessarily live in fear of skeptics. In normal cases, a person would seek to balance out inwardly the experience of failed "boasting"; although he might develop an aversion to the unimpressed observer, he would also draw back self-critically. The blush of shame is one such signal from the private self, which indicates to the environment regret over inappropriate public conduct. But what happens if a person's retreat into the private sphere is blocked? It is characteristic of the schizophrenic structure that blushing on such occasions is extremely rare. The schizophrenic must go on the offensive. We described an aggressive variant of the offensive reaction in the introductory chapter, using the example of Mathias Rust: when his bragging come-on as the "Kremlin flyer" got him nowhere with a nurse, he attacked her with a knife. It was not possible for him to self-critically relativize the rejection, for aside from his publicly presented persona, he possessed no other identity.

Hitler reacted to the derogatory signals of the environment in a similar – albeit monstrously exaggerated – vein: He did not withdraw, but rather attacked the persons responsible for the cognitive dissonance between the grandiose public performance and the private paltriness. Witnesses to his wretched pre-history, which did not at all fit in with the aura of the great Führer, were silenced by intimidation, threats, and murder. And anyone who dared to even hint at bringing him down to a normal human level was risking his life, as the following incident illustrates:

Early in 1937, the 21-year-old photographer Johan Brandner was refused access to his apartment through the ever-growing restricted zone around the grounds on the Obersalzberg, forcing him to take detours of several kilometers. He therefore wrote a letter to Hitler, which he handed over to the Führer personally as the latter drove by in an open car. The distanced Führer pose was undermined by the banal private approach, and Hitler reacted in accordance with his structure: "*The man must be helped*" (Chaussy and Püschner 1997, p. 110) he commented upon the incident – and gave orders for a police action in the course of which Brandner was arrested and brought to the concentration camp in Dachau.

When Hitler's luck began to turn in the war, the entire nation became potentially a witness to an impending exposure. Indeed, it was in the nature of the logical consistency of Hitler's defensive dynamic that he would sooner give the German public up to destruction than admit his own disgrace. In January 1941, Hitler assures Himmler: "*Here, too, I am ice-cold: if the German people are not willing to commit everything to their own self-conservation, well and good – then let them disappear!*" (Jochmann 1980, p. 239). This was no spontaneous confession; it would be repeated persistently in the ensuing time. For despite the growing realization that a victory in the continuing Russian campaign was impossible, Hitler commented on it to foreign visitors with the following words: "*I am ice-cold here too. If the German nation is suddenly no longer strong and dedicated enough to risk its own blood for its existence, then it should fade away and be destroyed by another, stronger power [...] I wouldn't shed a tear for the German people then*" (quoted in Haffner 1978, p. 152; Hillgruber 1967/70, vol. 1, p. 657 and 661).

It is not a logical war strategy that emerges from these statements, but rather the pathology of an exclusive fixation on the public self, for which nothing counts except the acclaim of the audience. If the latter denies him the applause, then it must be eliminated: "*If the German nation leaves me in the lurch in this war, then it deserves its downfall!*" (Krebs 1959, p. 123). In August 1944, Hitler repeated at a gauleiter conference: "*If the German nation is conquered in this struggle, then it was too weak to pass the test of history and only worthy of destruction*" (said to Albert Speer, according to Trevor-Roper 1947, p. 77).

But Hitler's aggressive resistance to exposure was directed not only against external witnesses. He was also unsparing to himself when it came to avoiding the revelation of his own weaknesses of mistakes. Thus, the eschewing of any friendly relationships, for instance, was a part of the price that he paid for the upkeep of his grandiose public self. He dispensed with pleasures such as dancing and swimming, smoking and drinking, because he was constantly anxious that he might seem ridiculous doing it. How limited was the existence that his Führer pose took for its toll is documented in the following episode:

After leaving a soirée at Heinrich Hoffmann's, Hitler returned once more to the latter's apartment. Hoffmann's 15-year-old daughter Henriette had already gone to bed when the bell rang. Hitler stood in the doorway: "'*I forgot my whip.*' Indeed, there it was on the coat hook, the short leather whip that was also a dog leash. Dog leash and talisman. I gave it to him. He stood on the red carpet on the little landing [...] Herr Hitler wore the English trench-coat and held his gray velour hat in his hand. And then he said something that didn't fit him at all; and he said it quite seriously: *'Wouldn't you like to kiss me*?" He said *'Sie'* [the formal form of address] What a notion: kiss Herr Hitler! I liked him a lot, for he was receptive to my ideas and also helped me whenever I wanted to get somewhere with father [...] but kiss him? 'No, please, really not, Herr Hitler, it is impossible!' He said nothing at all, tapped the whip against the palm of his hand, and very slowly went down the stairs to the entry-way" (Schirach 1983, p. 244f).

The scene appears to be in contradiction with the one we mentioned previously, in which Hitler left without a word after being kissed. Yet both testify to the same difficulty: as the great Führer, he could not allow a private approach if he did not initiate it himself. But if he did so, it not infrequently embarrassed the others. Almost all of his relationships with women were marked by this dilemma. If he had ever experienced sexual satisfaction at all, then only with one person: his niece Geli Raubal. And if what she reported about the perverse practices he demanded of her is true, then it is at least comprehensible within this context. The masochistic desire to expose oneself to the partner's excrement fits in with an apocryphal private self and indirectly confirms the public self of the ascetic fighter, who must be punished for any hedonistic deviations.

The schizophrenic exceptional norm

It is one of the elementary human needs to want to be considered valuable and to know that one's deeds are morally justified. This need for "self-esteem," as social psychology calls it (Greenberg et al. 1986, p. 197f), arises with the infant's dependence on parental care, and gradually expands its frame of reference beyond the family to the social environment, which evaluates individual conduct in accordance with cultural norms. The original fear of being abandoned by one's parents, who are crucial to one's survival, is replaced by the fear of being worthless in the eyes of others. The feeling of self-esteem offers protection from these threats. In the social context, this requires a building up of trust on two levels: the individual must have the certainty of being integrated into his cultural milieu, and he must be convinced that the role he plays in this milieu is not insignificant. To illustrate this double aspect Greenberg et al. speak of a "cultural drama" (p.

199ff) in the sense of a theatrical play. In order to derive a sense of self-esteem from the cultural drama, two conditions must be fulfilled: first, that one gets a role in the piece at all, and second, that this role offers enough leeway for one's own personal development. Of course, these two conditions can never stand in an entirely conflict-free relation to one another, and it is evident that the greatest degree of self-esteem is made possible by a culture that allows for the greatest differentiation of individual role ambitions without having to terminate the cultural drama as such, that is, without completely relinquishing the binding nature of the cultural norms.

What are the consequence of this for a person who, in the absence of a private self, can only derive a sense of his own value from public response? The schizophrenic's narcissistic fixation on the public self results in his incapacity of entering into a role assigned to him by others. For he finds himself always already in his own drama. For him, "every thought, every feeling, immediately has an observer [...] one wonders about the impression one makes not only on others, but also on oneself. One is always one's own audience – whether the matter is the way one walks, eats, or sleeps, everyday tasks or great works" (Paul Matussek 1992, p. 123). This self-exposition leads to the development of an exceptional norm that cannot – or can only with reluctance – be integrated into the social context. Here is an example of this:

"A schizophrenic who had played football in a junior league years before his psychosis spoke in therapy, rather in passing, of an argument with his trainer. I paid little attention to this recollection until I noticed that the patient brought it up over and over again – usually in connection with dreams. Only after repeated narration and my frequent questioning did the core of the memory come out: he had always played forward, and was valued by everyone as such. But in one game, he suddenly started to play defense, over the protests of his fellow players and above all the trainer. He responded to these with statements such as: 'But that's nothing special!' – 'I wanted to be defense for once too!' – 'Let the others score the goals!' etc. [...] The schizophrenic did not orient himself on the aim of the game, that is, on what is common to all the players; rather, in the game – as well as in life – he was ruled by the question: who am I playing for? For the trainer? The other players? My girlfriend? Who is looking at me? [...] The conduct of the patient was experienced by the other players as 'strange' and 'contrarian'; in order to characterize it correctly in psychodynamic terms, one would have to call it screwy. The incident makes clear a pattern of behavior typical for schizophrenia and its preliminary stages. The afflicted person wants to have contact with others at any price, but only in a manner determined by himself: he must not appear like the others. He must signalize his exceptional role; then – and only then – can he be sure of himself" (Paul Matussek 1992, p. 123f).

The dilemma of the schizophrenic, then, consists in the fact that he must thwart the "cultural drama" in order to live up to his exceptional norm, but at the same time remains dependent on his participation in this drama – as the background against which his exceptional norm can first be presented as such at all. This picture lines up with the three categories of Binswanger (1956): screwiness, extravagancy, affectation (*Verschriobenheit, Vertiegenheit, Manieriertheit*). All three express the ambivalence of having to stand simultaneously within and outside of the social context. In Hitler's case, these characteristics were extremely pronounced. Thus, his tendency toward extravagant fantasies manifests itself early on in his reactions to humiliation: instead of drawing himself back, he overtrumped the damaged self-image with increasingly more presumptuous ambitions that were increasingly less attainable for others. This process, which we have already discussed with respect to defensive self-enhancement, led to the fact that long before his actual rise to power he had already brought himself into a position in which there was no turning back. The rift between the public self he presented to others and the paltriness of his real existence had become so wide that any step back toward a lesser claim would have been tantamount to an annihilating plunge into the precipice. As early as his Linz years, he had already had the hallucinatory notion of being chosen to "raise [the German people] out of slavery and lead them to the heights of freedom" (Kubizek 1953, p. 116f). This left him with the alternative of either fulfilling this mission or exposing himself. He identified to such an extent with his public self that a deviation from it could not have been offset and relativized by the private aspect. With respect to affectation, the central moment of self-presentation first became evident in Hitler's clothing (we have already quoted one impression of his Karl May outfit) and developed to its fullest extent in the studied poses and heroic setting at the party rallies of the NSDAP. Finally, the screwiness of the schizophrenic exceptional norm is evident in Hitler's idiosyncratic argumentation. In *Mein Kampf,* for instance, he defends his notion of the exceptional individual with a strangely inconsistent antithesis to Jewishness:

"The movement must promote respect for personality by all means [...]. The greatest revolutionary changes and achievements of this earth, its greatest cultural accomplishments, the immortal deeds in the field of statesmanship, etc., are forever inseparably bound up with a name and are represented by it. To renounce doing homage to a great spirit means the loss of an immense strength which emanates from the names of all great men and women.

The Jew knows this best of all. He, whose great men are only great in the destruction of humanity and its culture, makes sure that they are idolatrously admired. He attempts only to represent the admiration of the nations for their own spirits as unworthy and brands it as a 'personality cult.'

As soon as a people becomes so cowardly that it succumbs to this Jewish arrogance and effrontery, it renounces the mightiest power that it possesses; for this is based, not on respect for the masses, but on the veneration of genius and on uplift and enlightenment by his example" (Hitler 1925/27, p. 352f).

In this rhetorically crooked view, the Jewish people feel the same "admiration" for their "greats" as the Germans. But at the same time, this admiration is condemned as idolatry – again, an argument that rests on the very world-view from which it strives to be distinguished: the reproach of the "personality cult." The self-contradiction betrays something of the irrational logic of the schizophrenic relation to the world: in order to justify his exceptional norm, he must resort to the very same cultural standards with which he stands in contrast. When we consider the formative role of Judaism for German culture in Hitler's time, it seems probable that he required his bizarre form of antisemitism in order to carry on with this self-contradiction. In that case, the hatred of the Jews would have served the function of a proxy: since Hitler was dependent on the acclaim of the public sphere while desiring to rise above it – not least out of rage over the humiliations suffered at the hands of this sphere's institutions (school, academy, men's home) – the part of his own culture that was portrayed by contemporary ideology as a foreign body presented itself as a fitting object for his aggressive defense mechanism. In this way, he could feel a sense of cultural belonging even in a state of apartness. We will have frequent occasion to return to this hypothesis. In the present context, it should be noted that hostilities are quite beneficial for the schizophrenic exceptional norm and for that reason may even be sought out under certain circumstances. Hitler enjoyed the public condemnations as much as the jubilation of his followers: *"Any man who is not attacked in the Jewish newspapers, not slandered and vilified, is no decent German and no true National Socialist. The best yardstick for the value of his attitude, for the sincerity of his conviction, and the force of his will is the hostility he receives from the mortal enemy of our people"* (p. 351).

The proverb "Viel Feind', viel Ehr'" (many enemies, much honor), with which people attempt in exceptional cases to console themselves for and relativize criticism, has the character of a leitmotif in the schizophrenic's relation to the world. That is why he feels particularly threatened in contexts that are marked by cultural diversity. For in such contexts, it is significantly more difficult to call public attention to one's own exceptional norm than in a homogenous culture, in which deviations are far more conspicuous. This explains the phobic undertone in Hitler's description of the multicultural society under the Habsburg monarchy, within which he struggled in vain to achieve an exceptional reputation:

"Old Austria was a 'state of nationalities.' By and large, a subject of the German Reich, at that time at least, was absolutely unable to grasp the signifi-

cance of this fact for the life of the individual in such a state. [...] What they failed to appreciate was that, unless the German in Austria had really been of the best blood, he would never have had the power to set his stamp on a nation of fifty-two million souls to such a degree that, even in Germany, the erroneous opinion could arise that Austria was a German state. [...] Only a handful of Germans in the Reich had the slightest conception of the eternal and merciless struggle for the German language, German schools, and a German way of life. [...] And who could retain his loyalty to a dynasty which in past and present betrayed the needs of the German people again and again for shameless private advantage? [...] In the north and south the poison of foreign nations gnawed at the body of our nationality, and even Vienna was visibly becoming more and more of an un-German city. The Royal House Czechized wherever possible, and it was the hand of the goddess of eternal justice and inexorable retribution which caused Archduke Francis Ferdinand, the most mortal enemy of Austrian-Germanism, to fall by the bullets which he himself had helped to mold. For had he not been the patron of Austria's Slavization from above !" (Hitler 1925/27, p. 10ff).

The disintegration of cultural norms produces anomie – to employ a classical term of the sociologist Émile Durkheim (1897). Anomie does not only signify a state of normlessness in social and interpersonal relations. Contradictory or competing norms can also produce anomic circumstances, because they lead to a loss of orientation. Schizophrenics are affected by this to a significantly greater degree than others, since they must fear the disintegration of their audience, on whose collective attention their entirely public-based sense of self depends. In the presence of an aggressive disposition, this fear in turn gives rise to hatred of the state of anomie and those supposedly responsible for it. That Hitler cast the Jews in this role cannot be adequately explained on ideological grounds alone. The causes lie far more in a psychological dynamic that had already developed before the political aim had ever been fixed. Hitler unwittingly reveals the arbitrariness of his choice of opponent when, in a secret speech of 30 May 1942, he ascertains in retrospect: "*All this did not fall into our laps like a gift from heaven; rather, I began the fight, a fight against everything that one can at all conceive of as an enemy*" (Picker 1962, p. 510).

How this fight began will be traced – now that we have roughly sketched out the most important features of our psychosis model – in the biographical context. Whereby it will become evident that Hitler's pathological personality structure played a crucial part in the manner of his political rise. This does not mean, however, that we wish to reduce the crimes of the National Socialists to the psychodynamics of an individual. As we will set forth in the later course of our study, there is a historically contingent affinity between Hitler's personality and the

Germans' acceptance of him. But in order to comprehend this affinity, a more extensive diagnosis of Hitler's personality is necessary. Only a precise understanding of his psychotic structure can explain his singular effect on others. For that reason, we will first delve into the biographical details before turning in Chapter 4 to how these details relate to the cultural-historical environment.

III. The development of Hitler's psychosis from a psychodynamic perspective

In the previous chapter, we surveyed both the psychosomatic findings and those of classical psychoanalysis and ascertained that neither approach is suitable the phenomenon. Hitler's monstrous callousness, the complete lack of personal feeling, and the brutality with which he asserted his enormous need for recognition cannot be deduced on the grounds of a missing testicle, a later Pervitin addiction, or Oedipal primal scenes. In order to fathom his behavioral drives and motivations, a new paradigm is needed that takes into consideration the dual public-private character of the self. The paradigm we have introduced here helps to explain both the internal processes of affect dissociation under the influence of humiliation and shame as well as the compensatory forms of self-presentation that finally gave rise to the fanatical acclamation of his environment. In the following, we will show that the essential qualities of Hitler's character had emerged already in his youth rather than only after his imprisonment in Landsberg, as is often claimed (cf. e.g. Eitner 1981, p. 52–60). In contrast, the beginnings of his political ambitions must be located later in time than Hitler himself would have us believe with his Pasewalk depiction in *Mein Kampf* – which has been taken up by many biographers.

Hitler's success was possible *because* it rested on a schizophrenic foundation. A "normal" person, in the psychiatric sense, would not have been able to muster up such a degree of implacability towards himself and others. And this in turn bolstered his success with the masses. Because our account of Hitler's life is based on the descriptive model of the public and private self, it does not simply represent yet another in a series of existing Hitler-centric biographies. Rather, its aim is to show that Hitler's individual life was interwoven with the social-historical contexts in a manner that neither a psychoanalytic nor a historical perspective alone can suffice to explain. Hitler's public impact was conditioned on his pathological structure just as much as his pathological structure, conversely, could have been stabilized only by the public approval that it found.

This chapter shall be devoted to the examination of the first aspect of this interplay – the emergence of Hitler's "aura" as a result of the evacuation of private aspects of the self from his personality, making it into an ideal projection surface. This process of evacuation began during his childhood and was completed by the time of his first public appearances as a speaker. In the following, we shall therefore concentrate on this time-span. The historical sources dealing with Hitler's

first decades are, however, rather sparse. One reason for this is that from the moment that his public career began to take off, Hitler systematically endeavored to wipe away all traces of his embarrassing past. He made documents disappear and silenced witnesses – if necessary, with violence. What remains is shot through with legend: on the one hand, the stylized, often entirely fictional self-portrait Hitler promulgated in *Mein Kampf*, as well as in his table talks (Picker 1963) and monologues (Jochmann 1980); on the other, the reports of the few persons with whom he had contact in those early years. In addition to isolated statements from the family circle, these include in particular the notes of his childhood friend August Kubizek (1953; first edition 1938 commissioned by the NSDAP) and his fellow men's-shelter resident Reinhold Hanisch (1939), which also are not free of politically motivated misrepresentation. For many biographers, this lack of primary sources is grounds to maintain complete silence about the psychologically relevant details of Hitler's youth. But this does not preserve them from a lack of cohesion either. For instance, in his review of Gudrun Pausewang's *Adi – Jugend eines Diktators* (1997), Wilfried von Bredow justly criticizes the book for its exclusive adherence to the external facts: "The flip side of this laudable abstinence is that [Pausewang] can say nothing about the question of how poor little Adi could have become the successful political agitator and organizer, the unscrupulous dictator" (Bredow 1997, p. L51).

If in the following we are somewhat less reserved in our dealings with the testimony concerned, we do so in the belief that it is justified by our paradigm. For the double perspective offers us the opportunity to interpret both Hitler's self-perception and the perception of him by others as the expression of public and private aspects of the self. In this respect, even tendentious representations of Hitler have a documentary value for us. Since our model dispenses with the speculative assumptions of classical analytical doctrines in favor of description from a socio-psychological perspective, it lends itself to empirical scrutiny. We realize that not all the depths of Hitler's psyche may be plumbed in this fashion; yet especially in this case, to assume the presence of destructive primal drives would not provide a better alternative explanation, since such an approach sidesteps the complex interactions between the individual and his environment. Our mode of proceeding, then, seeks to avoid the double danger aptly summed up in Bredow's review: "There is a trivialization accomplished by means of demonization, and a trivialization accomplished by means of a reduction to the ordinary" (p. L51). We trace the supposedly demonic aspects of Hitler as concretely as possible back to the process by which the public self obtained the upper hand over the private; and at the same time, we provide a systemic historical account of Hitler's thoroughly non-ordinary development. In this way, we hope to lead the discussion of the Hitler phenomenon out of this dilemma of trivialization.

Childhood. Early Symptoms of Personality Dissociation

The pathogenic conditions under which Adolf Hitler grew up may be adequately reconstructed even without recourse to psychoanalytical speculation. In the light of our paradigm, the facts of his childhood development manifest themselves as factors of an early dissociation of private aspects of the self in favor of a narcissistic fixation on the public aspects. The authoritarian father, obsessed with status, and the overanxious mother, idolizingly adoring her "Adi," represented the two identificatory figures – in the negative as well as the positive sense – on which the child foundered. It is the aim of the following to explain the ways in which what usually manages to turn out well in the development of most children went so horribly wrong in this case.

The world into which Hitler was born bore all the signs of an ambitious drive to rise above humble circumstances. The father, Alois, was the illegitimate child of Maria Anna Schicklgruber, a serving girl who came from the simple peasant milieu of the Waldviertel, a poor, backwoods region of Lower Austria. The unknown origins of his grandfather later gave free rein to Hitler's paranoid fear that he could be the descendent of Jewish ancestors. Whatever his heritage, the father managed to make it extraordinarily far for his backwoods origins. Although he only had a primary school education, he worked his way up the ranks of public service to become a senior customs official in Braunau – the highest rank that a civil servant could attain at the time without higher education. Alois was doubtless proud of his status and boasted of it over his evening beer at his regular haunt. Reports about him convey respect, but also hostility toward his humorlessness, which occasionally expressed itself in sudden outbursts of rage when one did not pay him the attention he strove to attract. Within the circle of the family – as Kershaw (1998) sums up, relying on the descriptions of Jetzinger (1956) and Smith (1967) – "Alois was an authoritarian, overbearing, domineering husband and a stern, distant, masterful, and often irritable father" (1998, p. 12).

The rigid exterior facade hid an unstable character. Before marrying Adolf Hitler's mother, Klara, Alois had three other children with various women, two of them out of wedlock. His first marriage was to Anna Glassl, who was 14 years his senior, and it was in all likelihood undertaken less for reasons of legitimization than on the basis of material calculations. The marriage was dissolved after Anna discovered that her husband was having an affair with Fanni Matzelberger, a young servant at the Gasthaus Streif, where the Hitlers were living. Fanni moved into the family apartment immediately after the separation from Anna. She gave birth to their son Alois in 1882, before they were married; at the time of their marriage in the following year, she was already pregnant with Angela. A year later, she died of tuberculosis. While his second wife was still in her deathbed,

Alois Hitler brought into the household his second cousin Klara Pölzl – 23 years his junior – who became pregnant soon after. Because of the close degree of the family relationship, the two were only able to marry after obtaining dispensation from the church. Even after they were married in 1885, Klara continued to call her husband "Uncle Alois," which sheds some light on the nature of their emotional relationship. She bore three children, none of whom lived past the age of two, before giving birth to Adolf on April 29, 1889. She clung anxiously to her first surviving son, who remained everything to her even after the birth of his siblings Edmund (1894) and Paula (1896). In Adolf, she could construct the ideal image of a man deserving of authentic respect, instead of the mere subservience demanded by her ambitious husband. The latter, it seems, was concerned solely with styling himself to arouse the unreserved admiration of his humble environment. This is evidenced, among other things, by the numerous show-piece photographs he had taken of himself: with proudly swelling breast, in full uniformed regalia. Apparently, he could not get enough of seeing himself pictured in this way (Kubizek 1953, p. 47). His self-satisfied posturing can be ascribed to petit-bourgeois contentment, but it also demonstrates the concentration of a narcissistic fixation on the public self. Admittedly, the forum for which he posed was limited: aside from the everyday show of respect that he could draw from the civil service hierarchy, the only other thing he had to satisfy his need for recognition was the local pub, where he got drunk on his reputation as much as on the alcohol.

The accounts given by Adolf Hitler of his father are conspicuous in their attempt to give this reputation a negative spin. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler makes Alois into the epitome of the aggressive, reviled public official (Hitler 1925/27, p. 8f); he exaggerates the pedantic and duty-oriented characteristics to the point of inexorability and tyrannicism without actually revealing anything about his personal feelings towards his father in this mythicized picture of his development. This is all the more reason to accept as authentic Adolf Hitler's depiction of the feeling of "horrible shame" with which the boy had to drag his father home from "stinking, smoky bars" (see Frank 1953, p. 331). That Adolf was, as much as his mother, the victim of rough beatings is supported by testimony from his sister Paula: "It was especially my brother Adolf who challenged my father to extreme harshness and got his sound thrashing every day" (National Archives, Washington DC, NND/881077). Such paternal behavior was certainly not rare at the time, and in this respect, it does not provide a sufficient explanation for Adolf Hitler's early inclination to violence. But in the context of the beatings, his need to differentiate himself from his father becomes understandable. This in turn led him into a dilemma that begins to cast a more specific light on his later development – the dilemma of inwardly believing oneself to be something special while at the same time being outwardly degraded.

Hitler had his mother to thank for this vague but deep-seated feeling of chosenness. Characterized by Paula as the epitome of a "very soft and tender person" (National Archives, Washington DC, NND/881077). Klara focused all of her anxious care on Adolf after the traumatic loss of her first three children. Thus, early on, she imbued him with the peculiar consciousness of being intended for higher things. Hitler's striking lack of personal connections has its beginnings here. His half-brother Alois states: "My stepmother always took his part. He would get the craziest notions and get away with it. If he didn't get his way he got very angry" (quoted in Bromberg and Small, p. 41). With respect to his siblings, Adolf manifested a downright phobic aversion to intimacy and tenderness. For instance, Paula recollects her brother's panicked flight reaction when he accidentally overheard their mother suggesting that Paula should wake him in the morning with a kiss (Paula Hitler 1959). Apparently, such familiarities could not be reconciled with his exceptional status.

And in his later life too, as Kubizek reports, "he eschewed any encounter with other people. The checkered masses that traipsed through the Prater were unbearable to him on a purely physical level. As much as he empathized with the ordinary people, he couldn't keep them far enough away from him" (1953, p. 171). Once, the two friends were witness to a worker's demonstration, and Kubizek noted that despite a fundamental agreement with the aims of the demonstrators, Hitler "was not in the least bit inclined to participate actively in the rally" (p. 246). In the presence of other people, he feared a loss of identity – an anxiety that was exacerbated to the point of paranoia the more he became used to elevating himself above others by means of inflated public aspects of the self. A remark Hitler made in conversation testifies to his efforts to rationalize this feeling: *"That is why a child cries and resists when his grandmother keeps trying to embrace him: for he does not want to squander his energies on a dying person. And after all, the grandmother only picks the child up precisely because she wants to seize the child's excess energies for herself – unconsciously, of course"* (Wagener 1978, p. 101).

Hitler had no dealings with his grandmothers, and it must remain an open question whether the cited remark can be traced directly to his ambivalent feelings towards his mother, who died early. Nonetheless, it is evident that the causes for the personality traits repeatedly stressed by the biographers – "Hitler's disturbed sexuality, his recoiling from physical contact, his fear of women, his inability to forge genuine friendship and emptiness in human relations" (Kershaw 1998, p.46) – must be looked for in the crown-prince role of his childhood. Preferred over his siblings and half-siblings, Hitler cultivated his feeling of superiority. That his father was especially strict with him was just an indirect confirmation of this self-perception, which was suggested to him by the particular atten-

tions of his mother. Both made him unapproachable. Thus, he grew up with a special consciousness of being an "uncontested leader" (Fest 1973, p. 18). In the games played by his contemporaries – such as reenactments of the battles between the Boers and the British (Hamann 1996, p. 9f) – he was apparently indeed the "little ringleader," as he later describes his own understanding of his childhood role (Hitler 1925/27, p. 6). The necessity of lifting himself above the others – associated negatively with the father and positively with the mother – is made conspicuous by a corresponding pose in a famous photo of his fourth-grade primary school class: Placed in the center of the row on the highest platform, the ten-year-old stands with his arms proudly crossed over his breast, in a gesture of demonstrative superiority, gazing out beyond his schoolmates into the camera.

This pose was nourished by the good grades he received at the village primary schools of Fischlham, Lambach and Leonding (the schools changed along with the family's residence). But this only lasted until he came to the *Realschule* in Linz. Although the father had already lowered his expectations for the son and refrained from sending him to a *Gymnasium*, Adolf failed miserably in the face of demands that were greater than those of the rural primary schools. In Leonding he was still the big fish in a small pond, so to speak, but in the Linz *Realschule*, he was no longer capable of impressing his fellow students. Kubizek writes: "He was hardly noticeable in the class. He had no friends or comrades like in primary school, and didn't look for any. Repeatedly, certain of these spoiled model children let him know that, at this school, they did not take him – the boy from the country – very seriously. This sufficed to isolate him even further from his classmates" (p. 57). But his proud lone wolf stance did not earn him any respect, since he could not legitimize it with any actual achievements. His learning difficulties were exacerbated by the fact that, in contrast to the tutorial set-up in the village school, the teachers at the *Realschule* changed with the subject. Hitler was held back in the very first form. After repeating the year, he made it with difficulty up to the third form, but was again unable to be promoted to the next form. This was all the more humiliating for him because the *Realschule* itself must have already seemed like a falling-off from his own standard. In order to trump the career prospects of his father, to whom he felt superior, he would have had to attend a *Gymnasium*. Now he had to bear the embarrassment of seeing that his father – apparently in the realization that admonitions to more diligence had no effect – showed utter leniency toward his lack of success in school and consented to scaling down the academic pressure.

It is remarkable how Hitler reacted to this first series of humiliations to his self-image: he did not draw back in order to make his public self conform with reality; instead, he magnified his presumption. He acted like an entirely extraordinary person who is not to be measured by normal standards. The class teacher,

Dr. Huemer, later described his behavior as "unruly, high-handed, opinionated, and irascible" (Jetzinger 1956, p. 105f). This aggressive relationship to the environment had already manifested itself within the circle of the family. What now additionally reinforced this pattern was the necessity to develop a defense against humiliation. Herein, as we will show, lies the inexhaustible source of Hitler's hatred for the Jews. It has nothing to do with concrete negative experiences. Thus, the undertaking recently attempted by Kimberly Cornish (1998) to fashion the origin of Hitler's antipathy against the Jews out of his school acquaintance with Wittgenstein is entirely unfounded. Although Wittgenstein was the same age as Hitler, his great talent placed him two classes ahead. If at all, then he would have provided more of a positive than a negative model for Hitler. For at the Linz school, the industrialist's son was also considered to be quirky: "His idiosyncrasies included addressing his fellow students with 'Sie' [the polite form of address in German], as well as demanding that – with the exception of one single friend – they, too, call him 'Sie' or 'Herr Ludwig'" (Hamann 1996, p. 16). Exactly the same thing has been reported of Hitler. He also had his fellow students – who naturally all addressed each other with "Du" (the German familiar form) – call him "Sie," and underscored this mannered trait with the fictive assertion that he came from a good family (Görlitz/Quint 1952, p. 34f). This was how he set off on his course of extravagant fabrication. His father's status – the attainment of which would have been no longer in reach given Hitler's poor school performance – was compensatorily bypassed. This secured Hitler's awareness of his own extraordinariness, but at the price of losing touch with reality. For him, the way back into the fold of the community would have been bound up with an unbearable admission of failure.

Thus, the basic pattern symptomatic for Hitler had already developed in his school years: an overcompensation for humiliations by means of imaginary self-enhancement. He aggressively fended off anything that threatened to get around this mechanism without making any attempt to put his own ambitions to the test with actual deeds. "And so he retreated entirely into his defiant stance and let everything go whichever way it went," writes Kubizek (p. 57) about how Hitler dealt with his academic failure. Since he could come up with nothing that might have justified his presumption, he had to equip his public self with attributes that escaped subsequent inspection. He was condemned to keep others at a distance in order to carry off his act of unapproachable greatness in front of them.

The isolationist tendency was reinforced by the sudden death of Hitler's father on January 3, 1903. Released from a real situation of existing competition, from now on the 13-year-old could on abandon himself without contradiction to his fantasies of superiority. The painfully unheroic circumstances of Alois Hitler's death – he collapsed over his morning drink at the pub – must have caused

Adolf as much grief as the loss of the strict tyrant. In any case, according to eye witnesses, when the "son of good family" saw the deceased, who so little befitted his social station, lying on the bier, he reportedly broke out in bewildered sobbing (Kubizek 1953, p. 54).

His mother was now the sole remaining support in his life, but even this support could only be secured with acts of self-denial. That was the price he had to pay for her validation of his feelings of superiority. If up to this point she had stood devoutly in the service of the dutiful maxims of her spouse, after his death she could give free rein to her wishful fantasies about her son's grandiose future. She pampered him excessively, and made no secret of her great expectations in the process. Her thoughts revolved incessantly around Adolf's prospects – and she repeatedly let him see and hear this (Kubizek 1953, p. 127f, 132). Despite the presence of the younger siblings Paula and Edmund (the older brother Alois, seven years Adolf's senior, was soon out of the house), Klara treated Adolf like an only child. He was the chosen one, and the object of all her over-protective energies (Eitner 1981, p. 17f; Carr 1978, p. 197). And thus she shared with her "Adi" the compensatory belief that his educational failures did not give the lie to his grandiose life prospects but rather confirmed their exceptionality. "He really is in a class by himself," she is reported to have said once to Kubizek with an expression of stunned admiration (1953, p. 127). And although the object of her astonishment was hardly capable of returning her feelings by virtue of being placed on a pedestal, the adoration doubtless reinforced his dependence. "Although he was not a 'mother's boy' in the usual sense," writes the Jewish family doctor Dr. Bloch, "I have never seen a more fervent affection" (Bloch 1941, p. 36).

In order to maintain his mother's faith in his admirability, Adolf had to venture out into the world. She sent him to the *Realschule* in Steyr after he failed a re-sit examination for the third form in Linz, and the institution agreed to give him a certificate of completion for that year only on the condition that he go elsewhere. At his new school, Adolf had to board with a foster family. The separation from his mother was terribly difficult for him, though at the same time he made an effort to live up to her expectations. This included his confirmation on Whitsunday 1904, which – on the account of his sponsor Lugert – he "allowed to be performed only with the greatest reluctance" (Jetzinger 1956, p. 116). But even with the lowered academic standard of the *Realschule* in Steyr, he continued to fail. With three "unsatisfactory" marks – in German, Math, and Stenography – the secondary school certificate remained beyond his reach. His teachers apparently did not place much faith in his prospects of a successful repetition of the form – indeed, they "urged strongly against it" (p. 103). And as Hitler admits in *Mein Kampf*, he too perceived this goal to be "incredibly hard" (Hitler 1925/27, p. 20). Above all, he longed to go back to his mother. But at the same time, he

feared the disgrace of having disappointed her expectations (Kubizek 1953, p. 61).

Hitler's reaction is once again characterized by a suppression of the private aspects of the self: He left school with an "elementary hatred" (Kubizek 1953, p. 61) in the fall of 1905 and, in a theatrical gesture, used the miserable school report for toilet paper. His prior history irreversibly set him on a course that made it impossible to react to humiliations with anything other than intensified forms of self-aggrandizement. Instead of seeing his lack of presentable qualities as a reason for showing more modesty, he turned the tables and expressed contempt for the others, even the entire school system – just as later, when it became more and more evident that he was incapable of meeting the requirements of public institutions, he would declare all civil service in general to be contemptible. But the contempt for the school system he displayed to the outer world could not be reconciled with reality. He may have destroyed the document that denied him his secondary school certificate in a spontaneous reaction of defiance, but the humiliating facts could not be concealed nonetheless. And so, he sheepishly requested a new copy of the school report and considered how he might explain to his mother that he did not think himself capable of attaining the academic goal. His energies – for the most part bound up in keeping up the defense against the humiliations he suffered and maintaining the pretense of a non-existent superiority – were all used up. But this would have escaped her notice, for she naturally expected that he would finish his education and that as long as he wanted to do so, it would cost him no effort. And since she would have interpreted his inability as an unwillingness, the unthinkable result of disappointing her conditional love was preprogrammed.

In this situation, Hitler was under extreme strain: on the one hand, he urgently needed his mother's consolation and understanding of his wish to end the hopeless school-time drudgery; on the other hand, he knew that it was this very proof of love that his mother could not provide. A recognition of his weakness would have been equivalent to a complete loss of her esteem. Under this strain, he broke down. Kubizek, whom Hitler had met shortly prior to this, and with whom he immediately established an exclusive bond, recollects: "In those months, in the fall of 1905, Adolf was going through a severe crisis, the most severe that I ever witnessed in him in the years of our friendship. Outwardly this was expressed in the fact that he became seriously ill. He himself speaks in his book of a lung illness. His sister Paula reports of a hemorrhage. Others claim it was a self-suggested stomach complaint. [...] As far as I recall, this illness was indeed a lung problem, more specifically, a catarrh of the apex" (p. 62). The peculiar indistinctness of the diagnosis makes it pretty clear that here we are dealing with a breakdown that is less of a physical and more of a psychical nature. The records

of the physician called to the case also do not contain the slightest bit of evidence for any organic illness. Hamann (1996, p. 20) is no doubt correct in suspecting a crisis of deep exhaustion, but the causes of this lay not in physical, but rather in mental and emotional over-exertion: Hitler had suffered what was, for an already precariously extravagant self-presentation, the greatest of all the humiliations he had yet encountered. But the usual reaction pattern of overcompensation had broken down in a moment when the neediness of his private self made itself all-too-clearly felt. For once, he wanted to be allowed, finally, to show the weakness he secretly felt. But this was denied him precisely by the expectations of the very person to whom he would have wanted to reveal himself at all. A demonstrative invalidism was the only way out of his dilemma – but it was an ambivalent solution. Although it justified the bed-ridden patient in entrusting himself to the care of his mother, at the same time he, as well as she, would have had to hate himself for his wretched state – for it represented a betrayal of the grandiose self-image that had bound the two so intimately until then.

This was the most extreme of all the humiliations suffered by Hitler up to that point, and we have every reason to interpret it as a primary impetus for Hitler's rejection of the private aspects of the self – as a first step on the path to a complete narcissistic fixation on his public self, which would no longer recognize any such signs of weakness. Here lies one of the roots of Hitler's schizoid coldness, which systematically immunized itself against every form of emotional affliction. From then on, he remained trapped by this primary impetus. While he sought to cover up the traces of his father, he always took a photograph and an oil painting of his mother with him, even to the site of his suicide in the Führer bunker (cf. Eitner 1981, p. 17; Steinert 1991, p. 27). His plan to have a high bell tower erected in her honor in Linz after the war remained a fantasy (cf. Carr 1978, p. 233). The grandiose conception of this monument, and the fact that he was not able to realize it, symbolize the originary source of his split relation to the world.

The strong affiliation with the mother's inflated expectations regarding Hitler's status was a leading cause of the high degree of inner tension he experienced throughout his entire life. "Everything preoccupied and disturbed him" (Kubizek 1953, p. 21) without, however, the possibility of being transformed into creative activity. This conflict had already began to develop during his time in school, and became more intense in the following years. In June 1905 the family moved into a comfortable apartment in Linz, where Hitler led "a life of parasitic idleness" (Kershaw 1998, p. 20). He was waited on by three women who took care of the household for him: his mother, her sister Johanna (the "Hanitante") and his little sister Paula. He took piano lessons for four months and was given his own grand piano to do so. A certain talent for drawing was exercised sporadically, and from time to time he also tried his hand at writing poetry. These unsystematic activi-

ties, together with his visits to the opera and to concerts, were occasion enough for him to conjure up a fantasy of a future career as an important artist. He was a late riser who had great difficulty with life's concrete decisions – indeed, had to have great difficulty with them, since they would have interfered with his grandiose self-image.

This background must be considered in relation to Kubizek's report of Hitler's tireless activity during their time together in Linz and Vienna. "He drew, he painted, he wrote poetry, he read. I cannot recall that Adolf had ever had nothing to do, or that he was bored for even an hour." But even his friend was aware of the unfruitfulness of these activities: "there was no definite purpose, no clear aim to be seen. He simply piled up impressions, experiences, and materials around him with enormous energy" (1953, p. 63). The inability to sit still and relax is characteristic of nearly all schizophrenic psychoses. The so-called deficiency theory of schizophrenia ascribes this to an "instability of intention," in which hyperactivity is – seemingly paradoxically – coupled with adynamia. The lack of drive combined with simultaneous bustling activity is interpreted as a symptom of a "protective, defensive stance against overtaxation through intention-related strain, or as a phenomenon concomitant with it" (Mundt 1984, p. 582). The afflicted must continuously occupy themselves with some kind of activity in order not to feel the inner flaw they are seeking to escape. A virtually classical example of this symptom is Hitler's distracted restlessness in the years after he left school. His activity was not allowed to concretize into realizable projects since this must have inevitably led to an admission of his own inability. Every glimpse into his private self – that is, into its substantive loss of emotionally-anchored intentionality – had to be anxiously avoided. An expression of this sealing-off is the lack of readiness to grant others an autonomous judgment over one's own actions. "Whenever a particular notion had taken hold of him," writes Kubizek, "he became as if possessed by it. Nothing else existed for him. It could make him forget time, sleep, hunger, everything [...] Then, he would pull out a notebook, the pencil would fly over the paper. This problem must be solved just so, and not otherwise, he would explain. I would have to compare his sketches with the executed design, would have to appreciate or reject things along with him, and all with an zeal as though both our lives depended on it" (1953, p. 99).

Suppression of affect, self-masking, and withdrawal were the tried and true means of immunizing himself against the wounding humiliations to which Hitler felt himself exposed on a large scale in his childhood and youth. Meant for the highest of all things in the eyes of his mother, he had to repress the admission of the paltriness that was made all too clear to him by his unresolved backwoods existence, the superiority of his fellow students in Linz, and his failure to meet the most minimal academic demands. This flagrant discrepancy between expectation

and reality could only be endured if the real failures were presented as a sign of a higher calling, as an indirect confirmation of an exceptional norm that could not be measured on the usual scale of success. In order to be able to convincingly stage the aura of defiant rebellion against bourgeois conventions, shameful consternation had to be turned into cool superiority. In short: Hitler saw himself compelled to encapsulate – and eventually split off – his private feeling in favor of a public self-construct.

This was the dynamic that, in the years after Hitler left school, gave rise to his styling of himself as a bohemian who despised the educational system and the civil service. If during this time, Hitler made "the impression of an ascetic oddball or day-dreaming artist," this is not to be seen as a sign of dandyism (Eitner, p. 23, 27) – he lacked the frivolity for it; rather, it was the dubious, ambivalent result of a self-concealing strategy born of emotional despair, which only mimicked the type of the misunderstood genius.

As Steinert (1991) also emphasizes, the choice of the vaguely promising career as painter is an expression of Hitler's feelings of social inferiority. Since artists are beyond the bounds of social convention, they cannot be measured by the same social standards that Hitler could not live up to (p. 31). This defensive background explains why he had to eschew the social contact necessary for a process of maturity. This had fatal consequences for a young man of his age because it prevented him from taking the steps toward closer contact with the opposite sex that would have been necessary for his development. Hitler had already gotten so carried away in the course of his illusory overcoming of actual trial situations by means of compensatory fantasies of grandeur, that he wound up missing the path to intimacy with others entirely.

Puberty. Obstructions on the path toward socialization

In his book *Childhood and Society*, Erik H. Erikson espouses the thesis that the National Socialist ideal of purity – which eventually extended to the eradication of the Jews, who were phobically perceived as a bacillus – can be traced back to Hitler's unresolved pubescent conflicts. This thesis is founded on a theory of personality development according to which puberty – as the phase in which one risks the step from "I" to "you" – is ascribed a key role for the individual process of maturation: "Thus, the young adult, who emerges out of the search for and insistence upon his own identity, is filled with a zeal and eagerness to merge his identity with that of the other. He is open to intimacy; that is, he is capable of yielding himself to real attachments and partnerships, and of developing the power of remaining faithful to his commitments, even when they demand sub-

stantial sacrifices and compromises. Body and ego must now have mastery over organic modalities and root conflicts so that one may – without fearing the loss of the self – deal with situations that require abandon: with orgasms and sexual union, with intimate friendships and physically violent encounters, with experiences of inspiration through teachers and of intuition from the depths of the self. If a young person eschews these experiences for fear of a loss of self, this then leads to a feeling of deepest isolation, and finally, to a complete preoccupation with oneself – to a loss of the outer world. The opposite of intimacy is dissociation: the readiness to isolate and, if necessary, to destroy energies and people whose nature seems a danger to one's own, and whose 'territory' threatens to encroach upon the sphere of one's own intimate relationships. Prejudices that develop in this way (and are used and exploited in politics and war) are the unfortunate outgrowth of a blind rejection that draws a sharp and merciless distinction between the familiar and the strange in the struggle for identity" (1950, p. 258).

Erikson himself did not make his account of the dangers of a dysfunctional puberty any more concrete in relation to Hitler's biography. We will make up for this in the following; whereby it will become evident that in Hitler's case, this decisive step in personal development foundered in an unusually dramatic way. Moreover, the psychotic tendency to dissociate oneself from others will become evident in the light of the paradigm of the public and private self: the exclusively outward orientation is maintained in isolation by means of delusional fantasies.

The most direct manifestation of this complex of symptoms is Hitler's "relationship" to Stefanie Rabatsch, which existed entirely in his mind. Although he only observed the girl from a distance without ever having exchanged a single word with her, he regarded her for years as his lover, who sent him telepathic signs of her favor. Hitler set himself an unattainable condition for a potential meeting with his beloved, and its contradictory logic corresponded to the fixation on his public self: Precisely because she appeared to him as a partner worthy of his imaginary greatness, he was not allowed to approach her until he could demonstrate the status that would do justice to this fantasy image of himself. The foundering on the path toward the "you" seems, in fact, to have been the result of one of the first episodes of full-blown delusions of grandeur.

Before we can go into the concrete details of this episode and its biographical circumstances, a word must be said about the reliability of the main source of information for this: the notes of August Kubizek, the friend of Hitler's youth. It must be taken into account that Kubizek's "Recollections" were originally commissioned by the NSDAP in order to portray the "unfathomable greatness of the Führer in his youth" (IfZ Munich, MA–731). However, both in this version of 1938 as well as in the revised edition of 1953 – all the obvious heroizing intentions and various factual errors notwithstanding – a kind of baffled astonishment

about Hitler's strangeness comes through, which can be read as an authentic reflection of Kubizek's experience. Precisely insofar as Kubizek does not manage to realize his post-war intention of providing an "objective, fair, and therefore truly convincing account of the historical facts" (p. 8), the distortions of his perspective reveal more about Hitler's effect on others than we might glean from a sober, matter-of-fact report. As Hamann also finds (1996), it is exactly in those passages that deal with "personal experiences" that Kubizek's recollections are "credible" (p. 55). And Kershaw also subscribes to this view; he believes Kubizek's "recollections ... to be a more credible source on Hitler's youth than was once thought," since the unequal constellation of the friendship is here consistently captured: "Gustl [Kubizek] was highly impressionable; Adolf out for someone to impress. Gustl was compliant, weak-willed, subordinate; Adolf was superior, determining, dominant" (1998, p. 21). Moreover, Kubizek did not remain entirely unaware of this constellation and the role that he had to play in it. "He had to speak," he sums up his own significance for Hitler, "and needed someone to listen to him" (1953, p. 22).

The monologic eruptions revolved above all around the genius of Wagner and the titanic nature of his Teutonic heroes, as well as around the necessity of razing the public buildings of Linz in order to rebuild them on a greater, more imposing scale in accordance with his own plans. At this time, Hitler had already lost his grip on reality. Through his clothing and behavior, he projected to the outer world the image of being something he could never have become: a student. This publicly demonstrated form of existence – which had no correspondence in reality, and which he underscored through a carefully decked-out, dandyish wardrobe – continued to be maintained until a further humiliating defeat occasioned him to drive the pretense even further. During the years of his illusory life as a student, he was increasingly consumed by the dream of a great career as an artist. He compensated the shame of his academic failure by means of affecting the behavior of eccentric genius, and in his need to be able to forget all his previous defeats and the authors of them, he actually began to paint incessantly, manically driven by the compulsion to be something else, something better, something somehow "higher" (Fest 1973, p. 21). Witnesses from this time in his life remember him as a "somewhat frightened young man," who did not open up to friendly encouragement, but instead displayed a truly "taciturn nature" (record of conversation, Lugert, in Jetzinger 1956, p. 115f). Fleeing from the confrontation with his experiences of helplessness in the face of his father and mother, his classmates and teachers, Hitler erected for himself a day-dream world of fantastic dimensions. He kept himself busy till late into the night with his grand urban planning projects or went to see Wagner operas that provided a musical and dramatic backdrop for his megalomania.

It was on one of these visits to the opera that Hitler met August Kubizek: as a rival for one of the more comfortable standing-room places. To the latter, Hitler appeared at first glance to be a "strikingly pale young man of slight build," who was "always dressed with meticulous care and [...] was extremely reserved," and thus presumably came "from a good family" (Kubizek 1953, p. 17). Hitler's reserve would soon yield to a monopolization of his friend, although these demands were simultaneously marked by emotional distance. The relationship between the two – which even Kubizek described only with reservation as a "friendship" – demonstrates from the start to what extent Hitler had already lost all capacity for interpersonal contact. Kubizek was merely the audience for Hitler's grandiose self-presentations. Without venturing a personal connection and the concomitant private exchange – indeed, precisely by virtue of the maintenance of this distance – Hitler cast a spell over him. However, the inconsistencies and eccentricities of his friend's self-stylization did not escape his notice – for instance, "the black ebony walking stick with the dainty ivory handle [...], a decidedly studenty prop." But when he became curious about Hitler's education, this unwittingly provoked a fit of rage: "He wanted to have absolutely nothing to do with school. School was of no concern to him any more [...] he hated the professors and no longer greeted them, and he hated the other students too, who were taught nothing but loafing. No, I wasn't to mention school to him." How much wounded pride lay behind this tirade was something Kubizek found out immediately afterward, when he remarked in agreement that he himself had also had little success in school: "'*Why no success*,' he wanted to know. He didn't like it at all that I had fared badly in school, though he disdained it so. I could not make sense of this contradiction" (p. 19).

The contradiction is easy to clear up: Hitler could not justify his contempt for school on the grounds of his own failure since this would have been tantamount to a belittlement of his public self. His self-presentation was entirely dedicated to outward effect and had to indignantly sweep aside any suspicion that it might have its roots in compensation. That this was the case was no longer completely transparent even for Hitler; in the meantime, the defensive reaction kicked in quite automatically. One reason for his later success with the masses – whose place Kubizek anticipated as representative audience – is that Hitler's reactive rage showed not a trace of self-doubt. This is only possible if the private cause of the compensatory behavior has been largely dissociated. Because this cause had become a blind spot for Hitler, he was quite naturally able to criticize his friend for an academic failure that was applicable to himself in far greater degree.

Despite, or indeed because, of these contradictions in his behavior, Hitler managed to impress the simple Kubizek. He showed him poems and drawings – or rather, hints of them, for it was hardly more than that: "somewhat muddled,

obscure plans" (Kubizek 1953, p. 20) the more precise and extensive versions of which he supposedly had at home. Despite his skepticism, the friend who had been chosen to be an audience willingly swallowed the bragging. Although he wondered why Hitler did not seek contact with professionals to discuss his bombastic plans and instead tended to anxiously avoid them (p. 186), Kubizek was all the more flattered that this mysterious maverick preferred to make do with an ordinary person like himself. Hitler, he wrote, "belonged to that special sort of human being of which I myself had dreamt in my bold moments; an artist who despised merely 'making a living' and occupied himself only with poetry, drawing, painting and going to the theater. This impressed me enormously. I trembled before the magnificence that I experienced there" (p. 20).

Kubizek was thus the ideal object for the exhibition of a brilliant public self, which Hitler needed in order to make up for his deficit of a private self. That the external effect of this over-compensation was so great cannot be explained by way of the friend's naiveté alone, for with respect to his education and talent, Kubizek was at the least on the same level as Hitler. Rather, it was the pathologically abnormal aspect of Hitler's charisma that produced for Kubizek the fascination of the "magnificence" before which entire masses would later "tremble." Indeed, the generally off-putting lack of private self that is typical of schizophrenics can actually amplify personal magnetism if it is accompanied by a correspondingly grandiose embellishment of the relation to the outer world. It may be observed in the case of schizophrenic children that the cessation of all personal feelings occasionally aids them in projecting themselves outwardly with enormous intensity (cf. Erikson 1950, p. 19ff). In the case of the young Hitler, the impressive emphaticness with which he presented his gigantomanic projects was a result of the paranoid repulsion of all memory of personal failure. For an enthusiastically-disposed observer such as Kubizek, Hitler's emotional void with respect to interpersonal relations could have been misinterpreted as a sign of his superhuman greatness.

Hitler high-handedly disposed of Kubizek's free time and completely monopolized him as a listener. He would not tolerate any other people around him who might distract the interest of his exclusive audience away from him, since this would have been tantamount to a relativization of his staged exceptionality. When Kubizek once wondered why Hitler wanted to accompany him to a wake for a teacher he had not known, he received the answer: "*Because I can't stand it when you go and talk with other young people*" (p. 24). The narcissism asserted in this statement is not one that is based on a private desire for love and personal respect. It is exclusively a narcissism of the public self. It was a matter of complete indifference to Hitler whether or not his friend liked him. The only thing that counted was the validation of what he outwardly pretended to be. He was to

remain his whole life long without any real relationship to other people, since he was only ever out to find confirmation for his masquerade. And this had to be maintained at all costs, for it protected his lack of personality from being penetrated by another's gaze. What Hitler really thought and felt remained hidden from Kubizek as well (p. 173). A break in the intimacy barrier would have been experienced by the young Hitler as a massive threat. As both were once walking through Linz – the one lecturing, the other listening – they came upon an earlier schoolmate of Hitler's who caught him by the sleeve and with a friendly greeting inquired after his well-being. Kubizek reports: "I expected that Adolf would respond to his classmate in an equally friendly fashion, since he had put so much stock in good, polite behavior. But my friend turned red with rage [...] *'That's none of your damn business!'* he yelled angrily into his face and roughly pushed him away. Then he took my arm and continued with me along his way without concerning himself with the other [...] *'They're all future civil servants!'* he said to me, still angry, *'and I sat in the same class with such creatures!'* It took a long time for him to calm down" (p. 23).

The aggressive rejection of a friendly gesture is the symptom of a fear – already grown into a paranoia – of exposing the private self to view, as well as a symptom of a pathological fixation on the public sphere. If anyone was going to take a hold of anyone's sleeve, then it would be Hitler – the other way around was for him an unbearable narcissistic injury, since any personal attention toward him represented a disregard of his untouchable greatness. And especially in front of Kubizek – the sole indispensable addressant of these grandiose performances – Hitler must have experienced the patronizing familiarity of his classmate as particularly shaming, indeed, as a threat to his identity. What is typically schizophrenic about this behavior is the inability to balance out the challenge to the public self with the reassurance of one's own worth in a private sense of self, as is normally the case. In his ossification into a mask, the schizophrenic is barred from the possibility of such an inner reassurance. This was also true of Hitler. He concealed his private self behind the public for so long that there was eventually nothing left to conceal. He was the greatest, and if the outer world didn't recognize that, then he would have to aggressively attack it and create a new one.

The plans for the reconstruction of Linz that he elaborated more and more extensively for Kubizek's benefit offer clear proof of this move into a substitute world. "At first," wrote Kubizek, "I observed this activity with very mixed feelings and wondered why he so stubbornly occupied himself with things that, as I believed, he could have never realized. But he worked himself up about a project all the more intensely, the further removed it was from its realization" (p. 100). Pretty soon, Hitler was no longer satisfied with the alteration of isolated buildings – the bank, the city hall, the theater – and instead began increasingly to include

the entire city, and eventually the surroundings of Linz, in his plans: a new bridge over the Danube was to be built – so huge, that a raised road would have to be constructed for the approach. The train station was relocated outside the city gates so as not to hinder the expansion of the inner city and the traffic in it. The Wildberg castle was to be reconstructed as a historical *"island on which time has stood still for centuries,"* and peopled with families of craftsmen so that tourists might study *"the life and doings of a medieval castle settlement."* A 300-meter steel tower was to be erected on top of the Lichtenberg so that one could see the Cathedral of St. Stephan in Vienna from the platform. Finally, a huge memorial with a *"hall of honor"* was to house "*the busts of all the greats*"; it was to be covered over by a dome from which one would *"enjoy the splendid panorama of the open countryside,"* and which would in turn be crowned by *"the figure of Sigfried, holding up his sword Nothung in the air."* The plaza in front of the monument would open up directly onto the Danube bridge. All these ideas were not just the sporadic notions occasionally thought up by youthful high spirits. Hitler threw himself into his delusionally grandiose project with such intensity that it became reality for him. Kubizek assures us: "Adolf was already living in this 'reconstructed' Linz to such an extent that he geared his daily habits to it. We went to the *'temple of honor*,' to the *'dedication hall*,' or to our *'medieval open-air museum*" (p. 100-106).

That none of these plans were realizable, even if Hitler were to some day become the greatest of all architects and a rich, powerful man – these were considerations that played a role for Kubizek, but not for his friend. "*Money – oh, fiddlesticks!"* was his supposed retort to the objections. And he bridged the gulf between the claim and the reality in a symptomatic way: he bought a lottery ticket – although for him, this did not mean something like trying his luck. To Hitler's understanding, there could be no question that he had drawn the winning number. "*Here it is*," he declared to Kubizek after a long and seemingly systematic process of selection. The days until the drawing were spent in rapturous fantasizing about all that would be done with the prize money. When the moment of truth came, Hitler went into a horrible rage like someone who has been personally hurt and deceived. "Not for one minute," Kubizek writes, "did it occur to Adolf to reproach himself because he had laid claim to the grand prize so absolutely, as if it were a matter of course" (p. 109). After the lottery disappointment, Hitler was deeply depressed and contented himself with smaller-scale projects, such as the construction of a bridge between Linz and Urfahr, where his mother had last lived (p. 109f). But the defeat was a further reason for Hitler to reinforce his defensive self-enhancement. He had to distance himself from people even further in order to preserve his delusions of grandeur from possible humiliation.

Hitler's phantasmically hyperbolic self-image found stimulation in the operatic world of Wagner (cf. Köhler 1997). And if Kubizek's portrayal has any credence, this is where he also drew the contents of a particularly florid delusional episode: the hallucination of being overwhelmed by a strange voice that called upon him to bring about the political redemption of Germany. The occasion was a Linz production of Wagner's *Rienzi*. The opera – which draws the ideal image of a people's tribunal in a parabolic adaptation of a medieval Roman subject – impressed Hitler deeper than all his previous musical theater experiences. Kubizek reports that the nighttime walk they took afterwards on the Freinberg was "the most impressive hour I experienced with my friend": "It had struck midnight. Yet my friend continued – earnest and taciturn, hands buried deep in his coat pockets – down the street out of the city. Although it was usually his habit after an artistic experience that had moved him to being speaking immediately and to criticize the production with sharp judgment [...], after this *Rienzi* production, Adolf remained silent for some time [...] As if driven by an invisible force, Adolf climbed toward the summit of the Freinberg [...] Adolf stood before me. And then he seized both my hands and held them fast. It was this one single gesture, which I had never experienced with him before. I felt the pressure of his hands, how deeply shaken he was. His eyes were feverish with excitement. The words did not flow eloquently from his mouth, as usual, but rather broke forth roughly and hoarsely from him [...] Something strange struck me in this hour, which I had never observed in him on earlier occasions when he had spoken to me in an excited form: It was as if another I was speaking out of him, by whom he himself was as deeply moved as I had been. It was by no means so, as one says nowadays of a compelling speaker, that he was exhilarated by his own words. On the contrary! I rather had the impression as if he himself were experiencing, with astonishment, indeed with deep emotion, what was bursting forth from him with such elemental power. I undertake no judgment with regard to this observation. But it was an ecstatic state, a state of complete rapture in which he took what he had experienced in *Rienzi* and, without directly mentioning this model and example, placed it, in a magnificent vision, onto another level appropriate to himself [...] The words broke forth from him like a swollen river through a cracked dam. In magnificent, rousing images, he elaborated for me his future and that of his people." The previously touted life ambitions of a painter or architect reveal themselves against the background of this vision as what they had always been: the mere ciphers of the aspiration to an exceptional norm: "Something higher was at stake for him, which I could not yet fully grasp. I was very much surprised by it, because I thought that the artistic profession appeared to him to be the highest, most desirable aim. But now he spoke of a mission that he would at some point

accept from the populace in order to lead it out of its servitude to the heights of freedom" (Kubizek 1953, p. 116f).

Indeed, this hallucinatory experience must have deeply made its mark on Hitler. More than 30 years later, on the occasion of Kubizek's visit to the Reichskanzlei in 1939, Hitler was able to recall all the details of the Freinberg scene when it was brought up. Shortly afterward, during a visit to Bayreuth in August 1939, Hitler introduced his friend to Winifred Wagner and told her of their shared *Rienzi* experience. Hitler concluded with the remark: *"In that hour, it began"* (p. 118). Between 1933 and 1938, the *Rienzi* overture introduced the Nuremberg rallies of the NSDAP; it thus became the "secret anthem of the Third Reich" (Hamann 1996, p. 24).

Long before, it had become Hitler's own secret hymn. Spurned on by his delusional experience, Hitler's self-image now took on the contours of a publicly heroic role. What "*began*" in that hour was a leave-taking from every-day reality in favor of a schizophrenic delusion of redemption in which his visions' lack of reality were transformed into the proof of their greatness. In the following years, Hitler continued to keep up the ambitions of the brilliant artist and architect, but the more his incompetence threatened to reveal itself to the eyes of his one-man audience, the more disproportionate and absurd became the plans that he announced. His extravagance had taken on a dimension that blocked his return not only to communicable terms, but to reality as such. Just like with a mountain climber who climbed up the wrong trail, any step backward would mean a certain fall. The path could only lead further up, away from human norms and sensations.

This is the background against which the episode with Stefanie Rabatsch, to which we now turn, must be seen. Any contact with the girl – and with it, the step from I to you appropriate to puberty – was literally obstructed by the gigantomanic architecture of his public self, which blocked off any view into the private self. Under these circumstances, youthful enthusiasm had to grow into delusional fantasy. Hitler saw Stefanie – clearly a girl from better social circles (the daughter of an official) – on her regular evening walks with her mother. He was so taken by her appearance that he came to observe her promenades daily at the Schmiedtoreck. "*I love her, namely,*" he explained to his friend (Kubizek 1953, p. 64); but he never made a move to approach her. He always maintained a safe distance, so that she could not even notice him. When she was later asked about Hitler's youthful infatuation, she could not remember the young man who lay in wait for her evening after evening. In the four years that Hitler follower her around, not a single word was ever spoken between them. The fantasy of catching brief glances from her sufficed for him. And after she had once coincidentally thrown a flower in his direction out of a carriage at a public festival, he became

definitively convinced that she returned his love. In response to Kubizek's question, why he did not simply introduce himself, he gave a characteristic reason: his status was not sufficiently high for an appropriate approach. *"I would have to name my profession during the introduction, after all,"* he replied, "*'Adolf Hitler, academic painter,' or something like that. But I'm not one yet. First I have to become one. Then I can introduce myself*" (p. 67).

The shyness of the youth is understandable, especially since Hitler had to ascertain painfully that his rivals were young officers whose attentions Stefanie visibly enjoyed. But the psychotic element of his reasoning emerges in the fact that he makes his own status into an indispensable precondition for contact with the opposite sex. And since he had long since worked up his self image to the dimensions of genius, an "appropriate status" in his eyes was something that lay far beyond normal standards. The mechanism of psychotic reaction, then, makes the entry into an intimate relationship conditioned on the very thing that stands in its way. Hitler would only be able to have sexual relations with women when his monstrous need for recognition was publicly validated. This, too, would have nothing to do with real intimacy – a result of the fact that in Hitler the normal pubescent process of maturity was blocked.

Kubizek adopts Hitler's rationalization when he writes: "Back then, he already had such a high view of man's relationship to woman that the normal way of making an acquaintance appeared unworthy to him. He fiercely rejected any form of flirtation" (p. 68). Indeed, he would have had to – since he lacked the psychological requirements for the play of fleeting glimpses into private desire. He was faced with a dilemma: he was only capable of worshipping his intended in the form of public self-presentation, and at the same time, had to keep this presentation to himself for lack of real substance. And so he wrote Stefanie love poems that he never sent, and built her palaces in his head that he could not realize.

The infatuation had nothing to do with the "sweet love-sickness" of a teenager – it was sick in the clinical sense. Kubizek observed how the phantasm of heroic love "increasingly lost more and more of its actuality for Adolf and was transfigured into a purely ideal image [...] His feelings and sensations for Stefanie visibly lost all support in reality" (p. 231). He did not experience the lack of contact in real life as a deficiency that had to be overcome, but instead interpreted it as a significant sign of a telepathic communication between lovers: "He always claimed," writes Kubizek, "that if would entirely suffice for him to stand before Stefanie one day. Everything else would then become immediately clear without a word having to be said between them. Two such unusual human beings like Stefanie and himself had absolutely no need of the normal forms of verbal communication common to other people. Extraordinary people understood one an-

other with the help of intuition, he explained to me. And even if it were the most out-of-the-way-theme, Adolf was always convinced that Stefanie would not only know his plan exactly, but would have as great an interest in it as he himself did. When I objected that he had never told Stefanie a thing about it, and that I doubted whether she cared about such things at all, he flew into a rage and yelled at me: *'You just don't get it, because you can't understand the meaning of an extraordinary love*'" (p. 67).

His rage also extended to the numerous young men who, unlike Hitler, did not let their lack of exceptional status stop them from accompanying Stefanie on her walks. The loafer cursed his rivals as "*loafers*" (p. 65). That they were nonetheless considered worthy of Stefanie's association could not be overlooked; but Hitler found an explanation of his own for this. He dismissed the clear sign that belied his imaginary precondition for a relationship and interpreted it "as a kind of self-created diversion [...] with which Stefanie wished to conceal her passionate feelings from him" (p. 67). Admittedly, this did not help him to bridge the gulf between reality and fiction; and if we may trust Kubizek's report, then Hitler did fragmentarily perceive the condition he was in: "Day and night, he was pursued by the image of his beloved. He reported being incapable of working at all, he could not even think clearly any more. He feared losing his mind if this condition continued for a longer time, a condition that he was not capable of altering on his own, but for which he could not make Stefanie responsible either. *'There is only one thing for it,'* he called out, '*I must go away, far away from Stefanie*'" (p. 126).

And Hitler now in fact effected a separation. Early in May 1906, he set out for his first visit to Vienna. The psychotic background of this distancing measure comes to light in the instructions he left for his friend in parting: Stefanie, he explained, would naturally notice his absence immediately and ask about him with concern. Then, he should answer: "My friend is not sick, rather he had to go to Vienna in order to take up studies at the Fine Arts Academy there. When he is finished with his studies, he will spend a year traveling – abroad, naturally [...] After four years, he will return and ask for your hand" (p. 72). Apparently, Kubizek was supposed to just confirm the information that Hitler also sent Stefanie in writing. When asked about it after the Second World War, she explained: "I once received a letter in which someone informed me that he was now going to the art academy but that I should wait for him and he would come back and marry me. I no longer remember what else was in the letter, or whether and how it was signed. Back then, I had absolutely no idea to whom I should ascribe it. The letter came with the mail, and like all letters, was read by my mother; but it was not followed by the otherwise usual upbraiding" (written communication, Jetzinger 1956, p. 144). Jetzinger comments: "That the letter did not precipitate a

domestic squabble is understandable; the clever mother would have quickly recognized that it was a matter of either a joke or a writer with a screw loose somewhere" (p. 144f).

In the two weeks that Hitler spent in Vienna, he did not make a single move to undertake the realization of his fantastic career designs. He roamed through the city, went to the museum and to hear Wagner at the Opera – including a performance of *Tristan* conducted by Gustav Mahler – and passed up the opportunity to register for the entrance examination at the Academy. Most likely, he once again did not feel equal to putting his ideal self-image to the test. Nonetheless, he harbored the expectation that his absence would have been enough for Stefanie to have painfully missed him. Upon his return to Linz, he immediately asked about her reaction. "Adolf did not want to believe it," writes Kubizek, "that Stefanie had not asked about him. He assumed that she would naturally have as great a longing for him as he for her" (p. 73). The humiliation of his delusional love affected him deeply, especially since he had been carried away to make a confession in the letter, and any attempt to make contact would expose him, now more than ever, to the feared disgrace. The disappointment must have motivated him to leave Linz and dare to seriously attempt the entrance examination for the Vienna Academy. He asked his mother for a statement of consent for his studies, which she granted him full of hope despite the objections of his skeptical guardian. Early in September 1907 – after some considerable time for preparation, that is – Hitler registered for the examination in Vienna and made it through the first round of selections. Full of *"proud confidence,"* as he himself admits in *Mein Kampf*, he then went to the second part of the exam, the drawing test. But once again, self-image and reality were poles apart: "*I had set out with a pile of drawings, convinced that it would be child's play to pass the examination. At the Realschule I had been by far the best in my class at drawing; and since then my ability had developed amazingly; my own satisfaction caused me to take a joyful pride in hoping for the best [...] I was so convinced that I would be successful that when I received my rejection, it struck me as a bolt from the blue [...] Downcast, I left von Hansen's magnificent building on the Schillerplatz, for the first time in my young life at odds with myself*" (Hitler 1925/27, p. 19f).

Hitler's drawings were judged as "inadequate" – indeed, the director of the Academy, whom Hitler sought out in bewilderment after the rejection, explained to him that his drawings demonstrated "beyond question" his "unsuitability for painting." He had not reckoned with this "*sudden blow*." The humiliation was aggravated even more when then director suggested to him the alternative of studying architecture. This was devastating for him, but not because – as he claims in *Mein Kampf* – he was lacking the educational prerequisites for this course of study (p. 20). The path to the Academy's architecture school would

have been absolutely open to him (cf. Joachimsthaler 1989, p. 35); but it was incompatible with his psychic structure to chose this – only second-best – option.

Anxiously, he kept the rejection a secret, both from his mother and from Kubizek. Again, he could not compensate for the humiliation by falling back on an inner feeling of self-worth; again, he found himself facing the dilemma of not being able to seek comfort with the only people close to him, for their acceptance also applied entirely to his public self. He had even avoided taking leave of his mother upon his departure from Linz because, as Kubizek writes, he loathed "public admission of feelings" (p. 130). An additional complication was that Klara Hitler was now seriously ill, and all the more in need of having the hopes she had placed in her son confirmed. Although Hitler looked after his sick mother with great devotion – as Binion (1976), in particular, substantiates against accounts to the contrary – it still did not escape her that he kept his innermost being hidden from her and found himself on a lonely track far from all personal relations. Shortly before her death she said full of foreboding about her son: "He goes his way as if he were all alone in the world" (Kubizek 1953, p. 132).

When his mother died, Hitler suffered his second major breakdown. The family physician, Dr. Bloch, recalled that although he had witnessed many death-bed scenes, he had "never seen a person as broken by pain as Adolf Hitler" (Bloch 1941, p. 39). Aside from the grief over the loss of the only person who had loved him, the fact that he had not been able to reveal himself to this very person no doubt contributed to the physical collapse. Now there was decidedly no longer an alternative to a life of exclusive outwardness with an absolute lack of interpersonal contact.

Indeed, just as his mother had predicted, he now went his way as if her were all alone in the world – with no consideration for feelings, committed solely to the bizarre perception of his own exceptional norm. His later rise is based on this forced dissociation of the private. The icy coldness that surrounded him completely since the death of his mother provided him with an enormous, unscrupulous ability to assert himself. But at first, this rise took place only in his fantasy, as compensation for real insignificance.

The Vienna Years. Psychotic Loss of Reality

We can assume that the years 1908 through 1913 in Vienna were of central significance for the development of Hitler's delusional mania due to the dramatic loss of reality that took place during this time. We now turn to this most obscure phase of Hitler's biography, but first, it is necessary to say a few words about terminology. The concept of delusion has so deeply infiltrated everyday language

that an important clinical distinction has been lost in the process: the distinction between "delusional disorders" and systematized delusions with schizophrenic content. The former may also be present in the form of paranoia, megalomania, delusional jealousy, erotomania, or hypochondria, but as "non-bizarre" or "culturally appropriate" forms, they are distinguished from the schizophrenic forms of delusion. A person with a delusional disorder still maintains sufficient contact with reality so that the contents of his fantasies represent at least real possibilities in his culture, even if they are not actually real (Deister/Möller 1998, p. 90f).

To clarify this with the help of an example: Anyone who has ever been jealous is familiar with the feeling that in this state, he perceives the world somewhat distortedly – for instance, when he sees the beloved flirting with another and reads far more into her gestures than what is in fact behind them. This is entirely normal. A delusional disorder is present when the jealousy is accompanied by unreal fantasies, and these fantasies have a specified duration (at least three months according to the ICD-10, at least one month according to the DSM-IV). A person with this disorder would still have enough contact with reality to enable him to give comprehensible reasons for believing his partner had been intimate with another. He would say, for example: "The sheets were crumpled; I therefore perceive that you were here with someone else." The delusional disorder can also go so far that highly improbable accusations are made, such as that the infidelity occurred in the shared marriage-bed during the night, while the betrayed party was sleeping. Whether such fantasies have developed into a schizophrenic delusion becomes evident when the grounds provided for one's perceptions are unrealistic. For example, when the wife of one such patient asked how the purported lover was supposed to have entered the apartment, he replied: "Through the fireplace."

It will be the task of the following to determine in which category the development of Hitler's delusions should fall. The above distinction remains mostly undiscussed in the relevant Hitler monographs. We have already mentioned that Kershaw (1998) also speaks of Hitler's "progressive megalomania" (p. xxviii) or his "paranoid antisemitism" (p. 64), but does not wish to interpret this psychopathologically (Augstein/Raulff 1998, p. 45). We, on the other hand, believe that the tendency toward megalomania and paranoia underlying Hitler's psychic structure certainly does begin to take on the characteristics of schizophrenia during the period we shall now be dealing with. We see the causes for this in the fact that the increasing paltriness of Hitler's actual circumstances drove him to overcompensate by means of more and more peculiar, and finally bizarre, forms of self-presentation. It was precisely this complex – which at first led to an ever-deepening isolation – that would later on, in an altered social context, help him to achieve an extraordinarily effective public appeal.

The sources on this period are, however, rather sparse. The reason for this is the symptomatic fact that Hitler's last years in Vienna are marked by a complete loss of all interpersonal contact. The lack of information about him is, thus, in itself an indicator of his living situation at the time. At the same time – not least thanks to the meticulous reconstruction of Hamann (1996) – Hitler's social decline and increasing peculiarity may be retraced with adequate precision. In the process, one must keep in mind that we are not dealing here with someone who had gone astray like countless others, but rather with someone who had long since been carried away by the self-perception of being an artist of genius, a grand architect, a savior of the German nation. The gulf between this self-image and the reality of Hitler's life became so huge that it could no longer be bridged with comprehensible self-justifications. The contents of the delusions visibly lost any relation to reality.

This process began with the shameful rejection from the art academy, which had been to such an extent incompatible with his high-flown ambitions that he could not admit it either to his mother or his friend. Even these two people – the only ones who were close to him – were for him merely the audience for his public self, and he had to conceal the private humiliation from them. Klara Hitler died shortly afterward, and Hitler had his share of the small sum she left behind paid out to him (the father's inheritance had been placed in a blocked account until Hitler turned 24). Apparently, in the process of the inquest, he could not avoid revealing the reality of his situation, but at the same time, he glossed over it with a vague account of private studies. This emerges out of a letter written at the time by Klara's landlady: "The son of one of my tenants is becoming a painter, has gone to school in Vienna since the fall, he wanted to attend the Austro-Hungarian Academy of Visual Arts, but was not accepted and went to a private institution instead (Panholzer I believe)" (IfZ Munich 19/19, Hamann 1996, p. 38). But Kubizek was told nothing about the rejection. He was now the last remaining support for the ne'er-do-well who had distanced himself from the rest of his family. Since Hitler did not (yet) want to relinquish this hold, he was faced with an alternative: either remain in Linz with Kubizek and consequently admit the falsification of his high-flown plans, or entice Kubizek to come to Vienna so that he might keep up the pretense of his artistic studies there. With his psychic structure, he couldn't help but chose the second solution. Kubizek was persuaded to accompany Hitler to Vienna, where he was able immediately to gain entrance to the Vienna Music Conservatory. This, too, must have been seen by Hitler with mixed feelings. When Kubizek told him that he had passed the examination, Hitler merely responded with the cutting remark: "*I had no idea that I had such a clever friend*" (Kubizek 1953, p. 161).

They shared a room as subletters at Stumpergasse 31. Hitler registered himself as an "*artist*," but undertook nothing that might have furthered him in this regard. This is all the more remarkable considering that he had been offered a thoroughly attractive opportunity: his deceased mother's landlady, in the above-mentioned letter, induced a friend in Vienna to write a recommendation for Hitler addressed to Alfred Roller, the renowned stage designer of the Vienna Hofoper and professor at the School of Applied Arts. And Roller had promptly reacted to this appeal to his sympathy for the artistically talented orphan with a very benevolent and detailed letter: "Do tell young Hitler to call on me and to bring some of his works so I can see how he is doing. I surely will advise him as best I can" (IfZ Munich F 19/19, Hamann 1996, p. 39). The chance remained unused – Hitler preferred to conduct a spectacular but illusory course of studies instead of allowing his real talents to undergo official examination. The renunciation of a realistic career prospect was the price that he was willing to pay for the confirmation of his exceptional status. For the time being, the money left by his mother, together with the 25 crowns from his orphan's pension, was enough to keep up the fiction.

A lopsided situation thus arose in the room in which the two friends lived: the music student, who woke early in order to go to the conservatory, would come home to be greeted by the late-rising Hitler, who occupied the common living space with indiscriminately piled-up books, brochures, and architectural plans, as though he were the one engaged in serious study. Kubizek had great difficulty asserting his own living space; he was reproached that his piano was in the way, and when he wanted to go to sleep, Hitler hindered him with his nightly lectures. "The moment I had crawled into my bed, he would begin to pace up and down and let it rip. Just by the excited tone of his voice, I could tell how much his thoughts had plagued him. He was positively boiling over and had to unload in order to be able to endure the enormous tensions that filled him [...] And so there I was, awake in my bed, while Adolf [...] kept talking to me insistently and with such passion, as if he were addressing not a poor, insignificant music student, but rather a powerful political player who would decide over the fate of the German nation" (1953, p. 244f).

Our understanding of Hitler's later rise to power would remain incomplete if did not take into consideration the psychodynamic constellation described by Kubizek: a music student lying in his bed is imagined as a people's tribunal before whom an outcast with a social disorder expounds with glowing passion upon the crucial questions of Germany's existence – this is precisely the role division of "Führer" and "drummer" with which Hitler would later establish his career as a speaker (Tyrell 1975), until he could play the one part so successfully that the other simply fell into his lap. Already at this early stage, what was at stake for

Hitler in the speeches he made before Kubizek – just as it turned out to be in later years, when the German populace actually became his audience – was not political interest but rather being taken seriously: "When these performances became too extensive," Kubizek writes, "I would occasionally doze off. As soon as he discovered this, he would shake me awake and shout at me: didn't his words interest me anymore? If so, than I should go on sleeping like all the others at this time who have no national consciousness" (1953, p. 245). In these tirades, Hitler fantasized himself entirely out of his everyday existence; and in his later mass appearances, he would similarly talk right past the concrete life interests of his listeners – paradoxically casting a spell over them precisely for that reason. "*Don't come to me with your day-to-day questions!*" he proclaimed in one of his election campaigns. "*The day-to-day questions tend to spoil one's eye for greatness*" (Preiss n.d., p. 42). Indeed, his only concern was the "*eye for greatness*" – for the greatness of his own self-presentation, that is. And Kubizek was the first to have to observe this ritual.

Admittedly, Kubizek was aware that Hitler's grotesquely unrealistic chamber performances could not have simply been the expression of his genius, but rather clearly had their source in his effort to cover up a paltry existence by means of a grandiose self-conception. Kubizek pinpoints the underlying compensatory mechanism with complete clarity when, for instance, he reflects about his friend that "he made up for the complete insignificance of his existence by taking all the more decisive a position with regard to all questions of public interest" (1953, p. 92). But what Kubizek could not recognize was the psychotic background of this mechanism. While in the case of neurotics, the striving for recognition spurned on by feelings of inferiority leads to a systematic acquisition of skills – such as in the classical example of the orator Demosthenes, who had a speech impediment – this path is usually closed to schizophrenics. They are fixated to such an extent on presenting an impressive persona to the external world that they simply could not reconcile themselves to beginning "at square one," so to speak, in order to approach their high-flying goals step by step. Their self-enhancement is defensive, that is to say, it is based on characteristics that are not verifiable by others. Only in this way is it possible for them to demonstrate their exceptionality. Hitler's avoidance of contact with Alfred Roller was an example of this defensive self-aggrandizement. Another example is the following episode:

Kubizek told a fellow Conservatory student, who was working as a journalist at the *Wiener Tageblatt*, about the literary talents of his financially needy friend. The journalist was sympathetic and asked for a sample piece of writing that Hitler should bring to him personally at the editorial offices. Hitler, whose bad grades in German were not given unjustly, nonetheless acted as though it were not a problem for him. On the evening before the meeting, he sat himself down

and, to Kubizek's amazement, wrote "a novella" entitled *The Next Morning*. The title in itself already indicates that Hitler's thoughts were turned far more to the anticipated revelation of his literary inabilities than to the linguistic formulation of a fictional narrative. Kubizek relates what ensued: "The next morning, when we came to the Langegasse to speak with my colleague, there was a terrible quarrel. Without even letting the novella out of his hands, Adolf had hardly taken one look at the man, turned in the doorway and began to shout at me before we even left the stairway: *'You fool! Didn't you see that he's a Jew?' Indeed, I had not seen it*" (1953, p. 250).

Although at this time, Hitler was already an avid reader of the right-wing, populist press, he nonetheless had no resistance of any kind, in these or the following years, to maintaining friendly contact with Jews and selling his pictures to them. That he now threw away a lucrative chance to exercise his supposed literary talent on ideological grounds was thus purely a pretext. It was not at all the supposedly Jewish appearance of the journalist – which Kubizek did not recognize because it was very likely nothing to recognize – that drove Hitler to flee from the scene, but rather the impending humiliation of a professional judgment about his literary abilities. That the vehemently expressed interest in contemporary political questions was only a front intended to rationalize Hitler's avoidance of situations in which his lack of skill would be revealed is also evident in the fact that he took no steps whatsoever to implement in practice his tirades about all sorts of public matters. Kubizek wonders about this: "Anyone, however, who [...] might conclude that the young Hitler would have thrown himself with fervor into day-to-day politics would be mistaken. A pale, sickly, gangly youth, completely unknown to people and inexperienced in the city, more restrained and shy than importunate, he engaged in these intense occupations entirely for himself alone. Only the most important insights and solutions he hit upon – ideas that the public is absolutely in need of – were presented to me in the evenings; presented, that is, to an equally insignificant and socially limited person [...] As intensely as political matters preoccupied him, just as intensely did he actually keep away from practical political activity. He did not join a party, did not associated himself with any organization, did not participate in party-related demonstration, and took care not to communicate his own thoughts beyond the narrow circle of his acquaintance" (p. 92). Of course, this would later change. But what changes with the advent of Hitler's political career is less the belated verification of a previously misunderstood special talent, and much more the acclamation of his delusion of grandeur by an audience that mistook this delusion for real greatness. For the time being, we can establish that during the Vienna period Hitler found himself in the schizoid situation of having to combine the exclusively public frame of reference of his communication with a complete avoidance of contact with rela-

tion to this public sphere, since he would have otherwise quickly exposed himself as a fraud. He did not join the political organizations or the social or artistic movements that he was continually talking about because he intuitively knew that he would not be taken seriously in these circles. For his grandiose self-presentations, he relied entirely on Kubizek, his willing one-person audience. And here, too, the external frame of reference was maintained. The long monologues that Hitler delivered – like ecstatic eruptions, as if something foreign were breaking forth out of him – did not seek an exchange between friends, but rather only approval to satisfy his own need for recognition (p. 22).

And his listener fell into line with his role. Kubizek did not make much ado about the continuing progress of his studies, which gradually brought him into a position that was actually superior to Hitler. His reserve might have had something to do with the fact that he was aware of the potential threat his small successes posed for the other. Although Kubizek did not yet know anything about Hitler's painstakingly concealed defeat at the Academy, there were other signs. For instance, the reaction of Hitler – who was only capable of a fantasmagorical love for women – to the female visitors who came to his roommate for piano lessons. Kubizek reports: "As soon as the girl was gone, he – who had been hostilely inclined to women and girls since the unfortunate experience with Stefanie – angrily attacked me. Is our place, which is already completely blocked by the piano, this monster, now also to become a rendezvous for this female musical riffraff, he demanded furiously. I had great difficulty convincing him that the poor girl suffered not from heartache, but from exam anxiety. The result was an extensive lecture on the pointlessness of women studying" (p. 163). This episode, too, makes apparent the connection between suppressed private injury and inflated public self-presentation, the primary cause of which, of course, lies not in an ideological disdain of women, but rather in the necessity of avoiding any intimate contact – a necessity brought on by the compulsion to maintain the facade.

And this also increasingly affected the contact to the sole person whom Hitler tolerated around him because he needed him for an audience. For the show of pretend studies that Hitler laboriously maintained for Kubizek's benefit had now arrived at a state of such flagrant contradiction with reality that the facade threatened blow up. Kubizek began to wonder about it: "As a rule, a professional course of studies becomes, over the years, increasingly more concrete, one-sided, specialized, and obtains a definite relation to matters of practice; but with Adolf, it became more general, multifaceted, and abstract and departed increasingly from praxis. The more persistently he repeated to himself the motto *'I want to be a master architect,'* all the more did this aim dissipate in reality. He reached ever more far afield in his studies, and constantly incorporated new fields. It was the typical attitude of a young person for whom the concrete profession stands in the

way of fulfilling the calling that he feels within him" (p. 187f). The conclusion is, of course, false. Hitler did not eschew the profession in order to fulfill a calling; rather, he eschewed reality in order not to have to bear the shame of its humiliations. He was not on the way to becoming a master architect, but rather to being a "master of building castles in the air" (Eitner 1981, p. 27). If some of the projects from the time in Linz still seemed realizable (such as the construction of the bridge to Urfahr, which was in fact carried out by Hitler 50 years later [Kubizek 1953, p. 109f]), the Vienna architectural plans took on the inhuman aspect of megalomania – for instance, tearing down the Vienna Hofburg in order to reconstruct it more splendidly. The delusionally grandiose projects had no other purpose than to cover up through bustling outward activity the inner vacuum and growing awareness of his own failure. As he was brooding doggedly over his papers once, Kubizek asked him what he was busy with and Hitler answered testily: *"I am working on the solution to the wretched housing situation in Vienna and am undertaking some studies for this purpose"* (p. 176).

Thus, Kubizek's modest but continual progress toward the concretisation of his career prospects unwittingly contributed to Hitler's progressive departure from reality. The latter's entirely indeterminate studies became more wide-ranging in order to avert the impending proof of his own inferiority. If there was anything purposeful about these studies then it was their motivation: to intimidate the onlookers and to obliterate himself as a person with his own views and needs. "I was everywhere in the way of these expansive plans," Kubizek reports. "In the whole entire room, there was not a foot's breadth of floor space that was not being used in the service of this task" (p. 178). Pretty soon, Hitler's plans advanced beyond the role of architect of bridges, castles, and entire cities. His presumption went as far as the design of a pan-social project labeled "*the ideal state*" (p. 180). This included, among other things, the creation of a new national drink. To Kubizek's objection that the residents of Vienna would hardly abstain from their wine, Hitler retorted: "*Your opinion won't be wanted!*" (p. 179).

Hitler's activities were gradually steering him toward a confrontation with his friend, whose growing aesthetic competence had to be overtrumped in a paranoid fending off of Hitler's own feelings of inferiority. For support, Hitler drew upon his identification with the genius of Wagner. As Kubizek writes, Hitler appropriated the creator of the heroic *Gesamtkunstwerk* "so entirely that [Wagner] could have been a part of his being." The identification incorporated the anticipated rejection in the judgment of others: "*You see'* [Hitler would say], *'Richard Wagner has fared just like me. His whole life, he had to struggle against the incomprehension of his surroundings*" (p. 84). Certainly, the tendency to the grandiose with which Wagner also vainly sought to impress established only a very shallow parallel with Hitler, who possessed no knowledge of composition to speak of. All

the more, then, did he have to outdo his model. Among other things, he drew up the outline of a play, the most remarkable aspect of which on Kubizek's account was the humongous scale of the stage decoration: "Through Richard Wagner, we had been used to great demands being placed on the stage. But what Adolf had designed there put the master entirely in the shade" (p. 184). Direct hostilities with Kubizek developed after Hitler picked up from him the information that the draft for a musical drama called *Wieland the Smith* had been found among Wagner's unpublished manuscripts. One day, as his roommate was just coming home from the conservatory, Hitler announced to his amazement: "*Listen, Gustl, I'm going to make an opera out of Wieland!*" When the speechless Kubizek had pulled himself together again, he asked Hitler how he envisioned pulling off such a stroke of genius. "*Quite simply; I'll compose it, and you'll write it down.*" Despite being aware of the fact that his friend's "plans, projects, and thoughts had always [operated] more or less outside of normal expectations," the music student suggested that Hitler had "not the slightest idea" about the techniques of composition, and retreated to a cafe. To his astonishment, upon his return Hitler explained to him that the prologue to the opera was already finished. Kubizek was relieved that his behavior "did not at all shake my friend's self-confidence." But in this, he was mistaken. Precisely because Kubizek had inflicted a narcissistic injury to Hitler's grandiose self-image, the latter had no choice but to flee forwards. Naturally, the so-called prologue was a catastrophe. Kubizek declared himself ready to tutor Hitler in composition. "Then he became furious. *'What am I, crazy?'* he shouted at me, *'what do I have you for, then? For now, you'll put down on paper exactly what I play for you on the piano.*'" That Hitler was indeed crazy is demonstrated by his inability to accept even the slightest bit of advice; any attempt to advise him would be paranoidly fended off as an attack on his unapproachable greatness. Kubizek continues: "At first, I tried to make it clear to him that he had to keep a specific beat in time. Then he shouted: *'Am I the composer, or are you?*'" Despite the emerging unfeasibility of the task, it was not possible for Hitler to abandon his efforts – a typical characteristic of schizophrenics as we have already described it with reference to Payne et al. (1959). Hitler worked on his opera day and night. "I'd seen him in this state often," reports Kubizek, "for a self-imposed task would encompass him completely and compel him to ceaseless activity. It would come over him like something demonic." How the story turned out goes without saying – Kubizek puts it mildly: "*Wieland the Smith*, Adolf's opera, remained a fragment" (1953, p. 201ff).

The episode demonstrates that in the meantime Hitler's identity had become one with the objects of his defensive self-enhancement. He thus possessed the psychological prerequisites necessary to exercise the unconditional will to assert his grandiose fantasies, which would later help make his career. The role of the

Führer would also merely serve the purpose of compensating for Hitler's inner emptiness – a camouflage that led Sebastian Haffner to speak of a "swindler in the mask of a statesman" (1939/96, p. 20). Nonetheless, the term "swindler" is misleading. Hitler *was* his mask – and this was already the case during his time in Vienna. The outbursts of rage reported by Kubizek had the same paranoid background as the fits of frenzy that Hitler would later fall into whenever his sketchy past threatened to surface – for instance, in 1942, when he found out that a commemorative plaque had been put up in his home village (cf. Köhler 1997, p. 22f). In all these cases, the reaction demonstrated a pattern of defense against exposure of the private self that had become autonomous. The paranoid and the megalomaniacal tendencies become interwoven: for anyone who projects an inflated image of himself to others must necessarily fear their critical questions and scrutiny – and the more grandiosely he presents himself, all the more wary must he inwardly be.

That is how things already stood with Hitler's reactions to Kubizek. After he had concealed from the latter his rejection from the Academy, he existed in the precarious state of permanent fear of disclosure. His friend's harmless inquiries about his concrete career plans drove him to despair: "His emotional state worried me more and more every day. I had never observed this self-tormenting manner in him before. On the contrary! When it came to his self-confidence, in my experience he possessed rather too much of it as too little. But now there seemed to be a complete turn-around. He heaped more and more reproaches upon himself. But it would take just a simple switch [...] and the charges leveled at himself would be directed against the times, against the entire world. In tirades of hatred that came thick and fast, he flung his fury at the present day, alone and lonesome, at the entirety of the human race, who did not understand him or accept him, and by whom he felt persecuted and betrayed" (Kubizek 1953, p. 165). As Kershaw writes, these tirades of hate proceeded from "an outsized ego desperately wanting acceptance and unable to come to terms with his personal insignificance, with failure and mediocrity" (1998, p. 39). Since Kubizek was the sole audience of this oversize ego, he had to eventually come into the firing line himself: "The slightest occasion could lead to angry fits of rage. There were days on which I could do nothing right for him, and he thoroughly spoiled all our time together for me [...] He had fallen out with all the world. Wherever he looked, he saw injustice. Hate, enmity. Nothing survived his critical judgment, nothing was acceptable" (Kubizek 1953, p. 163).

The paranoidly defended facade was brought crumbling down by an apparently trivial event: a quarrel about Kubizek's piano playing. A normal person would have been, at worst, annoyed by the piano exercises. But Hitler, for whom the successful music student's every note was a painful reminder of his own fail-

ure, felt downright persecuted by it. One afternoon, he started in on the practicing Kubizek: "*This eternal plunking [...] One is never safe from it.*" When this prompted Kubizek to put up a schedule informing his friend of the times when he might be "*safe*" from his practicing, this provoked the altercation with Hitler: "And so, in the face of the schedule tacked to the cupboard, which must have seemed to him like an officially certified guarantee of my future, it now came to an explosion. *'This Academy,' he yelled, 'nothing but old, uptight, antiquated civil servants, uncomprehending bureaucrats, stupid officious creatures! The whole Academy should be blown to smithereens!'*" (p. 166f). The vehemence of this reaction gave Hitler away. Faced with his friend's irritated query as to why he would carry on so about academies when he himself was attending one, he finally saw himself forced to reveal his failure.

Although Hitler still continued to remain together with Kubizek for a time, it soon became unbearable for him to be around someone who had seen through his facade – albeit only in part. He had to retreat into complete isolation. This consequence differentiates the schizophrenic's paranoid and megalomaniacal delusions from those of the neurotic. The distorted perception of a person who, after repeated failures, imagines himself in the proverbial situation where "everything has conspired against him" still falls within the sphere of delusional disorders. Hitler, however, interpreted his defeats psychotically, as the systematic work of malicious powers. Kubizek writes: "He spoke of the traps that had been cunningly set – I still distinctly recall this phrase! – for the sole purpose of preventing him in his advancement. But he would show these incompetent, senile twits that he would go further without them then with them" (p. 182). And now he had to produce proof of it to his one-man audience, as well.

At first, Hitler made one more covert attempt to expunge the shame he had suffered through the revelation of his Academy rejection. When his friend went to visit his family in Linz, Hitler undertook to assay the entrance examination for a second time. The postcards and letters he wrote to Kubizek indicate, without freely giving his plans away, that he was actually working with unusual purposefulness. But this last effort to bring his ambitions back into accord with reality also foundered. This time, the refusal was even more brusque than before – Hitler was not even allowed to appear for examination. The humiliation was so unbearable for him that he no longer felt like being within sight of his friend, to whom he had always presented himself as highly superior. Although he would have been able to count on Kubizek's affection and understanding, precisely this was entirely unthinkable for him in the face of the irreversible fixation on his grandiose public self.

While Kubizek was still in Linz, Hitler moved out of the shared apartment in the Stumpergasse, leaving neither note of farewell nor forwarding address. On 19

November 1908, he moved in as a subletter in the nearby Felberstraße 22. On the resident registration form he now described himself as "*student*" – which is remarkable considering he had just had to definitively bury all hopes of embarking on a course of studies. Probably, he gave this as his profession because the payment of his orphan's pension was dependent on proof of his student status. Hitler thus must have felt compelled for sheer financial reasons to maintain the false appearances as long as possible.

Kubizek, who remained unaware of the full extent of Hitler's mental and emotional misery, had great difficulty coming to terms with the sudden breaking-off of the friendship. The last sign of life he had received was a postcard on the occasion of his name day on 28 August. Inquiries with Hitler's family in Linz, where his half-sister Angela kept house for Aunt Johanna and Paula, were without success, since Hitler had not given them any tidings of himself either. Kubizek first saw the friend of his youth again about a decade-and-a-half later – on the title page of a Munich paper – and noted with regret that the star political speaker had not been able to realize his artistic dream. The details of the inglorious time in-between remained unknown to Kubizek until after the war due to Hitler's measures of secrecy. And when he was informed, in conversations with the Hitler biographer Franz Jetzinger, about the social decline of his friend after their time together in Vienna, he was finally able to explain the abrupt separation to himself: "Now I comprehended his behavior at the time. He no longer wanted to have a friend because he was ashamed of his own dire need. Alone and lonely, he wanted to go his way and bear whatever fate imposed upon him. It was the path into isolation, into the desert, into nothingness" (Kubizek 1953, p. 263f).

The fact that Hitler would prefer to give up the only person with whom he had had contact rather than taking him into his confidence about his failure testifies to the absolute dominance of the public over the private self. Fending off the shame was far more important than the need for intimacy – if one can speak at all of intimacy since, undoubtedly, the relationship may be described as a "friendship" only from Kubizek's perspective; for Hitler, it was a forum for self-presentation. The causes for the break with Kubizek thus lie not only in the singular occasion of the concealed failure, but rather in the dynamics of a development that had to secure its excessive relation to the outer world per se at the price of avoiding all contact. Any familiarity was a potential threat for Hitler's utterly shame-filled identity. And so, in the end, he had to embark upon that path "into the desert, into nothingness." At this point, he still had enough financial means at his disposal to afford an acceptable substitute lodging and continue the pretended existence as a student. The orphan's pension of 25 crowns would not have been sufficient – apparently, some remnant of the maternal inheritance and a loan from the "Hanitante" were still available. But after just a few months, these reserves were de-

pleted. In August 1909, Hitler had to move to a shabbier apartment; he took a room in the Sechshauser Straße 58, where he now gave his profession as "*writer*." The change of identity may indicate that Hitler had in the meantime dispensed with the pretense of studying, since Hitler's guardian Josef Mayrhofer must have at some point seen through the swindle that artificially maintained the condition for the payment of the orphan's pension. The family urgently needed the money for the upkeep of Hitler's 13-year-old sister Paula, and insisted that Adolf – who was after all old enough to get a job – sign over his portion of the inheritance to her. For the time being, the payments were still being made to him, but it was clear to Hitler that he would have to cut down his expenditures. Until the bequest of his father would become available to him on 20 April 1913, he was faced with the alternative of looking for work – which, considering his educational qualifications, would naturally have to be of a kind beneath his dignity – or to pay for the kept-up pretense of his imagined genius with a life of poverty. He chose the second option. The room in the Sechshauser Straße was vacated after only three weeks. The registration form of 16 September 1909 carries the entry "moved, no forwarding address" (Koblenz BA, NS 26/17a, Hamann 1996, p. 141), which suggests that Hitler made himself scarce without paying the rent. During the next five months, he led the life of a vagabond, took his meals from the soup kitchens, spent his days in cheap coffee houses, and slept in the open air as long as the weather permitted. In early November he was forced for the first time to seek out a homeless shelter – a house run by a private charitable organization in the Meidling district.

The exceptional aspect of Hitler's decline in comparison to others who have suffered the same fate is that in this case a person ended up among the flotsam and jetsam of society without being able to perceive the reality of his situation. His delusionally inflated self-conception prevented him from taking the necessary measures to rescue himself from the dire situation. As Treher puts it, in those years he presented "the distinct picture of a deranged mental case incapable of shaping his own life" (1966/90, p. 247). We learn more from the report of Reinhold Hanisch (1939) – a vagrant known to the police – who met Hitler at the homeless shelter. Hanisch recalls: "I have never seen such a helpless resignation in the face of misfortune." Hanisch's attempt to motivate Hitler to gainful employment met with no success – supposedly, because the latter was too weak; but it is probably closer to the truth that Hitler's shirking of physical labor resulted rather more from self-conceit. Thus, occasional work as a cook was given up as quickly as stints of ditch-digging and snow-shoveling. That Hitler had worked as a laborer "*at the building site,*" as he later claimed in *Mein Kampf* (1925/27, p. 39) and in his political speeches, is pure legend according to Hamann's research (1996, p. 141ff). The only authentic thing about it is Hitler's unwitting exposure

of his aberrant relation to the outside world: "*I drank my bottle of milk and ate my piece of bread somewhere off to one side, and cautiously studied my new associates*" (1925/27, p. 40). The typically schizophrenic isolation from others prevented integration into a professional environment. It was only possible for Hitler to seek a living in the anonymity of solitary activity – such as being a luggage porter at the Westbahnhof railway station, where, according to Hanisch, his unkempt appearance brought him few customers.

In order to underline his exceptional status in relation to the other homeless, Hitler took every opportunity to mention that he had been at the art academy. This led Hanisch to come up with a business proposition that the misunderstood genius was more likely to reconcile with his psychic structure: Hitler was to paint post cards; and since he would have been ashamed of having to peddle them himself, Hanisch would then sell the little art works in taverns. The profits would be shared between the two. After some persuasion and in view of this prospect of continuing to affect his pose as an artist, Hitler deigned to petition the "Hanitante" for funds (Hamann 1996, p. 156). He received 50 crowns, which he used to purchase the necessary painter's equipment. With the proceeds from the sale of the pictures, the two business partners were soon able to afford somewhat better lodgings: after five months of homelessness, Hitler moved in together with Hanisch into the men's home in the Meldemannstraße. Upon registration, he indicated his profession as "*artist*," but in a further act of defensively self-aggrandizing obscuration, described himself to the other residents of the home as an "*architectural painter*." And he also sought to give his outward appearance the provocatively mannered characteristics of the messianic genius: wrapped in an oversized coat, with a filthy felt hat on his head, which was framed by tangled strands of hair and a shaggy goatee, he looked like a desert wanderer. But the intended effect was inadequate; Hitler's peculiar appearance occasioned mocking remarks from the other residents and earned him the nickname "Ohm Paul Krüger" – a reference to the legendary Boer leader (1939). The strange figure did not seem to be of this world, even for its surroundings. Once again, and particularly under conditions of social misery, Hitler had to play an exceptional role. And despite great skepticism, it was granted to him. His regular place in the common room was kept free for him to work on his pictures – interrupted repeatedly by endless tirades on the same themes with which he had plagued Kubizek: a muddled mix of politics, Karl May, Gottfried Semper and Richard Wagner. His listeners usually just shook their heads over it. Once, as he was dilletantishly expounding upon Schopenhauer, he had to undergo the embarrassment of being rebuked by another resident – whom they called "Professor" – for his inadequate knowledge (Hamann 1996, p. 164). His outbreaks became all the more vehement but, on Hanisch's account, were received by the others as merely "a sort of enter-

tainment." Amused, the others perceived him just for what he was: a crackpot who considers himself something special in his fantastic costume.

For a while, the business with Hanisch was going well. Hitler painted his pictures on the basis of postcards and other models, and Hanisch sold them to patrons of taverns, frame dealers, and upholsterers who needed cheap illustrations to decorate their products. The artistic quality of his pictures was rather feeble – although capable of passably copying buildings, Hitler failed utterly at people, who always seemed lifeless in his pictures – but this was something he could not admit to himself. It therefore soon came to a conflict between the two partners. Hitler was of the opinion that a picture of the parliament that he considered particularly successful must have brought in substantially more money than usual – namely 50 crowns. Hanisch however protested that he had only received twelve, which was most likely the truth. Once again, Hitler found himself in a delusional state of megalomania turned paranoia: it was not possible to cast doubt on his conception of his own worth, consequently he must have been cheated. After a heated quarrel with Hanisch, the latter moved out of the men's home. In the meantime, Hitler continued to spread his story of the deception there – with the result that one of his fellow residents, Siegfried Löffner, handed Hanisch over to the police upon meeting him by chance at a framer's shop. At the interrogation, it came out that Hanisch had registered himself at his new residence – the men's home in the Wurlitzergasse – under a false name. As a motive, he claimed fear of Hitler's violent temper. Upon inquiry, Hitler stated for the record that his former business partner had already used the false name with him as well and by means of this link between the purported and the actual fraud, he caused his enemy to be incarcerated for seven days.

However, Hitler continued to feel persecuted. On the account of annother fellow resident, Anonymous from Brünn, (1935; cf. Hamann 1996, p. 172f), Hitler believed he was being incessantly observed by a friend of Hanisch, the painter Karl Leidenroth. Thus he claimed to have noticed that his colleague repeatedly loitered past his easel, apparently by chance but in reality with the intention of "glanc[ing] at [Hitler's] work, and one could see in his face a malicious espression." Hitler was convinced that "K. probably wanted nothing but to ruin him, out of competitiveness and envy." The paranoid fantasy went so far that Hitler "covered his paintings or turned them around" as soon as he felt the probing gaze of the other on his back. Quite possibly, it was just this defensive measure that provoked Leidenroth into suspecting that the arrogant colleague who boasted of having been to the Academy did in fact have something to hide. For Leidenroth actually was what Hitler only pretended to be: an academic painter. And thus, two years after the complaint was lodged against Hanisch, the two friends had their revenge. Hitler received a police summons for the fraudulent use of a title. He

averted the ignominy of public exposure with a remarkable excuse: He could not come to police headquarters to answer the summons because he did not have adequate shoes – upon which the authorities made do with issuing a warning by way of the home's director.

It is sufficiently well known and extensively documented that during this phase of his life Hitler was already strongly influenced by antisemitic ideas. In reference to the "pan-Germaninst" Georg Ritter von Schönerer and the Mayor of Vienna Karl Lueger, whose Christian Social Party fanned the flames of radical antisemitism, Kershaw writes: "Hitler greatly admired both. Once more, it would have been strange had he of all people admired them but been unaffected by such an essential stock-in-trade of their message as their antisemitism. Certainly, he learnt from Lueger the gains to be made from popularizing hatred against the Jews." Yet Hitler's interest was aimed less at any political content than at the satisfaction of the craving for sensation: "The explicitly antisemitic newspaper Hitler read, and singled out for praise, the *Deutsches Volksblatt*, selling around 55,000 copies a day at the time, described Jews as agents of decomposition and corruption, and repeatedly linked them with sexual scandal, perversion and prostitution" (1998, p. 65).

Undoubtedly, such antisemitic clichés already offered welcome material for Hitler's aggression-laden monologues during the Vienna time. It is all the more remarkable, then, that they do not stand in any relation whatsoever to any negative personal experience. On the contrary, Hitler was a beneficiary of the Jews, not their victim. The financing of the men's home was largely underwritten by Jewish families, and in many other respects, it was Jews who made Hitler's life at this time bearable: by running soup kitchens, by commissioning or buying his pictures, and even by being his most reliable companions. Among the latter were fellow residents Josef Neumann and Siegfried Löffner, who helped Hitler to market his pictures, as well as the frame dealers Jakob Altenberg and Samuel Morgenstern (Hamann 1996, p. 347–353). Hitler fell in particularly thick with Neumann after the relationship to Hanisch broke up. Among other things, he invited Neumann to join him on a one-week pleasure trip; the money for this brief vacation from the men's home had again been cajoled out of the "Hanitante."

That Hitler could at the same time maintain an attitude of radical antisemitism can only be made comprehensible by his schizophrenic structure. While a person with an intact private self could not avoid having to reconcile his personal experiences with the views he defended in public – or would at least need to work through the contradiction – Hitler apparently found nothing objectionable about "congenially" explaining to Josef Neumann the economic advantages of dispossessing the Jews of Austria and depriving them of their citizenship (Hamann 1996, p. 166). "Then Neumann always made a joke; it would nevertheless be a

misfortune for Austria, because when the Jews crossed the Red Sea all the coffeehouses in Leopoldstadt were deserted" (Hanisch 1939).

If Hitler's antisemitism can at all be traced back to a negative experience with Jews, then only indirectly: because his bizarre antisemitic world-view was received with calm good humor. For not being taken seriously undoubtedly represented a grave narcissistic injury for a person with such a craving for recognition. Thus, the most harmless teasing could provoke his deepest hatred, since it hit his most vulnerable spot: the humiliation of his public self. And such scenes were apparently plentiful in the bantering circle of the men's home. For instance, Hanisch reports how Hitler once received from Neumann the gift of a jacket, a caftan-like garment with long coat-tails that occasioned the residents to play a prank: they tied the tail ends to a bench, and knowing full well how easy it was to send Hitler into a rage, one of them began to talk politics with him. "Now everyone made sure to contradict him, which he couldn't stand. He jumped to his feet and with a great deal of banging and bumping, dragged the bench in tow [...] When he got excited, Hitler couldn't hold himself back. He shouted and gesticulated wildly with his hands" (Hanisch 1939).

The stunts that were pulled on Hitler involved Jews only coincidentally and had absolutely nothing to do with the characteristics described in the inflammatory antisemitic propaganda as typically Jewish. Nonetheless, it would later become a peculiar, obsessively recurring leitmotif of Hitler's speeches to threaten the Jews with the fact that their "laughter would die down everywhere" (Domarus 1962/63, p. 1963). The threatening gesture, to which we will later return in more detail, appears unmotivated in the face of its lack of relation to reality and has its roots not in the ideological influences of Hitler's time in Vienna but rather in the narcissistic injuries to the public self that threatened Hitler since his school days through the ridicule of others. Both were simply amalgamated later in order to be able to rationalize to the public sphere the defense mechanism against shame. Thus, the basis for "Hitler's paranoid antisemitism" (Kershaw 1998, p. 64) must be looked for in personal experiences, which interrelated with the racist propaganda only because the latter helped to conceal something that had nothing to do with it. Any purely functionalist explanation for Hitler's hatred of the Jews that seeks to derive it solely from the ideological tendencies of the time must consequently remain inadequate. Of course, the converse applies to research with an exclusive focus on personality. Psychohistorians have sought in vain for any concrete cause of Hitler's notion that he was being persecuted by Jews. There have been speculations about negative experiences with the Jewish family doctor because he allowed Hitler's mother to die a terribly painful death, or with a Jewish fellow student whose conduct awakened antipathies, but they are ungrounded. Hitler always showed gratitude to Dr. Bloch for taking care of his mother, and

Wittgenstein was, as we have mentioned, at best imitated by him, if there had been any contact between the two at all. Equally unsuitable targets are the Jewish acquaintances from the men's home. Their participation in the pranks was at most marginal. It was especially in respect to them that Hitler would have had the least occasion for vengefulness. He profited from them and in his personal dealings with them witnessed qualities that were diametrically opposed to the distorted public image of antisemitism. But considering his psychotic structure, it is precisely the good intentions of the Jews that could have contributed to the fact that he later radicalized the antisemitic ideology with such monstrous bloodthirstiness. There is nothing worse for a delusionally inflated ego than the humiliation of not being taken seriously – be it only in the form of offers of aid, since these are perceived as an attack on the compensatory mask that conceals one's own neediness. Even well-meaning gestures of familiarity can then provoke furious defensive reactions, as we have seen in the episode with Hitler's former classmate from Linz. The situation may have been exacerbated during the Vienna time by the fact that Hitler was influenced by antisemitic ideology to see the Jews as socially discredited, so that – having driven his imaginary status to incomparable heights – he might have seen their attentions and charities as a particularly massive humiliation of his public self-image.

After being issued the friendly warning from the home's director not to continue to assume the false title of academic painter, Hitler once again felt it necessary to leave the arena of his disgrace – just like at the time of his separation from Kubizek. He had to return to anonymity once more. This was hardly possible in Vienna, since the social milieu in which he could strike a pose had been practically exhausted as his resource for an audience. The payment of his father's inheritance was on the horizon, but it was not enough to lift him above his present social sphere for long, especially since Aunt Johanna, who had often helped him out, had passed away in the meantime; furthermore, at Angela's insistence, Hitler had to state for the official record that "he could support himself and had no objections to using the entirety of the orphan's pension for his sister" (Jetzinger 1956, p. 226). Still, the father's money would suffice to consider another change of scene. Hitler wanted to go to Germany. This aim fit in with his Wagnerian, political fantasies of grandeur and at the same time offered the chance to evade the impending conscription into the Austrian military. And so he convinced a fellow resident – the pharmacy apprentice Rudolf Häusler, four years Hitler's junior and impressed by his Teutonic visions – to come with him to Munich. The rest of the home's residents were told that he would go to the art academy there (Honisch, NSDAP archive, reel 17, file 1).

Of course, he did not make the slightest effort to realize these pretended plans. The 820 crowns he had received on 16 May 1903 were spent in Munich to

keep up the life style to which he had been accustomed. Together with Häusler, he sublet a room in the Schleißheimerstraße 34. On the registration form, he entered himself as "*architectural painter*," but then – probably with the embarrassing charge of fraudulent title use in mind – added "*writer according to passport*" (Koblenz BA, NS 26/17a). The city would have offered plentiful opportunities for both professional ambitions. Just like Vienna at the time, it was a center of the aesthetic avant-garde. But here too, as in Vienna, Hitler eschewed involvement in the circles to which he pretended to belong. He simply made use of the spatial proximity to the artistic elite as a backdrop for his defensive self-enhancement. Thus, for instance, he frequented the Café Größenwahn (Café Megalomania), where the bohème of Schwabing met (p. 77). But here too he had to keep himself apart – for one thing, in order to protect himself from the threatening loss of his singularity, and for another, because given his lack of talent he would have disgraced himself in the sheer attempt to emulate the new artistic currents. And so he continued to doggedly paint his postcards in a naturalistic manner and sold them in beer halls, and later in Munich shops. Undoubtedly, it stood in flagrant contradiction to his self-image as the great architect of Germany that he was forced to copy famous tourist attractions – the Sendliger Gate, the Residenz, the Hofbräuhaus – in order to hold himself above water. Joachim Fest is right when he supposes: "The more conscious he became, deep within himself, of his insufficient abilities a an artist and of his general failure, the more he had to find reasons for asserting his own superiority" (1973, p. 60).

But what might this feeling of superiority be built upon now? Just as during his time with Kubizek, Hitler now turned to Häusler as a one-man audience, whom he robbed of a good night's sleep with his tirades. And Häusler managed to hold it out for seven months before moving out into a neighboring apartment. Hitler's fantasies of grandeur had no place left to go but into a delusional world that obeyed the schizophrenic pattern of an excessive relation to the outer world accompanied by complete avoidance of social contact. This symptom still comes through – all the visible intentions of retrospective retouching notwithstanding – in the description that Hitler himself later gave of his Munich years: "*I went to Munich with heart-felt joy; I wanted to study for three more years; at the age of 28, I intended to go to Heilmann & Littmann as a draughtsman; I would take part in the first competition, and there, I said to myself, the people would see – the fellow really has something. I had privately participated in all the competitions back then, and when the designs for the construction of the opera in Berlin were published, my heart skipped a beat when I had to say to myself, it's much worse than what you yourself had planned!*" (29 Oct. 1941; Jochmann 1980, p. 115). This "private" participation in the competitions allowed Hitler to maintain the self-perception of his own greatness without having to offer proof of it.

It is highly unlikely that Hitler could have escaped this split form of existence if the biographical coincidence of approaching war had not come to his aid. Only in a situation in which the norms of civilian life are not applicable could the phantasms of his own exceptionality be maintained without having to come into conflict with the real conditions of existence. Admittedly, it was not immediately apparent to him that here was a great chance for his role as an unconventional individual. It was much more in keeping with the adynamia of his schizophrenic structure to shirk military service. But the Austrian authorities, whom he had initially dodged by moving to Munich, were now on his trail. He was summoned for medical inspection, but on such short notice that he had to write to request an extension. The letter, which we reproduce below, is marked by a degree of obsequiousness that may at first be surprising, since it seems to be incompatible with a grandiose self-image. Yet closer examination shows we are dealing with the same tendency toward delusions of grandeur, which – under the pressure of having to explain a failure – have simply been turned into a superlative in reverse. If Hitler was forced to humble himself, then he would be the lowest of the low in order to be admired for his excessive modesty:

"*In the summons, I was described as a painter. Although I am justified in carrying this title, it is nonetheless correct only to a degree. Although I support myself as an independent painter, it is only in order to enable me – since I am entirely without means (my father was a civil servant) – to continue my education. I am able to use only a portion of my time to make a living, since I am still in the process of training to become an architectural painter. Thus, my income is only a very modest one, just about large enough for me to make ends meet. I enclose my tax identification document as evidence and request that you may kindly send it back to me. My income is here calculated at 1200 marks, more an over- than an under-estimate, and this should not be understood to mean that this comes out to exactly 100 marks a month. Oh, no. The monthly income is very variable, but surely very bad just now, since the art market in Munich at this time is somewhat in hibernation... [...] As far as my sin of omission in the fall of 1909 is concerned, this was an infinitely bitter time for me. I was a young, inexperienced person, without any monetary aid, and too proud to accept any from someone, to say nothing of requesting it. Without any support, and dependent entirely on my own devices, the few crowns and often merely pennies from the sale of my works barely sufficed for my sleeping quarters. For two years, I had no other friend beside worry and need, no other companion beside eternal, insatiable hunger. I have never gotten to know the beautiful word youth. To this day, after 5 years, there are momentos in the form of frostbite marks on fingers, hands, and feet. And yet, now that I am over the worst of it, I cannot think of that time without a certain pleasure. Despite the greatest need, in the midst of a mi-*

lieu that was often more than dubious, I have always kept my name respectable, am entirely unblemished before the law, and clear in my conscience" (Jetzinger 1956, p. 262f).

And so, even in self-denigration, Hitler worked on spinning his own legend – which culminated in a thoroughly status-oriented declaration of having maintained an honorable name. And the letter, with which Hitler's stylistic and orthographic weaknesses fit in quite appropriately, had the desired effect: Hitler's dodging of the draft was not further punished.

When he finally appeared before the inspection board in Salzburg in February 1914, the medical evaluation read: "unfit for active and reserve duty, too feeble. Not capable of handling weapons" (Jetzinger 1956, p. 265). Subjectively speaking, this may have been a relief for him, since he decidedly rejected military service for the Habsburg monarchy – on political grounds as well, but above all, most likely for reasons of comfort. From an objective standpoint, however, Hitler was once again thrown back into his hopeless existence. He went back to Munich and once again took up his work as a post-card copyist. Only his own end, or the end of the existing world order, could mend this breach between ambition and reality – an alternative that Hitler would repeatedly have to face until the end of his life. Indeed, in situations of impending failure, he always kept suicide in clear view as an option – Fest speaks of a "suicidal impulse that had accompanied him throughout his life" (1973, p. 732). But for now, he was spared this consequence of the split nature of his life's design; the outbreak of war opened up an undreamt-of prospect for his extravagant maverick existence.

Soldier in the First World War. The refuge of an outsider

There can be no doubt that the catastrophe of the First World War amounted to an enormous psychic relief for Hitler. Looking back on the war years, he described them as "*the greatest and most unforgettable time of my earthly existence*" (Hitler 1925/27, p. 163). Although in *Mein Kampf* this relief is dressed up in the guise of patriotism, the personal motivation still comes through: "*To me those hours seemed like a release from the painful feelings of my youth. Even today I am not ashamed to say that, overpowered by stormy enthusiasm, I fell down to my knees and thanked Heaven from an overflowing heart for granting me the good fortune of being permitted to live at this time*" (p. 161).

War heroes prove their worth less by means of civilian attributes such as family background or success in school and career, and far more by means of their readiness to risk their own lives for the sake of a noble ideal. In this exceptional situation, a desperado with nothing to lose like Hitler was in just the right place.

And he realized this quite soon. According to his own account, which is adopted by many biographies, Hitler submitted a petition – not to any office, but to King Ludwig III of Bavaria directly – and asked to be allowed to serve in the German army as a volunteer despite his Austrian citizenship. In reality, Hitler's acceptance into the German army was effected in a far more prosaic way (cf. Joachimsthaler 1989, p. 102ff): apparently, he – like countless other war enthusiasts at the time – simply rushed to the next recruitment station and was initially sent away as unfit; but subsequently, without a thorough check of his papers in the general confusion, he was assigned on 16 August 1914 by Recruiting Depot VI to the Second Reserve Battalion of the Second Infantry Regiment. Two weeks later he had been transferred to the newly-formed Reserve Infantry Regiment 16 which was under the command of Colonel List – "a very motley crew" of persons little suited for military service (p. 114).

Nonetheless, they embarked immediately for the most dangerous sector of the front. Before 1 November 1914, around 70 percent of the over 3000 soldiers in Hitler's regiment had been killed or wounded in the battle on the Marne. Afterward, the front froze, and a gruesome positional war began. Hitler soon made a name for himself by his disdain for death, was promoted to corporal on 3 November, and was given the dangerous post of a dispatch runner (orderly) whose task it was to carry orders between the command post and the front. This meant that he was exposed to artillery fire with practically no protection for a distance of some 3 kilometers. While many men shirked the task in the face of the high casualty rate, Hitler took it on gladly. He was, as his former superior Max Amann reports, "always ready for duty [...] Whenever I came in, even around 3 am, a few orderlies were always lying there waiting; and none would budge when I called 'orderly,' only Hitler would jump up. When I said, 'it's always you,' he then said *'just let the others sleep, I don't mind'*" (interrogation in Nuremberg on 5 November 1947; Joachimsthaler p. 127). Once, he even voluntarily put himself in the line of heavy fire in order to protect his commander with his own body.

He didn't mind any of it because he had nothing to lose. He was not of this world and in the course of the war his disdain for death earned him various honors: among them, the Iron Cross, Second Class, the Military Service Medal, Third Class, a Regiment Diploma for exceptional bravery in the face of the enemy, and finally even the Iron Cross, First Class for a particularly dangerous dispatch mission.

In light of this, it might seem astounding that Hitler was not promoted to the rank of non-commissioned officer; however, this is directly related to the defensive nature of schizophrenic self-aggrandizement. Despite an environment that mitigated the symptoms, the eccentricities of the maverick dispatch runner still stood out. He had his comrades address him in the polite form and withdrew into

a separate dugout, where he bragged of Germany's greatness from off-side. His medals, the first and for the time being only confirmation of an exceptional public persona, reinforced these oddities further. Any contact with his companions in misfortune was carefully avoided. He even asked his Munich acquaintances not to send him packages or letters (Joachimsthaler 1989, p. 133) – evidently, in order to emphasize the aura of the lonely fighter. And when, over Christmas 1914, a spontaneous scene of camaraderie developed for a few hours between his fellow soldiers and the Englishmen posted within sight, Hitler condemned this fraternization with the enemy in the sharpest way (report of Lugauer, HIMC, File 47, Reel 2; Joachimsthaler 1989, p. 134). In the photos from this time, he is nearly always seen standing at the margins, with a vacant, glassy stare. The accounts of his comrades confirm the supposition of his outsider status. Balthasar Brandmayer, who met him in May 1915, recollects: "Adolf Hitler sat in a corner engrossed in a newspaper; from time to time, he would slurp hot tea from his kettle. Occasionally, he would throw an interjection into the merry conversation, which we usually didn't know what to do with [...] I wanted to converse with him in a comeraderly way, but he refused in a peremptory manner. There was something peculiar about Hitler [...] I admit, I never understood his affected behavior" (1932, p. 49 and 60ff). A similar report comes from Max Amann: "He had no one; he was unassuming and undemanding. But he certainly was a little strange" (5 May 1947; Joachimsthaler p. 156). The ambivalent impression of peremptory unassumingness fits in with the image of the schizophrenic exceptional norm that Hitler underscored with quite deliberate mannerisms. For instance, he adopted a terrier that had run away from the English whom he named Foxl and used to maintain distance from the others; even in retrospect, he continued to take pleasure in this: "No one was allowed to touch me, or he would become rabid" (22/23 December 1942; Jochmann 1980, p. 220).

None of this could preserve him from being ridiculed by his comrades, just as he had been in the men's home. Once again, his vulnerable point had become quickly apparent. Brandmayer recalls: "Often, Hitler was contradicted out of spite, just to make him get excited" (1932, p. 60). It was particularly the humorlessness of his patriotism that incited the others to jest with him. "'How about looking around for a mamsell today?' said one of the telephone operators as a similar theme had just come up. *'I'd die of shame looking for sex with a French girl,'* Hitler interrupted him energetically. The initial effect was a Homeric laughter. "Now just look at the monk!' someone called out. Hitler's face had become serious. *'Have you no German sense of honor left in you at all?'*" (p. 103). No doubt, Hitler's comrades also admired the way he stood up unconditionally for his ideals, but because of the bizarre manner associated with this motivation, a

good portion of alienation was mixed in with the admiration. He was mainly considered a crackpot.

His superiors were also uneasy about him. Thus, they had great reservations about promoting him to the rank of non-commissioned officer although his zeal in the line of duty certainly made him deserving of it. The regiment's adjutant, Wiedemann, recollects that Hitler was "a brave, decent, and absolutely reliable soldier. He was a corporal and a dispatch runner for particularly critical situations. Still, we could not discover in Hitler the qualities that would have led us to promote him" (denazification court file 1948; Joachimsthaler 1989, p. 160). And later on, Wiedemann reiterated his judgment that the superiors "could not discover any of the necessary leadership qualities in him" (Wiedemann 1964, p. 26).

This may sound like one of histories cruel ironies, but it was not due to something like a false perception. Throughout his life, Hitler remained incapable of leadership in the actual, interpersonal sense of the word. The fact that he nonetheless advanced to "Führer" rests – paradoxical as this may sound – precisely on the same features that once made him seem to his military superiors to be unfit for such a leadership position. The psychotic symptoms of oddity, affectation, and above all, inability to have social contact with others – which initially isolated Hitler from his fellow human beings – would later fascinate the masses as soon as he had been given the unhoped-for chance to act out these same symptoms in front of large audiences. What was perceived as alienating strangeness under conditions of intimate communication was lent the aura of mysterious greatness when seen from afar. We will examine this turning-point in Hitler's biography in greater detail later on. For the moment, it is useful to take a closer look at the structure of Hitler's personality, which would later allow him to rise to the position of Führer once the context was altered.

The pathological background of this structure is made evident by the fact that it was Hitler himself who ruled out the promotion to non-commissioned officer. For, despite all the reservations, this rank had been nonetheless awarded to him. As Max Amann testified in Nuremberg: "Our non-commissioned officer for the dispatch runners had been wounded, and I said – we'll take the next one up, Corporal Hitler; he's been corporal for a long time now, and is overdue; I therefore suggested his name to Wiedemann and at the same time asked him whether I might appoint him to the regimental staff. I then had him summoned and told him, 'congratulations, from now on you're a non-commissioned officer.' He looked at me, quite horrified, and said, *'I request that you refrain from this; I have more authority without stripes than with them.*' I asked him what sort of strange answer that was, and whether he refused the German officer's rank as an Austrian. He denied this. He was always humble, always obedient. Anyone else would have been proud" (5 November 1947; Joachimsthaler 1989, p. 160).

The "strange answer," which seems completely irrational from the point of view of normal ambitions, makes absolute sense in a psychotic context. Hitler refused not for lack of pride, but rather out of an excess of it. His aspirations for recognition reached far beyond any service rank that could have been offered him within the military hierarchy. Against the background of his delusional fantasy of being destined as Germany's savior, the promotion appeared shamefully trivial. And so he preferred to go on demonstrating his singularity by means of the affected renunciation of "stripes." Indeed, the Führer myth would later profit not inconsiderably from the legend of the "simple corporal." As had always been the case in his life, Hitler would rather be the big fish in a small pond than make do with second place somewhere else.

This maverick existence is normally unpleasant for people because it carries with it the threat of social isolation, but Hitler perceived it as a thoroughly fitting validation of the exceptionalness of his public self. The ridicule of his comrades undoubtedly plagued him, and must have made him think – as always – that he would "really show them one day." His singularity could be demonstrated far better by the daring risking of his life than by promotion. And so – on Wiedemann's account – his regiment became his "home" (1964, p. 29), and not despite, but precisely because he was able to set himself apart there. For this apartness only served to confirm the schizophrenic exceptional norm. His attachment to his life-threatening environment was so great that after being wounded twice in 1916 he begged his superiors to be taken into the regiment again. "*It's not that bad, lieutenant-colonel, truly, I'll stay with you, I'll stay with the regiment!*" (p. 29).

Accordingly, Hitler must have viewed the end of the war – which the others increasingly longed for – as a threat to his existence. If up to this time his paranoid tendencies had expressed themselves in a rather diffuse manner and – after a series of suffered humiliations – had led him (as Kubizek wrote) to fall out with the whole world (p. 163), then the friend-and-foe polarization of the war led to a crystallization of the delusional contents. The profound hatred with respect to an environment that refused to acknowledge his mission was directed less against Germany's enemies in the war then against opponents of the war, whom Hitler combated even more bitterly. Hitler experienced the growing criticism of the gruesome massacre as a personal insult, since this critique threatened to put an end to the happiest time of his life. During his convalescent leave in 1916/17 in Beelitz, he did not begin to acknowledge the hopelessness of further military campaigns like the majority of the Germans had done at the time, but instead simply became more enraged with anyone who tried to make him face up to the facts. With manic determination, he stood by his unrealistic perspective: "*For us, the world war cannot be lost*" (Brandmayer 1932, p. 51). Until the very end, he believed in victory and scoffed at anyone who criticized the pointless casualties

as "*loud-mouths*," "*vermin*," and "*perjuring criminals*." The fact that, as Fest notes, "he still longed hysterically for victory" shows that he was also blind to the opportunities available to him: "No prophetic sense or strategic instinct told him that the defeat would serve him far better as a basis for his rise from namelessness" (Fest 1973, p. 72).

Shortly before the end of the war, Hitler suffered an eye injury during a gas attack and actually went blind for some time. The organic cause seemed obvious. But the attending physician, Dr. Edmund Forster – a psychiatrist at the military hospital at Pasewalk and later director of the Greifswald Psychiatric Clinic – came to a different diagnosis: "Psychopath with hysterical symptoms" (Post 1998, p. 1127). According to Edward Post's study of the sources – which is based on a document declassified by the United States Naval Intelligence in 1973 – the symptoms ascertained by Foster may also suggest "psychosis not otherwise specified" (1998, p. 1130). That Post does not specify this psychosis as schizophrenia has to do with the traditional criteria on which he based his diagnosis. Against the background of our model, however, the blinding can be regarded as a symptom that points to the overdetermination of the public self with a concomitant fading-out of all private aspects of the self. Hitler had to literally turn a blind eye to the situation in which he found himself. The war had lifted him out of the misery of his civilian life and placed him into an exceptional situation where he might pursue his delusional fantasies to a large extent unhindered. Despite the unquestionably impending defeat, he continually refused to acknowledge reality, wishing to believe neither the defeat, nor the revolution that had long been in the offing. For him, the latter came "suddenly and unexpectedly" when a pastor informed him of the end of the monarchy on 10 November 1918. It is not difficult to read between the lines of the corresponding passage in *Mein Kampf* how Hitler sought here to come to terms with a narcissistic wound to his public self:

" – *I could stand it no longer. It became impossible for me to sit still one minute more. Again everything went black before my eyes; I tottered and groped my way back to the dormitory, threw myself on my bunk, and dug my burning head into my blanket and pillow. Since the day when I had stood at my mother's grave, I had never wept. [...] But now, I could not help it. [...] And so it had all been in vain. [...] Did all this happen only so that a gang of wretched criminals could lay hands on the fatherland? [...] The more I tried to achieve clarity on the monstrous event in this hour, the more the shame of indignation and disgrace burned my brow. What was all the pain in my eyes compared to this misery? There followed terrible days and even worse nights – I knew that all was lost [...] In these nights hatred grew in me, hatred for those responsible for this deed. In the days that followed, my own fate became known to me. I could not help but laugh at the thought of my own future which only a short time before had given*

me such bitter concern. [...] There is no making pacts with Jews; there can only be the hard: either–or. I, for my part, decided to go into politics" (Hitler 1925/27, p. 204–206).

The chain of associations produced in this passage is logically abstruse, but psychologically consistent. The rumination on the loss of his previous prospects awakened Hitler's memory of the death of his mother, which had led to his breakdown in a similar situation: the rejection from the Academy. Just as he had back then, he now reacted with an overcompensation for the suffered humiliation by developing outrage and hate against those who were supposedly to blame for his defeat and eventually found succor in the fantasy of being superior to them. If in the first instance it had been "*antiquated civil servants, uncomprehending bureaucrats, stupid officious creatures!*" whom Hitler would have liked to see "*blown to smithereens*" (Kubizek 1953, p. 167), now it was the Jews who had been chosen as the object of his aggressive defense strategy against shame. They, too, would have to be shown that one did not question his greatness without consequence. The choice of the object of hatred can only be explained by the fact that Hitler identified exclusively with his public self. Just as had been the case during his time in the men's home, so now there had been not the least pretext occasioned by a negative personal experience. On the contrary, the Iron Cross, First Class that he received on 4 August 1918 – that is, shortly before his gas poisoning – had been awarded at the instigation of a Jewish lieutenant (Joachimsthaler 1989, p. 173). But this very fact later caused him to distance himself from this lieutenant all the more forcefully: "*We had a Jew in the regiment, Gutmann, a man of unparalleled cowardice. He wore the Iron Cross, First Class. It was outrageous and a disgrace*" (10/11 November 1941; Jochmann 1980, p. 132).

A belated defense against shame is also suggested by the purported decision to enter politics described in *Mein Kampf*. Hitler quite clearly endeavors retrospectively to stylize the experience in Pasewalk into the primary scene of his later success as a party propagandist. However, it has been shown that such a determination of Hitler's career goals could not have possibly been made at this time (cf. especially Joachimsthaler 1989); for this reason, it is worth considering what constituted the intensity of the Pasewalk experience. As the earliest existant account, which Hitler narrated to Karl Wiegand in 1921 or 22, has it: "*And as I lay there, it came over me that I would liberate the German Volk and make Germany great.*" Rudolph Binion (1976), who has collected this and countless other sources (p. 19–32 and 178ff, here p. 178), believes that we are here dealing with a downright hallucination (cf. Kershaw's critique of this position, 1998, p. 103f). We will leave these speculations open, especially since the more recent diagnosis manuals no longer identify hallucinations as a necessary criteria for a schizo-

phrenic psychosis (World Health Organization 1994, p. 194f). What is decisive is that, as has been proved, the vision did not stand in any relation to a concrete career plan. That in itself lends it the unreal quality of a delusion. Thus, we can ascertain that Hitler's blindness went hand in hand with a psychotic stage in which elements of paranoia and megalomania were interlinked and which was occasioned by his typical reaction mechanism – an overcompensation for the humiliations to his public self.

Rise as speaker. A psychosis finds its affirmation

With the end of the war, Hitler was threatened with the loss of his spiritual "home." He wanted to stay in the military at any price. His later mentor, Captain Karl Mayr, reports that the impression Hitler made on him in this phase was one of "a tired, stray dog looking for a master." In the post-war confusion, anyone could have become such a master for him, and Mayr was convinced in retrospect that "at this time, Hitler was ready to accept a post from anyone who was well-disposed toward him [...] he would have worked for a Jewish or French patron just as well as for an Aryan" (1941, p. 193). Indeed, when the "*bunch of miserable criminals*" Hitler had so recently chosen for his enemy obtained the upper hand after the revolution, he reversed his ideological position without much ado, and in his endeavors to continue his military employment urged his services on the new authorities. At first, in February 1919, he was appointed a representative of his demobilization battalion, which went hand and in hand with the task of disseminating propaganda for the new regime of the Majority Social Democrats. Ernst Toller, in his memoir, cites a witness to this time in the Munich barracks: "Back then, Hitler had declared himself to be a Social Democrat. The man had noticed him because he had blathered on in such a 'pompous and turgid' manner, like someone who reads a lot of books without digesting them" (1933, p. 208). On 16 April 1919, two days after the proclamation of the Communist *Räterepublik*, Hitler even went so far as to have himself elected to the position of Deputy Battalion Representative – a position that was created for the express purpose of ensuring "loyalty to the Red Army" within the company (Joachimsthaler 1989, p. 188f, 213f). The ambitious aspiration to a special post irrespective of its political tendency, makes it clear that Hitler's behavior had purely personal motivations. The fear of being discharged from the army and once again abandoned to the mercy of civilian life, which offered him no chance to distinguish himself, made all the ideological discrepancies retreat into the background.

When the political wind had changed a few weeks later, Hitler was equally ready to betray his loyalties. After being briefly arrested, he was able to secure

his continued enlistment in the army by making himself indispensable to an investigating committee that had been founded on 9 May 1919 for the purpose of uncovering collaboration with the defeated Communist Councils. Thanks to his psychotic coldness of feeling, he was now able to denounce his former comrades without a second thought (Joachimsthaler 1989, p. 221). When the decidedly right-wing leaning Gruppenkommando Nr. 4 was created in the wake of the reorganization of the Munich regiments, Hitler was once again among the most overzealous to present themselves for duty in the unit's Information Department, the purpose of which was to engage in anti-Bolshevik agitation. Through his service as an informant, Hitler became a favorite with Captain Karl Mayr, who recommended him for the political instruction program at the University of Munich. In the speaker courses associated with this program, Hitler was for the first time granted the opportunity to unfold his tirades before an audience that was duty-bound to listen by orders from above. Occasionally, there were still a couple of derisive remarks made, but this time already on the sly, and in general, the others were impressed by the enormous energy with which Hitler presented the officially prescribed propaganda goals. Simple formulas such as the opposition – adopted from Gottfried Feder – between "productive" and "rapacious" capital, which was supposed to differentiate authentic from Jewish capitalism, were imbued by Hitler with such fanaticism that his audience listened with amazement. The Munich historian Karl Alexander von Müller, with whom Hitler's mentor Mayr had also studied, reports than after one of his lectures, he noticed a group that remained in the auditorium to "listen to the passionate, guttural words of a man." Mayr explained to him that this was "the Hitler from the List regiment" (Müller 1954, p. 338f).

From then on, Hitler received particular attention from his superior. Mayr assigned him to a group of 26 propaganda educators who were to complete a five-day course at the Reichswehr camp in Lechfeld near Augsburg in order to raise the level of political reliability among the local soldiers, who were about to be discharged. Hitler was the main figure in this action at the side of Rudolf Beyschlag, the unit's commander. He organized discussion groups on Beyschlag's lectures and spoke himself about topical economic and societal themes. He was completely absorbed by his enthusiasm for the task. It clearly comes through in the corresponding passage in *Mein Kampf* how much he now enjoyed having an audience that was institutionally obliged to listen to the tirades for which he had previously only been derided: "*I started out with the greatest enthusiasm and love. For all at once I was offered an opportunity of speaking before a larger audience; and the thing that I had always presumed from pure feeling without knowing it was now corroborated. I could 'speak'*" (Hitler 1925/27, p. 215). Instantaneously, Hitler recognized his chance to bring to the

populace the grandiose notions that came over him in the *Rienzi* experience and the vision at Pasewalk. The delusional belief in his own mission, which he had previously only been able to present in seclusion – to the mini-public of roommates, men's home residents and army buddies – could now be unfolded quite officially, before a large audience, as the fulfillment of a duty. Pretty soon he even outshone Beyschlag as the star speaker of the camp. An ambulance man reports: "Herr Hitler, in particular, is a born public speaker, if I may say, who absolutely compels the listeners to attend to and follow along with his words through his fanaticism and his layman's manner" (Lorenz Frank, Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Abt. IV, RW GrKdo 4, Nr. 309).

The fact that Hitler's mania seemed to compel others to "follow along" was due to a biographical coincidence: the complex of individual motivations that drove him – the torment of personally suffered humiliations and the compensatory longing for greatness – now met with its pendant in a collective national pride that perceived itself disgraced by the "*Schandvertrag*" of Versailles and hungered for international recognition. Precisely because Hitler's feelings of vengeance were not primarily nourished by ideological sources, he was able to present them with a greater power of conviction than any party strategist. It was only at this point, and only for the same old personal reasons, that Hitler became interested in a political career. Only against this background did his hatred for the Jews take on its specific, extremely brutal character. He gave vent to a destructive wish that even the most atrocious demagogues had not dared to express till then. If Hitler had not possessed this possibility of aggressive reaction, which tends to be rare in schizophrenics, then he would have hardly been spared a descent into total insanity. But the hate, dressed up with antisemitic trimmings, held Hitler in the real world. For in this mask, he found an audience that attended his words with fascination and thus provided confirmation for the contents of his mania. In order to emerge with such phenomenal success out of the swarm of nameless right-wing populists, Hitler had merely to overtrump the paranoid components of the prejudices they stirred up with the monstrosities of an authentically delusional persecution mania.

This completely new tone, whose aggressivity put all previous propaganda in the shade, did however cause some concern among the instructors. For all their ideological sympathies, they could feel that something uncontrollable was in the works here. The commander of the Lechfeld camp, Lieutenant-Colonel Bent, felt it necessary to order Hitler not to present his antisemitic statements so "bluntly" but rather to put them "in a somewhat disguised form" (report of 25 August 1919 to Gr. Kdo. 4; Joachimsthaler 1989, p. 247). For the radically right-wing Mayr, this made Hitler a bona-fide expert in antisemitic agitation. Thus, for example, he had Hitler respond personally to the letter of a former course participant, Adolf

Gemlich, who wished to know how one should express oneself with respect to the Jews. Hitler approached the task with predictable bluntness: "*The final, irrevocable aim must remain the removal of the Jews altogether*" (R.W. Gr. Kdo. 4, No. 314, BHStA, Abt. IV).

But the decisive step in furthering Hitler's career, which became the actual turning point in his life, came when Mayr assigned him to attend a meeting of the German Worker's Party (DAP) on 12 September 1919 as an informant. The event took place at the Sternecker, a Munich beerhall, and was attended by some 80 people. The first speaker was Gottfried Feder, and then came a guest speaker, Professor Baumann, who represented a moderate democratic position. When the latter suggested that Tyrol should merge with Bavaria but not with Germany, Hitler rose and trounced him in such a coarse manner that Baumann left the room distraught (report of Anton Drexler for the NSDAP-Hauptarchiv, 23 January 1939; cf. Hitler 1925/27, p. 219). Party chairman Drexler was impressed by the sharpness of this verbal attack. He immediately solicited Hitler's membership and boasted of the new recruit: "Now we've got an Austrian, he's got a real loud mouth" (Michael Lotter on 19 October 1935, NSDAP-Hauptarchiv, HIMC, File 78, Reel 3; Joachimsthaler 1989, p. 251f).

Hitler held his first official party speech on 16 October 1919 in front of 111 people in the Hofbräuhauskeller. The person speaking before him was a professor, and Karl Harrer – who led the DAP together with Drexler – was skeptical of whether Hitler was up to the task. This only provided additional motivation for the latter. From his point of view, the refutation of the skeptic – with which he passed his decisive test – looked like this: "*Things turned out differently. In this first meeting that could be called public I had been granted twenty minutes' speaking time. I spoke for thirty minutes, and what before I had simply felt within me, without in any way knowing it, was now proved by reality: I could speak! After thirty minutes the people in the small room were electrified*" (1925/27, p. 355). The stereotypicalness of this self-citation, in which Hitler reproduces almost word for word the account of his first rhetorical success in the Lechfeld camp (see above), only underscores the significance of this experience for him; he couldn't repeat it often enough.

Indeed, the effect of Hitler's speeches was enormous from the very first – precisely because Hitler, as he himself admits, simply give way to what he "*had simply felt within [...], without in any way knowing it,*" His delusions, paranoid visions, and vengeful cravings, which until then had only met with a scanty and mostly derisive audience, could now be indulged before a crowd that hung on every word. People who had previously known Hitler as a reticent loner were completely amazed at what suddenly broke forth from him. "I didn't recognize Hitler anymore," reports Max Amann, who had during the war misunderstood

Hitler's refusal of promotion as modesty. Now, he saw "an unfamiliar fire" blaze up in the little corporal: "The man shouted, he put on a show, I'd never seen anything like it! But everyone said, 'the man honestly means it.' Sweat was pouring off him, he was completely drenched, it's quite unbelievable" (5 November 1947; Joachimsthaler 1989, p. 253). The impression that Hitler meant it "honestly" – an assertion that would be made repeatedly, even by his opponents – is correct in so far as the berserk speaker was completely immersed in his role. He was at one "with himself," that is to say, with his public self.

Liberated from his previous hopelessness, Hitler threw himself into party work. Since he was still in the pay of the Reichswehr until the end of March 1920 without having many demands placed upon him, he was quickly able to outshine the other party members, who had to earn a living by day, with the degree of his commitment. When Harrer realized that Hitler wanted to build up a real proper bureaucracy for the little DAP, he proclaimed the latter "megalomaniacal" (Hitler 1931). But the megalomaniac – who would later look back on the remark with satisfaction – knew better than all the realists that reality would substantiate him.

The further course of Hitler's career is well documented: within the briefest time, his over-exited performances for the party – which changed its name to the NSDAP on 1 February 1920 – made him an acclaimed sensation. On average, he gave a speech nearly every week, sometimes several a day, and with every one, his audience grew. On 24 January 1920, he announced the party platform at the Hofbräuhaus in front of 2000 listeners; by 3 February 1921, he was already drawing 6000 people to the Circus Krone. And when some disagreements about its future course arose in the party some months later, his mass appeal had grown so great that, in the quarrel for leadership, he only had to threaten with resignation to have them begging for Hitler to take the office of chairman. With this party putsch, the process of amalgamation between his delusions and a real position of power was now effected for good. That the coup succeeded was again due to Hitler's psychotic structure, as the course of events shows:

From the point of view of a rational party strategy, it would have seemed sensible to combine the splintered energies of the right-wing populists. This was the plan of Otto Dickel, who wanted to fuse his "Werkgemeinschaft" together with the DSP and the NSDAP to form a confederation. Although this fusion would have meant an increase of the right-wing's political influence, Hitler vehemently opposed Dickel's plans. This behavior, which was actually irrational, can only be understood from the standpoint of his pathological complex: within the small NSDAP, his leading position as a star speaker had in the meantime become unassailable, while in a larger association, he was threatened with the prospect of losing this exceptional status. And this is what led to the fit of rage in which he threatened to resign. Even Kershaw, despite his commitment to a political expla-

nation of Hitler's rise, ascertains that the underlying behavioral pattern in question went against all political reason: "Always from a maximalist position, with no other way out, he would go for broke" (1998, p. 163). The remarkable thing about the Hitler phenomenon is that, precisely with this more psychopathologically then politically motivated conduct, he was able to have his way in the given historical situation. A delegation was sent to the star speaker of the little party to inquire anxiously about the conditions under which he would consider coming back. Hitler's key demands corresponded exactly to his personally motivated aspiration to the special role: "*the position of first chairman with dictatorial authority,*" the "*irrevocable*" placement of party headquarters in Munich, the inalterability of the party platform, and – the end of all attempts at fusion (Jäckel/Kuhn 1980, p. 438).

The demands were met on 29 July 1921. Hitler – who had seen himself as a drummer for a delusionally grandiose mission ever since his *Rienzi* experience – had maneuvered himself into the position of Führer because he had no other aim in mind then the function of the drummer. Only a short time before, he had expressly refused the chairmanship of the party, which had been offered to him once before. For he knew that the organization of the party and the responsibility for its ideology was not within his competence. Even in the future, he would always leave the programmatic political work to others. His sole strength was propaganda. It was only in order to secure the public acclamation of his singularity that the drummer became the Führer in the course of the 1920s (cf. Kershaw 1998, p. 167ff).

At every station along Hitler's path to power, it may be shown that his conduct was determined by the striving for exceptional status and not by any realistic evaluation of the situation – which nonetheless granted him undreamt-of successes. For instance, after the failed putsch attempt on 9 November 1923: the shameful defeat did not cause him to appear humble before the judges, present himself as a mere hanger-on, and hide behind the figurehead of Ludendorff in order to obtain a milder sentence. Instead, during the trial he assumed the pose of the "soul of the entire enterprise" in accordance with the indictment (Deuerlein 1974, p. 203f). Even in the position of defendant, he wanted to play the starring role. And it was just this that ensured the spectacular propaganda effect for himself. "A tremendous fellow, that Hitler!" murmured the judge after the latter's first speech, and in response to the objection that it was really quite embarrassing to let the agitator go on for hours, he is said to have replied only that this torrent of words was impossible to interrupt (p. 215ff). Although Hitler was found guilty, he went into imprisonment in Landsberg as an icon of the movement. His differentiation from the community once again only increased his popularity.

Why did people react to a psychotic public self in this, rather than another, way? Aside from the cultural and sociological reasons – to which we will turn in chapter 4 – there are also psychopathological causes that should first be considered.

Psychotic lack of capacity for interpersonal contact. The auratic symptom

Not all of Hitler's contemporaries failed to notice that his endeavored self-stylization – which he continued to engage in during his incarceration with the writing of *Mein Kampf* – suggested a substantial lack of character. His manner was not yet rehearsed enough and his influence not great enough to intimidate skeptics. At his earlier beerhall appearances, it was not rare for him to encounter an "scoffing audience" (Fest 1973, p. 125). Admittedly, the amusement was mixed with alienation. Even in Hitler's major electoral campaign appearances, some eye witness had certainly recognized the awkward traits – for instance, Fedor Stepun, in a report for the Russian exile newspaper *Sovremmennyje Zapiski*: "Then he climbed onto the stage, fiddled uselessly around up there for a bit, stepped up to the front and began to speak. For a moment, there is an impression of something special, perhaps even of a certain significantness. It is created by the hindrances to speech, which one hears and feels through the pauses, through the utterance of single words, in short, through something that seems similar to the labor of producing words, the labor of creation. But this impression is soon dispelled. The hindrances to speaking are soon overcome; the words that escape the speaker are ordinary, really very ordinary. And the gestures aren't convincing either: the elbow is pressed into the ribs. In the hacking movement of the right arm there may be exhortation, but no power. The message of the brief speech (about 10-15 minutes long) is inimitably bland" (quoted in Treiber 1999, p. 219).

The fact that these indications of a compensatory self-styling received relatively little attention, however, rests on a reciprocal psychological effect: people who seek to disguise their awkwardness can, as a rule, count on those around them to instinctively ignore the embarrassing signals, because if they did not, they would then be confronted with their own shame. But anyone who has once seen the stage-set falter becomes curious about what is concealed behind it, and reacts either with malice or bitterness. Both reaction patterns are exhibited by the report of Gauleiter Albert Krebs, who describes what was for him an unforgettable scene in which Hitler's Führer pose wavered and an anxious hypochondriac "emerged from the frame." During the presidential elections, Krebs brought a printed copy of a speech to the exclusive Atlantic Hotel in Hamburg, where Hitler was staying. "As far out as the hall, I could hear the rhythmic cry, *'Mei Supp!*

Mei Supp!' in alternating pitches. In the suite occupied by Hitler and his entourage, I came across some of this entourage's members – adjutants, drivers, personal photographers and journalists, who were lounging about in the antechamber, and with smirking irreverence throwing the cry around like a ball: 'Mei Supp! Mei Supp!...Another plate of soup...his soup, he wants!' It was clear that they were speaking of Hitler's breakfast soup; it was just as clear that this soup didn't quite fit in with the image that Hitler's on-hangers had of the Führer and presidential hopeful. Unwittingly, Hitler himself had then provided a few strokes to correct the propaganda image of the imperturbable folk hero not given to any human weaknesses or afflictions." Krebs describes how, upon entering the room, he was confronted with the hardly heroic spectacle of a pitiful creature slurping vegetable soup, who began – caught out for once in an uncontrolled moment – to interrogate him, "in obvious alarm," with regard to his "views on vegetarian nutrition." Instead of waiting for an answer, Hitler predictably launched into "a long and extensive lecture about the tenets and aims of the life-reform movement." But this is not what Krebs was shaken by: "That he proceeded with his lecture with the one-sidedness of a sectarian who wants not only to convince his listener, but to mentally rape him, is not particularly surprising. But that he betrayed his hypochondriac anxieties about his health with so little hesitation, really with practically no restraint, to myself of all people – someone to whom he had till now always appeared solely in the function of political Führer, never as an individual – this made the scene unforgettable for me. Since, due to the nature of our respective relation to one other, I could not take these revelations as a sign of a suddenly emerging intimacy, I had to take them as proof of the extent of Hitler's internal instability, which did not express itself in particularly pleasant ways." In conclusion, Krebs interprets this instability as a "weakness that looks for security in the excessiveness of violence" (1959, p. 136f).

The inadvertent breakdowns of Hitler's Führer pose – for which Kershaw also provides ample evidence without wishing to interpret them psychopathologically – are a clear indication of the fact that this pose was not based in a free choice of behavioral patterns, but rather obeyed the vagaries of psychological distress. Anyone who has dissociated his private self is not in a position to consciously stage and, if necessary, adjust his public effect. He has become one with his public self to such an extent that he either becomes entirely consumed by it or presents a pitiful picture, like the one portrayed by Krebs. Hitler was not capable of "playing" himself. The strangely cramped, bizarre-seeming gestures captured on film at Hitler's instigation by his personal photographer Heinrich Hoffmann also testify to this fact. Because these gestures are not addressed to an audience, on which the schizophrenic sense of existence is excessively dependent, they are entirely devoid of the power of suggestion that was certainly present in them at the

mass events. Thus, following a correct intuition, Hitler also quickly discontinued the attempt to take acting lessons. The very situation of having a repertoire of performance techniques dictated to him, in all his matchless greatness, went completely against the grain of Hitler's nature. Paul Devrient got a taste of this in 1932, when he was brought in under strict secrecy to teach the electoral contender some acting and rhetorical tricks. In his diary, he writes – with full justification as a theater professional, but mistakenly from the standpoint of mass suggestion – about one campaign appearance he had witnessed: "Hitler speaks incorrectly. I turn red with mortification, want to stop up my ears, involuntary tighten my fists. Then, I am overcome with pity and the wish to help this man as soon as possible" (Maser 1975, p. 26). The pity was unnecessary, for Hitler's performance, which caused his observer such painful embarrassment from the perspective of acting technique, was followed – as Devrient writes in the same context – by "the crowd all around him with captivated, even enraptured faces [...] As Hitler sits in a closed car after his speech, ecstatic shouts repeatedly demand in chorus to see him again [...] In the luggage rack above Hitler, fragrant bouquets of flowers are stacked up to the roof, roses, carnations, asters, etc., which his party supporters threw to him into the open car, often with cries of 'God be with you and your work!' or simply 'Help us!'" (p. 26 and 28). Hitler was honored as savior and helper precisely because his own manner was so awkward. His conduct, which went against any concept of skilled declamation – "a practically obsessive moving back and forth, waving of the hands, rolling of the eyes [...] the sort of podium hysterics that one sees with dilettantish actors and singers" (p. 28) – this was exactly what sent the masses into fits of ecstasy.

It is thus not enough to chalk up Hitler's rhetorical successes to "elementary theatrical tricks" (Kershaw 1989, p. 344). Rather, the fascination of the speaker was at its greatest just where his psychotic complex was the least covered over by an accomplished self-stylization. Among the symptoms of this complex is, in particular, the trait of affectation. On Binswanger's account (1956), the function of psychotic affectation is to bring attention to and the same time distract attention from oneself. It is not simply a peculiarity of behavior that one can take on or cast off as the need arises; rather, it stems from the necessity of concealing the lack of private self through an overly accentuated public self. The portrait of Hitler drawn by Kershaw approaches this: "In his gangster hat and trenchcoat over his dinner jacket, touting a pistol and carrying as usual his dog-whip, he cut a bizarre figure in the *salons* of Munich's upper-crust. But his very eccentricity of dress and exaggerated mannerisms – the affected excessive politeness of one aware of his social inferiority – saw him lionized by condescending hosts and fellow-guests. His social awkwardness and uncertainty, often covered by either silence or tendency to monologues, but at the same time the consciousness of his

public success that one could read in his face, made him an oddity, affording him curiosity value among the patronizing cultured and well-to-so pillars of the establishment" (Kershaw 1998, p. 188). Yet with a view to the psychopathological background, it should be added: The schizophrenic needs the regard of others, but he doesn't need it for something like personal attention in the sense of private contact, but rather in the sense of the confirmation of his outward presentation, his status, his inflated ambition. That is exactly why there is a repeated incidence of grotesque breakdowns of the sort described by Albert Krebs: what emerged from behind the statuelike mask was no human being, no private person, but a wretched nothing crying instinctively for food. This pathetic impression had to be avoided with the greatest effort. As Fest writes, Hitler "regarded life as a kind of permanent parade before a gigantic audience" (1973, p. 518). Since this did not stem from a mere inclination, but was rather anchored unalterably in his psychic structure, he had to continually keep those around him at an observer's distance and be anxiously intent on shielding his inner emptiness from view. If he ever laughed at all, then only provided he "held his hand up in front of his face, at an angle over his nose" (Picker 1963, p. 181).

Only the anonymity of great masses could offer him the distance necessary for a schizophrenic's relation to the external world. If others came too close to him, the perception of unchallenged singularity was under threat. Thus, for example, in the intimate context of Hermann Esser's wedding celebration early in 1920, Hitler could not manage to make a speech: "*In a small circle, I simply can't find the right words. You will only have been disappointed! [...] I just can't speak at family celebrations, nor can I give eulogies [...] I need masses when I speak,*" he explained to the incredulous guests (cited in Hoffmann 1974, p. 24). Indeed, Hitler's incapacity for intimate contact was striking. In all the biographies, it emerges that throughout the course of his life he did not have any real friends. Even the closest relationships he had ever entered into with other people (with the exception of his mother) – those with his childhood friend Kubizek and with his niece Angela (Geli) Raubal – were not built on a foundation of intimate familiarity, but rather carried alone by a psychotic dependence on others as an admiring audience and object of domination. Magda Goebbels said, in the early 1930s: "To a certain extent, Hitler is simply not human – inaccessible, untouchable" (Lüdecke 1938, p. 378). Even Albert Speer, who embodied Hitler's unfulfilled childhood dream, did not experience Hitler as his friend and spoke of an "insurmountable wall" around him (Speer 1969, p. 114). And at his alpine retreat, the "Berghof" – the palatially expanded Wachenfeld House on the Obersalzberg – where one would expect him to appear at ease, he was always on his guard before the others and anxiously monitored their reactions. Even those most devoted to and well-disposed toward him found it unpleasant to be invited be-

cause in "intimate circles" he was not actually more relaxed then in public, but rather as disconnectedly stiff, distanced, and affected as ever. At the fire-side get-togethers, which would last until everybody fell asleep, one was inescapably condemned to the role of passive audience. Langer writes that it was considered "an unwritten law among his immediate staff never to ask a question at these early-morning sessions because to do so might get Hitler off on another subject and force them to remain for another hour" (1943, p. 85). The only variety in the program defined by Hitler's tiring harangue consisted in watching films together. These evenings left behind a feeling of emptiness in their participants, for Hitler himself spoke like a technical medium: directed not *at* the people, but *past* them. Only when he would finally leave the room did the rest of the company breathe a sigh of relief, and the conversation would pick up (Zoller 1949, p. 21; Lüdecke 1938, p. 495).

The fact that Hitler nonetheless managed to electrify the masses while making a downright uninteresting impression up close seems paradoxical, but is apparently predicated on an inner coherence. How can this coherence be explained?

As we have discussed, Hitler's "mastery as a suggestive popular speaker and expert mover of emotions who captivates the people through the staging of striking, impressive situations" (Schmitz 1998, p. 265) did not rest on theatrical skill but rather followed the spontaneous direction of his psychotic drama. Contrary to what his private instructor Devrient believed, Hitler impressed not despite, but because of his lack of an ability to communicate. Kershaw is closer to grasping the phenomenon when he explains the continued presence of Hitler's remoteness even in the most intimate circles: "The remoteness of his personality was complemented by the need to avoid the familiarity which could have brought with it contempt for his position as supreme Leader. The aura around him dared not be sullied in any way" (1998, p. 342). But this aura of unapproachability was not the result of calculation. Even if Hitler had wanted to, he would not have been able to take anyone into his confidence. His distance from others was far more related to the fact that he was only capable of presenting himself in his public aspect. It had long since become impossible for him to switch to a private mode. This is demonstrated by the clumsy and stiff gestures with which he addressed little children, or played with his dog. He suffered through activities such as horse-back riding or row-boating with grotesque rigidity and avoided them as much as possible because he did not possess the capacity to abandon himself to a spontaneous mode of existence.

Some historians – such as Haffner, for instance – tend to the mistaken conclusion that the "emptiness and insubstantiality" of Hitler's private life must be seen as an occasion to turn away "from the person of Hitler and his unrewarding biography" in order to explain his effect entirely by means of external factors (Haff-

ner 1978, p. 13). In this way, an essential element of the historical dynamic is not taken into account from the start, as the social psychologist Gudrun Brockhaus explains: "Haffner's descriptions – emotional emptiness, the lack of a psychological development and differentiation, the concentration of all passion and sensuality on the political sphere, the incapacity for empathy and self-criticism – may all be accurate. But his conclusion that no personal biography of Hitler is thus worthwhile certainly is not. On the contrary, it would be very interesting to take a closer look at the psychological background of this emptiness. And even more important would be to examine the connection between this emotional poverty and Hitler's attractiveness to many people within and without his immediate circle" (Brockhaus 1992, p. 12). But the conclusion drawn by the author does not turn out to be satisfying in its execution either. She recognizes that "the total lack of close relationships, the unabating pressure to engage in self-production, the psychological rigidity, [...] the striking inability to take distance from oneself" are indeed symptomatic of "a severe psychological disturbance" (p. 20). But instead of pursuing, from a psychopathological perspective, her own question of why these very symptoms were able to exercise such a power of attraction over the masses, she finds only the stock response that in the face of Hitler's great suggestive effect, his disorder must have not been that grave after all. For Brockhaus, "Hitler's 'normality' is far more in need of explanation than his disturbance" (p. 21), since its only on this level that she can imagine how Hitler's "emotional poverty" could have had an influence over others. Joachim Fest's biography seems to us to come significantly closer to an answer on this point. He, too, characterizes Hitler's person as "oddly pallid and expressionless" (1973, p. 6). But he reads this very characteristic as an explanation for a mechanism of projective effect: the more Hitler as a person disappeared behind the mask of his public persona, the greater became the auratic fascination that he evidently exercised over others. This direction should be explored more thoroughly.

The phenomenon is known from the reception of cult images (Peter Matussek 1998): the more impersonally and schematically an icon is painted, all the better is it suited to be an object of devotion; in its remoteness from an expression of individual empirical experience, it releases the imaginative energies of the observer, who fills in the gaps of the image with his own desire and fantasy (cf. Belting 1990). An aura is, on Walter Benjamin's famous account, "the unique phenomenon of distance, however close it may be" (1931, S. 378). Just this was the ambivalent effect emanating from Hitler. "I see him from time to time in the weekly newsreels. Here, his face appears more direct and expressive. The footage of Field Marshall Göring's wedding reception shows him in a virutally symbolic way. He is close to everyone here, especially the bride and groom – and yet, at the same time he seems to be somewhere else, he is so unapproachable. One feels

as if a stranger had appeared at this celebration who was nonetheless immediately familiar to everyone. His comerades-in-arms and friends, who are close to him, must feel this 'remoteness' most keenly in his presence" (Robakidse 1939, p. 9). His self-expression, in its distance from actual life, often took on for others the character of an icon; they felt themselves touched to the inner core by the rigid remoteness of his gaze.

As many contemporary quotes clearly document, the projection of a messianic redemption is precipitated not by the presence, but rather by the absence of the other. Thus, Hitler had only to be what he was – pure surface, a shadow image – in order to be perceived as a cult figure. The personal remoteness of the Führer was the vacuum that sucked in the masses in their expectation of redemption. He was able to trigger this effect precisely by making himself unavailable in every respect, as demonstrated by the following account of a waiting, hysterical crowd on the Obersalzberg: "But as the fifth hour of our waiting is gone by, we are no longer freezing, nor do we feel the fatigue, for we are full of just one, single, electrified expectation. And now – now – it will finally happen! The loud voices suddenly fall silent. Lights have appeared on the dark mountainside [...] slowly they approach. We stand breathless. Now, he is coming [...] And jubilation breaks out. 'Heil! Heil! Heil!' over and over again into the darkness. And then, suddenly, he is with us at the gate. Quite near to us, this man known to us a thousand times over [...] There is no timidity, but neither is there a single loud word – only a blissful pressing forward. Hands reach out for him over the picket fence. He looks at us and welcomes us with his smile and clasps every hand. Now I feel the warm, firm pressure [...] The bright face, so familiar to us, is turned toward us. And then it dawns on us: it is the Führer. He raises his right hand in greeting – and slowly, walking backward, he disappears in the darkness [...] And then everything is consumed in one single awareness: you are with us, you know every one of us, you love us, you are the call to the fulfillment of our existence" (Florentine Hamm; Chaussy/Püschner 1997, p. 55f). What is remarkable about this exalted account is the sense of inner intimacy, of personal familiarity, that the crowd projects into a figure briefly emerging out of the darkness.

The hysterical tone accords with many representations of Hitler's mass appearances that repeatedly emphasize the erotic atmosphere he managed to create. As early as the Munich speaker courses, one of the instructors, the historian v. Müller, had already noted that Hitler fell into an extremely intense interaction with the audience, "as if its excitement were his work and at the same time gave him his voice" (1954, p. 339). This excitement has frequently been read sexually. Ernst Hanfstaengl, for instance, commented: "The speaker's platform was for him like a substitute for the marriage bed, where he consummated the copulation with the crowd, his 'bride'" (1970, p. 37). Hitler himself had often put it similarly.

"*The mass audience is feminine*" (Hitler 1992–98, I, p. 323), he claimed, and treated it accordingly. He portrays his feelings during the speech on 3 February 1921 like a symbolic sexual act: *"But only after I had pressed myself through the human walls and reached the lofty platform did I see the success in all its magnitude. Like a giant shell this hall lay before me, filled with thousands and thousands of people [...] I began to speak, and spoke for about two and a half hours; and my feeling told me after the first half hour that the meeting would be a great success. Contact with all these thousands of individuals had been established. After the first hour the applause began to interrupt me in greater and greater spontaneous outbursts, ebbing off after two hours into that solemn stillness which I have later experienced so very often in this hall, and which will remain unforgettable to every single member of the audience. Then you could hardly heare more than the breathing of this gigantic multitude, and only when the last word had been spoken did the applause suddenly roar forth to find its release and conclusion in the 'Deutschland' song, sung with the highest fervor"* (1925/27, p. 500–501).

But the explanation for Hitler's rhetorical excesses from the perspective of sexual psychology – as it is also rehearsed in the recently published psychogram of a dictator by Koch-Hillebrecht (1999) – presupposes something that was quite clearly not present: the capacity for intimate exchange of feelings. Hitler was no "Don Juan of the speaker's podium" (p. 325ff), for he did not have the erotic quality necessary for the role of a classical seducer. His infectiousness was based far more on his psychotic inability to make personal contact. In order to explain why he was nonetheless capable of kindling highly passionate emotions in others, especially in the opposite sex, we must take a look at his sex life – or rather, his lack of it.

Hitler and women. The attraction of lacking intimacy

The ambivalent connection between great attractiveness and a simultaneous inability to establish social relations comes to the fore highly symptomatically in Hitler's relationship to women. Hitler, of all people – the sexually inhibited outsider who had for years avoided any sort of intimate contact – managed to send women into hysterical crying fits just by letting them touch him, and caused them to suffer despairing breakdowns when he paid them no regard. He drove every single one of his partners to suicidal desperation. There was hardly a one who did not attempt to kill herself – in the majority of cases, with success – directly or indirectly because of his pathological unapproachability. We will discuss the indi-

vidual cases later on. But first, it is necessary to say a few words about the state of the documentary evidence.

Much of what is purported to be known about Hitler's later sex life is based on rumor and speculation. This has to do with the fact that Hitler's private life disappeared completely behind the facade of his public persona. And wherever glimpses of it still threatened to break through, he resorted to various strategies to cover it up. As we have already mentioned, he deliberately sought to destroy any documents relating to his seedy background. "*These people cannot be allowed to know who I am*," he once said, "*they cannot know where I come from and from what family*" (Patrick Hitler in Paris Soir, 5 August 39, as well as in OSS, p. 926f). No pictures of him from his youth were allowed to be published; he repeatedly covered up his biographical tracks, attempted to make his origins unrecognizable, and maintained practically no private correspondence to speak of. His earlier acquaintances from Vienna and the comrades of the First World War were kept from speaking about his past with pleas, confidentiality agreements, and where necessary, threats (Speer 1969, p. 111f). Because the primary sources on Hitler's intimate life are so sparse, we are also dependent on second-hand statements. However, we pursue these only in so far as they exhibit a certain degree of probability, and identify speculations as such.

It may be considered a certainty that prior to his political rise Hitler had acquired no sexual experience of any kind. The eschewing of contact determined not only his first, "telepathic" love from afar to Stefanie. Hitler's enormous fear of approaching the other sex during puberty is also documented in the following account Kubizek gives of a visit by the two friends to the Vienna Opera: "Despite his modest clothing, his reserved and cool nature in society, Adolf was so much liked by the ladies promenading past us that occasionally one or the other would even turn her head toward him – a conduct that was considered unbecoming according to the strict etiquette of the Hofoper. I wondered even more at this since Adolf did not in any way provoke this conduct; on the contrary, he hardly paid any mind to the encouraging glances of the ladies, or made an indignant remark about it only to myself. For me, however, these observations were enough to ascertain that my friend had remarkably great luck with the other sex; a luck however that, to my amazement, he did not want to make any use of." Here, too, Hitler obstructed the path to sociability through an ostentatious public self; indeed, he inflated the public persona even more in order to avoid the embarrassment of an intimate situation, which would have confronted him with the defects of his private self. Kubizek goes on: "when we returned to the standing-room stalls after the intermission, one of the liveried servants came after us, tugged at Adolf's sleeve and handed him a billet. Adolf – not at all surprised, but rather so composed as if it was an everyday occurrence – accepted the billet, expressed thanks,

and hastily scanned the lines. I believed I had just come upon the track of a great secret, or at least the beginning of a sweet secret. But Adolf merely said disdainfully: *'yet another one,'* and passed me the billet. Then he looked at me, half inquisitively, half in jest and asked whether I was perhaps interested in going to this announced rendezvous. 'It's your concern, not mine,' I said somewhat irritated, 'and besides, I wouldn't want to disappoint this lady" (1953, p. 228f).

That Hitler, who had never had a rendezvous, pretended in a laughably boasting gesture as though such advances were a routine matter is not merely a sign of normal pubescent timidity. The rejection of the advance, which he staged with played-up disinterest, had a pronounced pathological background. As we have already set forth in connection with the Stefanie episode, Hitler's fear of intimate contact was so great that he took refuge in a fantasy world that had all the characteristics of a psychotic erotic delusion. Subsequently, he would cultivate his intimacy defenses into an ideology of celibacy, the content of which he drew primarily from the writing of the "pan-German" Georg Ritter von Schönerer. There, it is described as healthy to live in abstinence until the age of 25 because – just like abstaining from meat and alcohol – it supposedly builds up willpower. Contact with prostitutes is also to be avoided on grounds of "racial hygiene" (cf. Kershaw 1998, p. 44). We can assume that Hitler did not in fact live in abstinence because Schönerer's ideology demanded it; rather, it is far more probable that he resorted to this ideology as a way of rationalizing his fear of intimacy. That this rationalization also soon took on the character of a systematized delusion dissociated from its actual source is demonstrated by its constancy.

The next encounter of any sort with girls that Hitler was to have had after the delusional relationship to Stefanie during puberty was a platonic passion he developed in 1913 for "Milli," the sister of Rudolf Häusler, who sometimes took along his fellow men's home residents to visit his family. During one of Hitler's visits, the seventeen-year-old Emilie – who was also called "Nichtserl" ("little cipher") by other family members due to her unassuming nature – asked him to draw a picture in her autograph album. Since he was apparently incapable of such a spontaneous production, he complied with the request by bringing her a colored drawing on another day: a Teuton armed with helmet, shield, and sword before an oak tree in which the initials A.H. were carved – also in shield form (statement of Marianne Koppler, quoted in Hamann 1996, p. 364). The motif speaks for itself. And the move to Munich, undertaken with Häusler shortly afterward, helped Hitler to keep up the fantasy relationship – at shield-length distance – for some time.

There is not a single mention of any involvement with women until far into Hitler's thirties. There are, on the other hand, numerous indications of the avoidance of it. Recall, for instance, the "patriotic" rigor with which he rejected his

war-comrades' suggestion to seek out a "little French sweet-heart." Nor did Hitler ever appear with a female companion at his side when he began to frequent the Munich salons in the 1920. Helene Hanfstaengl, at whose house he was a regular, once placated her husband – who expressed irritation at Hitler's affected manner of paying court to her – with the words: "Believe me, he is an absolutely sexless individual, and not a man" (Hanfstaengl 1970, p. 61). Ernst Hanfstaengl adopted this judgment; later on he would declare that he was convinced Hitler was impotent.

Hitler's efforts – in an anxious, downright panicked concern about his image – always to be seen completely dressed, even by doctors, testify less to impotence than to an overwhelming sense of shame. This contributed to his pathological loss of touch with reality. Cut off from the others, he retreated more and more into the isolation of his delusional world. Yet in the phase where his delusions began to find external confirmation, he also began to establish contact with the opposite sex – admittedly, not in the sense of a real intimacy driven by feelings, but in the only way that he was capable of: as a mannered self-presentation.

One of the first signs of Hitler's altered attitude may be a remark circulated by Helene Hanfstaengl to the effect that Hitler had used the absence of her husband to fall on his knees before her and play the "pining minnesinger." Whether he had actually referred to himself as her "*slave*" (p. 183f) remains within the province of the rumors, to which we will have occasion to return later. What is a fact, however, is that at the age of 37, Hitler became close – to what extent is uncertain – with a young girl. The contact was established through dogs: Hitler was training his Alsatian, Prinz, in the park in front of the Deutsches Haus in the Berchtesgaden while the 16-year-old Maria Reiter was playing nearby with her Alsatian, Marco. Equipped with the attributes of power and fame – the Mercedes with waiting chauffeur, the riding boots, and the whip – he finally fulfilled the precondition that he had once set himself for approaching a female. When his Prinz attacked Maria's Marco, Hitler was able to introduce himself in accordance with his standard by giving his dog an impressive thrashing. The age difference between himself and the girl, whom he called Mimi, Mimilein, Mizi, or Mitzerl, alleviated his anxiety by contributing to his feelings of superiority (cf. Kershaw 1998, p. 284). How close the relationship was is not known. According to her testimony, their most intimate encounter was a walk in the woods, during which she had to pose against a tree like a model. He played around with his riding whip and called her his "*wood nymph*," while she was supposed to call him "*Wolf*." When she appeared amused about it, he made her swear never to laugh at him. Afterwards, he kissed her passionately and said the he would have liked to crush her (Peis 1959). The account appears credible in its portrayal of Hitler's characteristic paranoia about making himself a laughing stock and the crude overcom-

ing of the shame threshold through a pose of mastery. This pose maintains the distance within the context of intimate contact.

In the years between 1926 and 1931 there were only a few isolated encounters between the two. Mimi's hopes of marriage were held in ambivalent suspension by answers formulated in the subjunctive. He was capable of giving her nothing but his public self: For her birthday, he gave her two volumes of *Mein Kampf* with the comment that after reading it she would understand him better. Finally, tormented by his lack of committal, she attempted to kill herself by hanging herself from a door post, but was found in time by her brother-in-law.

Hitler's next lover was to be more successful in her attempt: Geli Raubal, the daughter of Hitler's half-sister Angela.

Hitler's childishly natural niece was twenty in the fall of 1928, when she came to live with him in his newly-rented nine-room apartment on the Prinzregentenplatz in Munich. There, according to reports, she was held captive like a prisoner. Hitler had occasion to be jealous, for she liked to flirt, especially with his chauffeur Maurice. Once, when Maurice kissed her on the cheek, Hitler purportedly flew into a frenzied rage that climaxed in a threat to shoot him. The accounts of this incident are based on a contradictory conglomeration of statements by Hanfstaengl and Otto Strasser (Hayman 1997, p. 120). It is however beyond a doubt that Hitler saw Geli as his property; very likely, the family relationship had helped him to allow for the intimacies in the first place. But if what Otto Strasser supposedly told Wulf Schwarzwäller is correct, then these sexual experiences were also marked by aberration. The brother of the NSDAP Reichspropoganda and organization director is cited as follows: "I liked this young girl very much, and sensed how much she suffered from Hitler's jealousy. She was a vivacious young thing who was glad of the Carnival hubbub in Munich, but could never get Hitler to accompany her to one of the many boisterous balls. Finally, during Carnival in 1931, Hitler allowed me to take Geli to a ball. Shortly before I wanted to pick her up, my brother Gregor told me Hitler had just called and withdrawn his permission. I went to the Prinzregentenplatz anyway. She seemed to have gotten her way. Her eyes were red from crying. Hitler stood stony-faced at the door as we left the house and climbed into the waiting cab. We spent a lovely, merry evening. Geli seemed to enjoy having escaped Hitler's supervision for once. On the way back from Schwabing to the Prinzregentenplatz, we took a walk through the English Gardens. At the top of the Chinese Tower, Geli sat on a bench and began to cry bitterly. Finally, she told me that although she loved Hitler she could not stand it anymore. His jealousy was not even the worst of it. He demanded things of her that were simply disgusting. She had never imagined that there was even anything like it. When I asked her to get it off her chest, she told me of things that I had previously only read about in Krafft-Ebing's 'Psychopathia Sex-

ualis' during my studies" (Schwarzwäller 1998, p. 141f). Strasser also added: "He was a sadist and a masochist, both in one person." He did not wish to go into detail, "not out of consideration for Hitler, but for Geli's memory" (p. 142). This is strange insofar as Strasser had already gone into far more detail at his interrogation by the US Office of Strategic Studies in 1943: "Hitler made her undress.[...] He would lie down on the floor. Then she would have to squat over his face, where he could examine her at close range and this made him very excited. When the excitement reached its peak, he demanded that she urinate on him and this gave him sexual pleasure. Geli said the whole performance was extremely disgusting to her and [...] it gave her no gratification." (OSS, S. 919).

Of course, there is no proof of the authenticity of this description. Both Geli and Strasser may have had their motives for spreading such a story. But if it is to be true, it is at least not implausible. It fits into the complex of symptoms of a person who suffers from a compulsion to control others due to his psychotic lack of intimacy. The close examination of female genitalia and the desire to come into direct contact with excretions are a psychologically consistent ersatz for the inability to feel personal closeness and accept the intimacies of another in a less crude form. For a schizophrenic with such an extreme loss of feeling as was the case with Hitler, other people are things. The complete lack of intersubjective sensation compelled him to secure the partner's intimacy in an objectivized form; he had to approach the innermost part of the other from an anatomical point of view, since he could not experience it erotically. The psychotic's paranoid compulsion to control the reactions of others could allow for no secrets in sexual contact; everything, even the body's innermost processes, had to come to light – as a complement to his own fear of discovery. It was a sexual contact of the public self, which, in its masochistic components, makes certain of the indignity of the private self.

There are also reports – in connection with a blackmail affair – of pornographic drawings that Hitler was supposed to have made of Geli's genitals. After the drawings were ransomed, Hitler purportedly did not destroy them, but rather locked them up in a safe at the Brown House (Hayman 1997, p. 147, relying on Hanfstaengl 1957, p. 162f). If this information is correct, than it points to the same need for reified intimacy.

Geli's suicide fits in with this complex of symptoms. The experience of his infinite distance in close proximity was apparently unbearable for her. She was found dead in their apartment on 18 September 1931. She had shot herself in the heart with her lover's revolver. Hitler was not in Munich at the time. The news of Geli's suicide hit him hard; for days he appeared deeply distraught and on the edge of a nervous breakdown. He closed up her room and made it into the shrine of a bizarre death cult. His rigorous vegetarianism also dates back to this time.

The incorporation of the love object's memory and the ideology of purity are equally symptomatic of psychotic distancing. Several observers expressed the view that during this phase Hitler lost the last remainder of interpersonal empathy. He himself is said to have commented on the loss of his niece with the following words: "*Until now, I still had a connection to the world – evidently, I still had one and didn't even know it. Now, everything has been taken from me. Now I am completely free, inwardly and outwardly. Perhaps it was meant to be. Now I belong alone to the German people and my mission. – Poor Geli! She had to sacrifice herself for it*" (Wagener 1978, p. 358). Indeed, his reserve and coldness toward others now continued to grow. By Albert Speer's reckoning, from this time on Hitler granted the familiar "*Du*" to just four men – the "old warriors" Herman Esser, Christian Weber, Julius Streicher, and Ernst Röhm. "With the first, he took advantage of a suitable opportunity after 1933 to reintroduce the *'Sie'*; he avoided the second, treated the third impersonally, and had the fourth one murdered" (Speer 1969, p. 114).

As we have mentioned, the allegations of Hitler's perversions cannot be proved. On the accounts of Rosenbaum (1998, p. 137) and Redlich (1998, p. 285) skepticism with respect to the reports in question is in order above all because they originated almost exclusively from Nazi dissidents who fled to the US, such as Otto Strasser, Ernst Hanfstaengl and Hermann Rauschning. However, their claims are indirectly supported by statements made by the actress Renate Müller, Hitler's next affair, to the director Adolf Zeissler. According to the latter, Hitler supposedly took Müller to his home after observing her on set for an entire day in 1932 and talked her into participating in some sadomasochistic practices. These involved her beating him with his whip and kicking him while uttering obscenities; in the meantime, he masturbated and called himself her slave who was not worthy of being in the same room with her. After his orgasm, he chit-chatted banally with her over a glass of wine and thanked her for a nice evening. Zeissler concludes his recounting with the assurance: "I am convinced that Renate Müller, who was always entirely sincere with me, did not make this story up" (OSS, p. 22; Schwarzwäller 1998, p. 143f). Hayman tells the conclusion of her story: years after the affair with Hitler, the actress noticed that she was being observed by the Gestapo, and that she was in danger of being put on trial for "race defamation" because of her affair with a Jew. Under this pressure, she became addicted to morphium and eventually sought therapy in a sanatorium. A renewed attempt to see Hitler did not meet with success. Back at the sanatorium, she saw a car with four SS men drive up and jumped out the window (1977, p. 146f).

In 1929, Hitler met the 18-year-old office assistant Eva Braun at the studio of his photographer Heinrich Hoffmann. There are speculations that Geli Raubal's suicide could have had something to do with jealousy of the potential rival. But

there could have been no question of a more intense relationship between Hitler and Eva Braun at that time. Hitler's long-time secretary Christa Schroeder energetically denies that it had ever come to any intimacy between the two (verbal communication, Joachimsthaler 1989, p. 20). What is certain, at least, is that Hitler treated Eva with significantly more distance and coolness than he did Geli. The relationship to Eva had strongly anti-hedonistic traits; pleasures such as dancing, or even sun-bathing and smoking, were forbidden to her. And their sex life together – if there had been one at all – must have also been marked by a corresponding joylessness (Zoller 1949, p. 73). Apparently she once confided to a friend: "I get nothing at all from him as a man" (Hayman 1997, p. 207). It was only after two suicide attempts in 1932 and 1935 – precipitated by her suffering from his inattentiveness – that Hitler was moved to show her somewhat more regard. In 1936, she was allowed to move in with him at the Berghof, where she was however not treated as a companion, but at best as a guest, and more like a member of the staff who must always keep in the background. "He needs me only for certain purposes," she wrote in her diary, and: "When he says he's fond of me he means it only at that moment. Just like his promises which he never keeps. Why does he torment me so and not of put an end to it right away?" (Ilse Fucker-Michels, quoted from the facsimile in Fest 1973, p. 524; on the authenticity of the diary, cf. Gun 1968, p. 68f). Until their joint suicide in the bunker, Hitler's secret mistress – whom he married only shortly before their deaths, on 29 April 1945 – suffered years of a subtle kind of isolation torture, from which she was able to escape only sporadically through shopping trips and travel. Even in more intimate circles, where Hitler condescendingly called her "*Tschapperl*," he treated her as a non-person. Once, for instance, he remarked in her presence to Albert Speer: "*Very intelligent people should have a primitive and dumb woman [...] In my free time, I want to have my peace*" (Speer 1969, p. 106).

One of the admirers who supposedly attempted to take her life because of Hitler's inattentiveness was the British aristocrat Unity Walkyrie Mitford, who belonged to Hitler's entourage in Munich since 1933. Evidently, his interest in her was limited to the purpose of staying in contact with fascist circles in England. When England declared war on Germany on 3 September 1939, she put two bullets in her head. It was, however, possible to save her. "*I'm afraid I don't bring women any luck*," was apparently Hitler's laconic comment on the suicide attempt (quoted in Knopp 1995, p. 146). To what extent at least two other women – the actress Inge Ley and the secretary Susi Liptauer – became Hitler's luckless suicidal victims is not something we need to go into here (cf. Domarus 1962/63, p. 2221; Redlich 1998, p. 78).

Hitler's affairs, in short, were characterized by an immense emotional distance. This, however, did not lessen, but rather increased his attractiveness. The

psychotic symptom of unapproachability – precisely due to the lack of personal qualities – offered an ideal surface onto which Hitler's partners could project their longing. His power to fascinate was so great because it intensified the tension of unfulfilled desire. We know from art history that it is precisely the statuelike and lifeless qualities of human representations that lend them the unique, magic aura of a soul. And scholars of new media repeatedly ascertain with amazement that telecommunication contacts in which the other person disappears behind a virtual mask can kindle stronger passions than real life (Turkle 1995; Peter Matussek 1997). Hitler was just such a statue- and mask-like phenomenon – his inner lifelessness animated by giving leeway to the virtuality of projective fantasies and desires.

Thus, even on the micro-level of Hitler's deficient intimate relationships, we find the same dynamic with which we had previously explained his attractiveness for the masses. It was through the same mechanisms that Hitler managed to drive the larger public – with whom he had, as Ernst Hanfstaengl perceived, consummated an ersatz marriage (1970, p. 37) – to become his hysterically despairing followers. Indeed, before the masses, the effect was considerably amplified, since here his public persona could make use of the auratic unapproachability to the very best advantage and evoke an atmosphere of collective rapture that made the participant shudder in awe.

There is, then, some evidence to suggest that the notorious suicidal tendencies of Hitler's female acquaintance represent, from the point of view of individual psychology, a mirror of the Germans' self-destructive readiness to follow their Führer enthusiastically to their doom. Admittedly, to make such a reception at all possible, it first required the presence of very particular cultural-historical framing conditions, the path to which was paved by propaganda. We will turn to them in the next chapter. For the time being, we note that these conditions – both with respect to their production and to the unfolding of their effect – cannot be divorced from the factors of individual psychology described above. Hitler's coldness did not only aid him in achieving his aims in an unscrupulously brutal manner – it allowed him at the same time to appear in an otherworldly light that helped to transform the violence perpetrated in his name into devout duty. But before we go on to describe this reverent readiness for violence, let us first examine the roots of the transformation in Hitler's paranoia.

Paranoid elements in Hitler's persecution of the Jews

Hitler's "first documented attack on the Jews" (Joachimsthaler 1989, p. 247) is the previously cited letter to Gemlich of 16 September 1919. Here, Hitler de-

clared it a matter of principle that antisemitism must not be grounded on emotions, but rather only on "the recognition of facts [...] The final, irrevocable aim must remain the removal of the Jews altogether" (R.W. Gr.Kdo. 4, No. 314; BHStA, Abt. IV). The emphasis on the irrevocable, factual character of a statement determined by affect is in itself symptomatic for any systematized delusion. The demand for the complete destruction of the opponent qualifies it as a delusion of persecution. For Hitler, the battle against the Jews was, as he repeatedly emphasized from then on, a matter of life and death – a paranoid obsession that he doggedly took hold of to the point of frenzy, in order finally to convince others of its truth. In the *Völkischer Beobachter*, he announced on 15 May 1921: *"Hatred, we want to pour burning hatred into the souls of millions of our countrymen, as long as it takes for a flame of wrath to ignite in Germany that shall bring vengeance upon the despoilers of our nation.*" And as late as 4 February 1945, he assured Bormann that the Jewish opposition to the National Socialist ideology was tantamount to a deadly threat: "*They want to eradicate us, there's not doubt about that. This time, the hatred comes through decisively more than hypocrisy. We cannot thank our enemies enough for this candor! The total hatred that surges up around us can only be countered with total war. We are fighting for our very lives; this war is a desperate battle for our existence*" (Hitler 1945, p. 48). Where did this paranoid, distorted perception, which had no correspondence in reality, come from? A telling indication of the solution to this question is a mistake that repeatedly and persistently occurred in Hitler's speeches after 1939:

On 30 January 1939, on the occasion of the sixth anniversary of his assumption of power, Hitler openly declared war on the Jews in a speech before the members of the Reichstag: "*And one more thing I would like now to state on this day memorable perhaps not only for us Germans. I have often been a prophet in my life and was generally laughed at. During my struggle for power, it was primarily the Jews who received with laughter my prophecies that I would someday assume the leadership of the state and thereby of the entire Volk and then, among many other things, achieve a solution of the Jewish problem. I think that in the meantime, the laughter that resounded among the Jewry in Germany at the time has by now probably choked in their throats. Today I will be a prophet again: If international finance Jewry within Europe and abroad should succeed once more in plunging the peoples into a world war, then the consequences will be not the Bolshevization of the world and therewith a victory of Jewry, but on the contrary, the destruction of the Jewish race in Europe*" (Domarus 1962/63, p. 1058).

However, in the actual declaration of war against Poland, in a speech of 1 September 1939, Hitler did not even mention the Jews at all. Nonetheless, he

would later on repeatedly claim that he had. In the speeches of the following two years, Hitler "recalls" not less than four time that he had threatened the Jews with extinction in his September war declaration (and not in the January speech):

30 January 1941, Sportpalast: "*And I should not like to forget the indication that I had already given once, on September 1, 1939[!], in the German Reichstag. The indication, then, to wit, that if the rest of the world would be plunged into a general war by Jewry, then the whole of Jewry would have finished playing its role in Europe! They may still laugh today at that, exactly as they had laughed before at my prophecies. The coming months and years will prove that I also saw correctly here*" (Domarus 1962/63, p. 1663).

30 January 1942, Sportpalast: "*We see our way clearly on the point that the war can end only in that either the Aryan peoples are annihilated or Jewry will disappear form Europe. On September 1, 1939 [!], I declared in the German Reichstag – and I guard myself against premature prophecies – that this war would not end as the Jews imagine, namely, that the European-Aryan peoples will be annihilated, but on the contrary that the consequence of this war will be the destruction of the Jewry*" (p. 1828f).

30 September 1942, Sportpalast: "*On September 1, 1939 [!] I stated two things at the meeting then of the Reichstag: First, that after this war was already forced upon us, no force of arms and also no term would ever force us down, and second, that if Jewry would plot an international world war for the annihilation of the Aryan peoples of Europe, then not the Aryan peoples would be annihilated, but on the contrary Jewry. The Jews also laughed once in Germany at my prophecies. I do not know if they are still laughing today, or if their laughter has not already subsided. But now, too, I can only assert: Their laughter will die down everywhere. And I will be right with these prophesies in the end as well*" (p. 1920).

8 November 1942, Löwenbräukeller: "*You will recall still that meeting of the Reichstag [!] in which I declared: If Jewry perchance imagines that it can bring about an international world war for the annihilation of the European races, then the consequence will be not the annihilation of the European races, but on the contrary, it will be the annihilation of the Jewry in Europe. I was always laughed at as a prophet. Of those who laughed then, countless ones no longer laugh today, and those who still laugh now will perhaps no longer do so in a while either. This realization will spread beyond Europe to the entire world*" (p. 1937).

Dawidowicz (1975) interprets these mistaken attributions as "slips" that, on her account, reveal that Hitler's declaration of war was above all directed against the Jews, but that for psychological reasons he attempted to conceal this primary war aim. Dawidowicz maintains that Hitler had already made up his mind to de-

stroy the Jews in 1918 in Pasewalk, and that from then on he had consistently worked in secret toward this goal until the war came and made such secrecy superfluous (1975, fn. p. 110f).

Despite justified doubts concerning the early dating of Hitler's determination to exterminate the Jews, Rosenbaum (1998) takes up the strain of Dawidowicz's argument, but he sees the actual betraying slip in another aspect of the quoted speeches that recurs with equal stubbornness: Why, at a time when no Jew would have dreamt of laughing about him any more, does Hitler take precisely this supposed laughter as the occasion of his death threats? Rosenbaum draws the natural conclusion that the entirely unrealistic perception of laughter, which is repeated like a leitmotif, points to a hidden impulse. However, in view of the psychodynamic facts of the matter, the journalist's reading seems to us to miss the point: Rosenbaum interprets Hitler's attacks on the non-existent laughter as an "esoteric" sign that it is the speaker himself who is secretly laughing. This is taken as proof of the mass murderer's deep-seated evil (p. 385ff). Instead of resorting to this ultimately unexaminable reason of radical evil and speculating about Hitler's coded messages, we find it more helpful to undertake a descriptive analysis of the characteristic pattern of his speeches in order to trace as far as possible its biographical origins.

The four repetitions of the leitmotif justify the project of the obliteration of the Jews with obsessive persistence by claiming the necessity of silencing their laughter; whereby, on the one hand, the progress of this project – parallel to the measures of the Holocaust – is ascertained, while on the other, his objective proves to be unattainable, since the laughter by which Hitler felt persecuted took place only in his head. And evidently, it was indelibly lodged there. On 30 January 1939, Hitler had still differentiated: in the past, he had been "*generally laughed at*" as a "*prophet*"; during his "*struggle for power, it was primarily*" – that is, not exclusively – "*the Jews who received [the prophecies] with laughter.*" This "*laughter that resounded among the Jewry in Germany at the time has by now probably choked in their throats.*" In January 1941, a year before the Wansee Conference, he ascribes the laughter solely to the Jews, and experiences it as a phenomenon of the present: "*They may still laugh today at that, exactly as they had laughed before at my prophecies. The coming months and years will prove that I also saw correctly here.*" In September 1942, despite the fact that the machinery of death, which could only have elicited fear and speechless horror from the Jews, had long since been in full swing, Hitler is still uncertain of his case: "*I do not know if they are still laughing today, or if their laughter has not already subsided.*" A month later, he finally knows that "*of those who laughed then, countless ones no longer laugh today,*" however, the delusional perception re-

mains. He still continues to hear some "*who still laugh now*" and can only hope that they "*will perhaps no longer do so in a while either.*"

The repeated, humiliating discreditation of his missionary, grandiose ideas through the ridicule of his classmates, his fellow men's home residents and his comrades in the army as well as some of the listeners at his early public speaking appearances had planted itself so deeply in his mind that he still heard the derisive laughter long after it had died down. This paranoid hallucination is documented not only in the public speeches; it also appears in the monologues: on 3 April 1942 in the Wolfsschanze, for instance, Hitler blusters about the "*madness*" that the Jews had hindered the non-Jews in "*their perception of reality*" by means of religious occultism, and continues: "*The most diabolical thing about it is that the Jew now laughs about how successful the deception has been [...] But this time, they will disappear from Europe! A light-hearted, carefree laughter will return to our world only when this incubus is taken from it!*" (Jochmann 1980, p. 263). And the "*political testament*" of 29 April 1945 continues to be concerned with Hitler's greatest worry: "*Moreover, I do not want to fall into the hands of enemies who require a new Jew-produced drama for the amusement of their inflamed masses*" (Domarus 1962/63, p. 2237). The "*incubus*" (being the object of derision) could not ultimately be taken from him by means of the industrially perfected erradication of the purported mockers; rather, it was necessary for him to destroy its actual creator: that is, himself. Only when defeat in the war made it impossible to avert the shameful discreditation of his megalomania, and the delusions of persecution were thus also revealed as such, did Hitler accept this final consequence. Prior to this, all of his efforts were geared toward compensating for the narcisisstic wound to his public self with any means possible – hate propoganda, war, and mass murder.

If the testimony of Helene Hanfstaengl is to be believed, Hitler himself had once confided to her that his "hatred of the Jews was a *'personal matter'*" (cited in Toland 1977, p. 72). Joachim Köhler is correct when he comments: "The way his Munich acquaintance understood the statement was probably not how it was meant. Hitler did not want to indicate that it was something like a private concern – which would, in any case, have gone against his messianic self-perception – but rather the fact that one couldn't talk about it because it was simply a 'personal matter" (1997, p. 98). However, the quote is revealing in this latter sense, as well. Hitler's hatred of the Jews could not be like the usual antisemitic ideologies of his time. It had to rise above all others in its ferocity and relentlessness. The truly personal cause of his obsession – the unbearable injury to his megalomaniacal pride inflicted by the ridicule of others – had long since become dissociated. What he revealed to Helene Hanfstaengl was not a secret of the private but of the

public self, which formed the meticulous disguise of his personal motives through the numinous presentation of a grandiose ersatz personality.

More revealing were the denials – such as Hitler's frequent, and often loud protestation: "*I have never had feelings of inferiority*" (cf. Lukacs 1991, p. 41f). It fits in seamlessly with the above-cited assurances that the laughter of anyone who did not take his messianic "*prophecies*" seriously would subside everywhere. Clearly, the fact that Hitler was able to make his program of destruction come so dreadfully true did not liberate him from the "*incubus*" of the suffered humiliations. The public death threats, in particular, demonstrate that his wish to be taken seriously by others could not be realized by virtue of his personal power of persuasion, but only by means of external power. In this underlying contradiction hidden within his hate-filled tirades rests the incommunicable – because irresolvable – problem at the core of his paranoid delusion. The immutable self-contradiction was, in the literal sense, Hitler's "*personal matter*" – the vulnerable point that he had to conceal from himself. This is also suggested by the fact that although Hitler so loudly proclaimed his extermination program, he had it executed in the highest secrecy. Certainly, this was also done to prevent public outrage from endangering the machinery of murder. But it is conspicuous that even within the innermost circles it was considered taboo to approach Hitler directly on the subject. Behind the "state secret of the Third Reich," as Lukacs writes, "was also Hitler's personal secret – at least to the extent that he attempted to keep the knowledge of it from himself" (1997, p. 257). Although there was no doubt within the hierarchy about Hitler's order to eradicate the Jews, he carefully avoided putting this order down in writing – which he had indeed done with respect to the execution of the mentally ill (Görlitz/Quint 1952, p. 552f). At the Wannsee Conference, the official terminology spoke of "*evacuation*" instead of liquidation. Nor did Hitler want to hear the euphemisms "*final solution*" and "*special handling*"; he "allowed only the locution that the Jews were to be *'deployed for work'*" (Bormann, 11 July 1943; Lukacs 1997, p. 257). Ernst Deuerlein confirms: "Hitler did not talk about all the problems. To name just one convincing example, he kept silent on the so-called final solution of the Jewish question" (1969, p. 152). Even in the presence of his closest associates, Hitler refused "to admit that concentration of Jews in camps in the East represented anything other than deportation for the purpose of forced labor" and showed an "evident reluctance to hear or read reports about what was being done to the Jews in the East" (Lukacs 1997, p. 257). This evidence does not fit in with the image of the public tirades of hatred. Rather, they suggest far more the high potential for shame that drove the delusion of persecution at its innermost core. The latent awareness that the "*final solution*," with its extermination of the mockers, was

only a compensatory ersatz solution for an insatiable need for greatness could not be shaken off even with the most aggressive expenditure of destructive energies.

Hitler's problem had no solution. In the days of his complete breakdown, during which he soliloquized about how they would be "*eternally grateful*" to him for "*eradicat[ing] the Jews from Germany and Central Europe*" (Hitler 1945, p. 122), his actual interest was turned to the reality that he had never been able to realize. One of the last photos of him show him with a far-away look in front of his fantasy world: the architectural model of Linz (Giesler 1977, p. 480f) that he had wanted to put in place of the Linz of his failed youthful dreams – "the petrified glorification of his person" (Hamann 1996, p.4). The extent to which Hitler had portrayed himself in this colossal construction had already become evident to Kubizek at the time that it was first planned: "There was something firm, rigid, immovable, obstinately fixed in his nature that revealed itself outwardly in a terrible earnestness and constituted the formal basis upon which all the other qualities of his character developed" (1953, p. 44). This ossification is characteristic of people who hold entirely to their public persona. It results from the fact that one's own identity is supported exclusively on criteria that are visible to others. The more one seeks to impress the outer world with one's significance, the greater is one's inner commitment to keep one's behavior consistent (Baumeister 1986, p. 65). In contrast to the private self, which generally remains concealed and is therefore less binding, the public self cannot be so easily withdrawn. It creates public assumptions and expectations that must continually be reconfirmed in a kind of feed-back loop, through which the expectations are in turn stabilized, and so forth. Private self-conception then eventually adapts itself to the public self under the pressure of its formative effect. The former is entirely consumed by the fixed portrait of the latter (Schlenker 1986, p. 36, cf. 40f). Hitler represents an extreme case of this development.

In light of these findings, one cannot help asking whether Kershaw's statement, which we quoted at the outset, may be left in the subjunctive: "If the domineering traits were signs of a deep inner uncertainty, the overbearing features the reflection of an underlying inferiority complex, then the hidden personality disorder must have been one of monumental proportions" (1998, p. 344). As overwhelmingly banal as it may sound: Hitler's declarations of war on the Jews are the expression of a prematurely frustrated need to be taken seriously – a need that, through the interaction of mutually exacerbating humiliations and self-aggrandizements, grew to such monstrous proportions that Hitler sought to fulfill it in the most terrible way and was doomed to fail precisely for this reason. The bizarre disproportionality between the motive and the execution of his actions is a reliable indicator of the "monumental proportions" of his "hidden personality disorder." It is, albeit, comprehensible from a psychiatric point of view that a

person who has had to take a great deal of mockery from his environment reacts with feelings of vengeance. But in Hitler's case, the criteria of incomprehensibility that distinguishes the schizophrenic delusion from a delusional disorder is fulfilled by the fact that he continued to carry on his vengeful campaign long after the laughter of his opponents had died away – for it was carried out by a machinery of mass murder completely freed of any emotion. Hitler's narcissistic fixation on his public self was so great and exclusive that he preferred anything to its disgrace, including mass extermination, world destruction, and ultimately his own suicide.

Of course, the realization of this paranoid program of annihilation required the help of others to be implemented – whether through active collaboration or through turning a blind eye. And this brings us to the question of the cultural-historical circumstances that made it possible for the delusion to be realized by the public sphere instead of being discredited by it.

IV. Cultural-historical aspects of Hitler's mania

As we have already emphasized, charisma and the emotional deficits of a schizophrenic are not mutually exclusive; rather, they can even reinforce one another. Hitler exhibits an extreme case of this mutual interaction. While some contemporaries were simply bored stiff in the face of Hitler's complete remoteness and unapproachability, others experienced these as overpowering. Unfortunately, the latter reaction was more common. It was the intention of the previous chapter to make the biographical background of this phenomenon transparent. But the catastrophic misinterpretation of the features of a severe personality disorder as the mark of special chosenness does not originate in individual psychology alone; there are also social-psychological and cultural-historical causes, to which we will now turn.

We begin with the question of how Hitler's hate propaganda developed out of the ideological context of its time. In the ensuing steps, we will elucidate both the framing conditions and the ideological messages that allowed him to make a name for himself as a speaker with such phenomenal success. Against this background, the Führer cult appears as a culminating point at which the societal desire for a collective sovereignty coincides paradoxically with the submission to the will of an individual. For Hitler, the complexity involved in the position of power that had fallen to him placed upon him excessive demands that, in the context of his psychotic structure, could only be mastered through the denial, and eventually the utter annihilation, of reality. Why he met with such massive support in the process will be discussed here in conjunction with the question of what made Hitler's world-view so attractive and why its pathologically consistent consequences went unrecognized so frequently and for so long.

On the prehistory of Hitler's hate propaganda

In order to understand the process by which Hitler's hate propaganda achieved its effect, it is necessary to refer back to the most significant influences in his development. Three elements constitute the seminal factors of the hate dynamic that Hitler would later deploy politically with great success: an anomic – that is, marked by normative conflicts – family situation, Hitler's revolt against paternal demands, and populist agitation as a masking of this conflictual structure.

In Chapter 3, we described extensively the dissonance in the parental influences between the father's obsessively dutiful bureaucratism and the mother's idealizing expectations. This anomic family situation was reactivated when Hitler began to identify with the ideology of German-Austrian survival in the multicultural Habsburg state. The historical sources leave it an open question whether Hitler was introduced to this ideology by his father, who – despite his professional loyalty to Austria – supposedly belonged to a circle of pub regulars with a penchant for the nationalistic and antisemitic views of Schönerer (Kubizek 1953, p. 94). Hitler himself claims that he became familiar with, and appropriated, the German nationalist theories of ethnic struggle (*Volkskampfthesen*) under the influence of the history teacher Dr. Leopold Poetsch, whom he revered: "*I, too, while still comparatively young, had the opportunity to take part in the struggle of nationalities in old Austria. Collections were taken for the Südmark and the school association; we emphasized our convictions by wearing corn-flowers and red, black, and gold colors; 'Heil' was our greeting, and instead of the imperial anthem we sang 'Deutschland über Alles', despite warnings and punishments. In this way the child received political training in a period when as a rule the subject of a so-called national state knew little more of his nationality than its language. It goes without saying that even then I was not among the luke-warm. In a short time I had become a fanatical 'German Nationalist' [...] This development in me made rapid progress; by the time I was fifteen I understood the difference between dynastic 'patriotism' and folkish 'nationalism'; and even then I was interested, only in the latter*" (1925/27, p. 12–13).

Naturally, and as always with Hitler, this account represents a subsequent back-dating of his political ambitions that attempts to create the impression of a continual personal development. Neither of the men who come into question during this period as Hitler's purported inspiration – his father or his history teacher Poetsch – had "politically educated" him in the manner described. Rather, both men were characterized far more by a parallelism of German nationalist beliefs and simultaneous loyalty to the Habsburg monarchy. The history teacher was later correspondingly irritated to find himself portrayed in *Mein Kampf* as an enemy of Austria (Jetzinger 1956, p. 108). Nonetheless, it is possible that Hitler had already picked up the ethnocentric (völkisch) theses early on and made them his own in a fanatically heightened form – although certainly not in the sense of a sovereign process of forming an opinion but rather as a pubescent deviation from familial and institutional authority. After all, a radical, German nationalist attitude lent itself well to ideologically outdoing those who were in reality superior, and it could thus contribute to the aggrandizement of his self-image.

After the death of Hitler's father, which cleared the way for the mother's unrestrained idolization, anomie was no longer a factor in his immediate experi-

ence. Instead, Hitler now found the familiar anomic situation in the ethnocentric propaganda. On the one hand, this propaganda stirred up the fear of "*foreign cultural domination*" (*Überfremdung*) and financial depletion by the numerical superiority of the eight non-German ethnic groups in the Habsburg empire; on the other hand, it used the racially and biologically based doctrine of the supremacy of the Germans to proclaim the "Nordic-Aryan people" as the purported vehicle of culture. This ideological brew must have spoken straight to Hitler's heart, for his personal experiences in his own family seemed here to be reflected on the great stage of politics and society: the chosen one surrounded by a malevolent power that wished him ill out of obscure motives. The ethnocentric doctrine now offered a simple explanation for the paranoid feeling of threat: the weakening of the master race through "blood defamation" and economic parasitism to the advantage of the "inferior races," protected and promoted by the Habsburgs, who were motivated sheerly by the wish to maintain power. The Jews were considered to be the intellectual avant-garde of the racially inferior peoples. This made them appear particularly dangerous from the perspective of this propaganda.

The transfer of the childish feelings of hatred onto an ideologically underpinned conception of the enemy provides an important clue to its psychotic nature. We have already described how schizophrenics have great problems controlling the origin of their mental episodes. We owe one possible explanation for this to C. G. Jung's insight into his own tendency toward schizophrenia. In his autobiography, he remarks: "The difference between most other people and myself lies in the fact that in my case the dividing walls are transparent. That is my peculiarity" (Jung 1961, p. 357). Paul Matussek interprets the dividing walls as boundaries between the private and public self and offers this gloss on Jung's statement: "The schizophrenic [...] thus cannot think something to himself; he must reveal his innermost thoughts not because he wants to, but because he cannot do otherwise" (1997, p. 28). This phenomenon could explain why Hitler was capable of generalizing a personal experience of frustration and making a purely ideological position into the foundation of his self-image. In this way, he reduced the components of his hatred to a common denominator – a psychotic transformation that would later make "the Jews" in the abstract as hateful to him as if it had been a matter of the deepest private concern.

As we have mentioned, Hitler's concrete experiences with Jews in his years in Vienna offered absolutely no confirmation for this hate propaganda. Accordingly, he dissociated these experiences – and discussed radical antisemitic theses in a friendly tone with Josef Neumann, for instance. The desire to revenge himself for the mockery he attracted from his fellow men's home residents and army comrades, on the other hand, must have attached itself to the ready-made enemy image, in line with the transference of personal experience onto public content. This

response mechanism found a further occasion to kick in at the end of the First World War, as the realization of the senselessness of more fighting grew, and the capitulation was no longer to be averted. The fear of losing his "home," the army, led Hitler to search for the causes of the impending relapse into hopelessness: "*There followed terrible days and even worse nights – I knew that all was lost. Only fools, liars, and criminals could hope in the mercy of the enemy. In these nights hatred grew in me, hatred for those responsible for this deed*" (Hitler 1925/27, p. 206).

Those responsible were for Hitler quite obviously the Jews: "*I hated the whole gang of miserable party scoundrels and betrayers of the people in the extreme. It had long been clear to me that this whole gang was not really concerned with the welfare of the nation, but with the filling empty pockets. For this they were ready to sacrifice the whole nation, and if necessary to let Germany be destroyed; and in my eyes this made them ripe for hanging. [...] Kaiser Wilhelm II was the first German Emperor to hold out a conciliatory hand to the leaders of Marxism, without suspecting that scoundrels have no honor. While they still held the imperial hand in theirs, their other hand was reaching for the dagger. There is no making pacts with Jews; there can only be the hard: either–or*" (p. 200, 206).

The decision to "go into politics" (p. 206) that was supposedly made in this situation masks the concealed experience of suffering humiliation by means of the self-appointed function as representative of a humiliated public. In this function, Hitler could display his injured feelings with confidence, for it was now no longer a sign of his paltriness but rather of the courageous struggle for a noble ideal. The renewed transformation of the hate feelings relativized the private misery that threatened Hitler in the face of impending demobilization by pinpointing a party responsible for the ideological defeat and thus exorcising the fear of a loss of orientation. Bychowski had already made a similar assessment: "Feder's brochures and similar literature induced Hitler to direct his paranoid ideas at the Jews, who were the chief enemies pulling the strings behind the hateful democracy and socialism, and were therefore responsible for the misery and all the humiliations of the naively trusting German nation. It is obvious that Hitler found a highly satisfying, simple, and convincing explanation in this for his own humiliations and defeats. In this way he could deny his own inferiority and justify his hatred, which found it focal point here. As Hitler himself admitted, everything fell into place and light appeared where only darkness and confusion had been before" (1948, p. 138).

The statement, "*I, for my part, decided to go into politics*" does not describe a historical fact, but is rather a symbolic certificate that Hitler issued to himself in retrospect for having overcome a crisis of cognitive dissonance. Of course, he did

so publicly only in coded form: he did not describe the crisis, but rather only it's resolution, packaged in the form of a supposed act of will. Since the entire energy of Hitler's frustrations was channeled into hatred of external enemies, he was in a position to fight against them with all his resolve – whether it be the "November criminals," the Bolsheviks, or the Jews. The tackling of more and more far-reaching goals naturally met with resistance, brought forth competitors and opponents. But the latter were in turn transformed into objects of hatred and attacked with corresponding severity, whereby they only served to provide the political propaganda of the "drummer" with a sound-board for the increasingly louder tones with which he obtained the ear of the masses.

With respect to the origins of Hitler's specific variant of antisemitism, the opinion of the historians remains divided. In the above-cited passage of *Mein Kampf*, "the Jew" seems to appear out of nowhere. In our view, the biographical link should be sought halfway between the appropriation of ethnocentric propaganda during the Vienna years and the psychotic transformation described above, which gave these influences a specific character. In Vienna, Hitler was still capable of doing seemingly incompatible things. On the one hand, he soaked up the racial antisemitism of the ethnocentric propaganda, but at the same time, during his three-year residency in the men's home, he maintained business – indeed, for his standards, almost friendly – relations with several Jews. Kershaw explains this contradiction as calculated opportunism: "Whatever his true feelings, in his contacts with Jewish dealers and traders, Hitler was simply being pragmatic: as long as they could sell his paintings for him, he could swallow his abstract dislike of Jews" (1998, p. 67). But it is doubtful that this common response pattern of opportunistic adaptation applies to Hitler. There is some evidence to suggest that his feelings did not get in his way for other reasons.

The customary dynamic of hatred rests on a generalizing prejudice: negative personal experiences with particular persons are transferred to groups or classes of similar people. The vehicle of the transfer is the generalization of selectively perceived, usually visible characteristics such as sex, skin color, hair style, clothing, habits, profession, etc. Public attacks, slander and stigmatization play an important role as catalysts, but the hatred itself has its roots in direct, rather than mediated, experience. Consequently, the prejudiced hatreds of this commonly occurring sort may be broken down by positive personal experiences with members of the stigmatized group. Social therapy programs successfully make use of this.

Hitler's antisemitism, in contrast, drew for its sources exclusively on concepts of the enemy disseminated publicly in the Vienna journals, brochures, books and pamphlets, which he indiscriminately devoured. Personal experiences that did not fit the enemy template of the pan-German discourse or that remained outside the

focus of populist agitation did not disturb the book-learned world-view, since such experiences were not negotiated through this view. There is much evidence that Hitler's Jewish acquaintances from the men's home period fell into this category. For him, they were not the representatives of the "typical Jewish" milieu as it was evoked in the pan-German writings; rather, they were his companions in social misfortune, craftsmen and small tradesman, and he perceived them as such. One might perhaps object that the situation in the men's home constituted a temporary exception, in which Hitler was compelled by pure necessity to tolerate the Jews as long as he profited from them. However, the following anecdotal account speaks against this view:

According to Reinhold Hanisch, Hitler advocated a rigorous antisemitism in his lectures to his fellow residents while simultaneously maintaining business associations with Jews. When asked by a men's home colleague why the Jews remained strangers in every nation, Hitler replied that the reason lay in the fact that they were a separate race. They even differed from other races in their body odor. The descendants of Jews tended toward radicalism and terrorism. Moreover, the Talmud allowed the Jews to cheat those of other faiths. Hitler openly professed his sympathies for Schönerer, Stein, Lueger and Karl Hermann Wolf and fantasized about founding a new party in which antisemitism would have to be a central pillar of the program (Hamann 1996, p. 167).

This rupture between the world of Hitler's personal experience and the ideological views he expressed is a clear symptom of psychotic denial of reality. And it comes to the fore even more clearly later on – for instance, during Hitler's chancellorship, when he unceremoniously declared his dietary cook, Fräulein Kunde, and her entire family to be Aryan after it came out that she was of Jewish origins (cf. Bromberg and Small 1983, p. 188). Thus, the two spheres – the ideologically-founded antisemitism and the normal, everyday dealings with Jews – remained unconnected in Hitler and exerted absolutely no influence over one another. Consequently, the pragmatic opportunism assumed by Kershaw was by no means necessary to place Hitler in a position of being on friendly terms with his Jewish business associates. Hitler was not aware of the contradiction that an external observer would have perceived. The usual social-therapeutic process, then, would have had no effect on him. Due to his psychosis, his antisemitic ideology was so dissociated from reality that the latter could have absolutely no correcting influence on the former.

On the convincing account of Joachimsthaler (1989), the point at which Hitler began to shape the antisemitic slogans picked up in Vienna into his own autonomous ideology falls in the months between the end of the war and his first forays as a party speaker. That personal motivations certainly also played a role in the process, as we have depicted in the previous chapter, is in our opinion important

for an appropriate understanding of Hitler's ideological statements. Otherwise, the result is generalizations that tend to support rather than expose Hitler's obfuscations. Hartog, for instance, attempts to explain Hitler's atrocious cruelty on the basis of his "metaphysical antisemitism" and "cosmic hatred of the Jews" (1994, p. 23, 28), which he supposedly developed during his incarceration in Landsberg. As proof of this, he cites a remark of Hitler's from 29 July 1924: "*I have realized that until now I have been far too lenient. In the development of my book, I have come to the realization that in the future the strongest means must be applied in order for us to prevail in the struggle. I am convinced that this is a vital matter not only for our people, but for all peoples. For Judaism is the world plague*" (Jäckel and Kuhn 1980, p. 1242). What this quotation demonstrates is not so much a new quality of Hitler's antisemitism – similar trains of thought had already appeared in the form of the term "*racial tuberculosis*" in Hitler's letter of 16 September 1919 to Adolf Gemlich (p. 184–201); new here, at most, was the reinforced awareness of being able to transform politically the personal motivations for hatred.

The elimination of the private as a framing condition for Hitler's rhetorical success

As we have seen, Hitler's antisemitism already exhibited paranoid traits long before 1919. Nonetheless, in the clinical sense, he remained asymptomatic. From the psychodynamic perspective, the crucial reason for this was the fact that Hitler's public self met with strong encouragement from the outside. Certain preconditions must have existed in the public sphere in order for this to happen. And in this sense, Kershaw is right to demand that in the analysis of Hitler's power we look less to his personality than to the motives and actions of those who became his followers and admirers (Kershaw 1998, p.xxvi, 132f) At the top of the list, we would mention Karl Mayr and Otto Drexler, who provided the institutional backing for Hitler's first public verbal attacks through the army and the party, respectively. Without this patronage, he might have perhaps continued to be mocked as the hot-tempered oddball. But as the representative of a "movement," he had public legitimacy and was correspondingly taken seriously.

On Kershaw's account, Hitler was at least as much driven by the course of events as he was the driving force behind them: "His followers portrayed him, in fact, as Germany's 'heroic' leader before he came to see himself in that light. Not that he did anything to discourage the new way he was being portrayed from autumn 1922 onwards" (1998, p.183). Here, Kershaw relies on the thesis of "cumulative radicalization" (Mommsen 1997). Using the example of the institutional-

ized persecution of the Jews, he sums up this process as follows: "The dialectic of radicalization in the 'Jewish Question' in 1935 had been along the following lines: pressure from below; green light from above; further violence from below; brakes from above assuaging the radicals through discriminatory legislation. The process had ratcheted up the persecution several notches" (Kershaw 1998, p. 571).

On the other hand, even Kershaw cannot avoid the question of how a personality like Hitler's, of all things, could have achieved such mass success: "Rather than the issue of 'historical greatness,' we need to turn our attention to another question, one of far greater importance. How do we explain how someone with so few intellectual gifts and social attributes, someone no more than an empty vessel outside his political life, unapproachable and impenetrable even for those in his close company, incapable it seems of genuine friendship, without the background that bred high office, without even any experience of government before becoming Reich Chancellor, could nevertheless have such an immense historical impact, could make the entire world hold its breath?" (p. xxiv).

Kershaw answers his question by relativizing his own observations: on his account, Hitler's rise demonstrates that his intellectual gifts must not have been so insignificant after all. Hitler was quite astute, had a terrific memory and was quick on the uptake. A part of his success was due to the simple fact that his reputation as a beer-hall agitator often caused others to underestimate him. His most important capital however was indisputably his speaking talent, whereby its effect unfolded less through the content and much more in the manner of presentation: "What Hitler did was to advertise unoriginal ideas in an original way. Others could say the same thing but make no impact at all. It was less *what* he said than *how* he said it that counted" (p. 133). A corresponding observation had already been made by Kubizek: "I was often astounded when he gave a speech with animated gestures just for me alone [...] It was not what he said that I first liked about him, but how he spoke. It was something entirely new for me, something tremendous. I had no idea that a person could communicate so much with the help of mere words" (1953, p. 22).

From what sources Hitler drew his rhetorical intensity was described in the previous chapter. We should now turn to the cultural-sociological factors that made it possible for the hate propaganda to be readily received. One factor in particular stands out here: the overwhelming power of the slogans. Hitler very quickly realized that he only had to appeal to the most primitive resentments in order to sweep his audience away. He reveals his right-wing, populist recipe for success in his speech of 27 February 1925 in the Munich Bürgerbräukeller, among others: "*But the art of all great national leaders throughout the ages had always consisted in concentrating the attentions of the masses on one enemy*"

(Hitler 1992–98, I, p. 14–28). And in *Mein Kampf* he writes: "*The broad masses of a people consists neither of professors nor of diplomats. The scantiness of the abstract knowledge they possess directs their sentiments more to the world of feeling. That is where their positive or negative attitudes lies. It is receptive only to an expression of force in one of these two directions and never to a half-measure hovering between the two. Their emotional attitude at the same time conditions their extraordinary stability. Faith is harder to shake than knowledge, love succumbs less to change than respect, hate is more enduring than aversion, and the impetus to the mightiest upheavals on this earth has at all times consisted less in a scientific knowledge dominating the masses than in a fanaticism which inspires them and sometimes in a hysteria which drove them forward*" (1925/27, p. 337f). On 26 February 1926, he explains to the Hamburg National Club: "*The general public is blind, dumb, and knows not what it does [...] What is stable is the emotion: the hatred*" (Hitler 1992–98, I, p. 315, 320). And in the speech at the Berlin Sportpalast on 10 February 1933, he promises: "*Never, never shall I turn away from the task of eradicating Marxism and its attendant ills in Germany [...] someone must be the victor here: either Marxism or the German nation! And victorious will be Germany!*" (Domarus 1973, p. 204–208).

Indeed, the simplest rhetorical antitheses – which he spat out with a strained gutturalness that defied every notion of a decent declamatory breathing technique – obtained him the greatest favor with the audience. The latter became intoxicated by the fact that there was someone standing there and cathartically providing a vicarious outlet for its own psychological pressure. Shortly before his execution, Hans Frank – the erstwhile "Governor-General" of occupied Poland – described this substitute function from his own experiences with Hitler as a speaker: "He spoke from the bottom of his heart and out of the depths of all our souls [...] he articulated that which was on all our minds and linked the general expectations with a clear insight and the general desires of the impoverished and the hopeful with a program. Factually, he was certainly not original [...] but he had a vocation to become the spokesman of the people" (Frank 1953, p. 38–42). The writer Ernst Jünger expresses himself in similar terms after experiencing the effects of a Hitler speech in 1923 at the Circus Krone in Munich: "And here was now an unknown who stood there and said what was to be said, and everyone felt that he was right. He said what the government should have said [...] He saw the gap that had formed between the government and the people. He wanted to fill it. It was not a speech, it was an elementary experience that I had come upon" (Jünger 1949, p. 612).

In these responses, too, it should be noted that it was not the content of Hitler's speech as such that helped him to speak "out of the depths" of his audience's souls, but rather the enormous intensity of his presentation, with which he

transported the audience into an "elementary experience" of a collective trance. Any subsequent reading of Hitler's speeches that does not take account of this performative aspect necessarily misses the actual core of its rhetorical effect. Thus, for instance, Widmann (1999) writes in a review of a new edition of the fifth volume by Lankheit and Hartmann (1998) that Hitler was a bad speaker but had still been able to fire up his audience because he made use of the same bureaucratically stilted subservient language as it did: "The fact that he did not couch his messages in the form of the enflaming address of an inspired inspirer, but rather in the written German used by civil servants of the fallen monarchy, this signalized to the listeners: this fellow is for order, he knows what decency and discipline is. And, more importantly: he is one of us, a subservient subject" (Widmann 1999, p. 10). This observation may be correct when it comes to the linguistic form, but it has no grasp of Hitler's rhetorical success. This success rests precisely on the very fact that he was a "bad speaker." The support of the masses was not due to an exceptional talent – as is ultimately ascribed to him by Kershaw against the grain of his own general characterization of Hitler as "someone with so few intellectual gift and social attributes" – but rather to the unrestrained release of his compensatory energies, which he had been allowed in the meantime with institutional backing. It is above all in this that we see the cultural-sociological framing conditions for Hitler's success as a speaker. Despite some half-hearted attempts to reprimand him, he was repeatedly given the opportunity to publicly recite his paranoid and megalomaniacal obsessions and was thus able to speak to the resentments of his listeners in a way that – due to its pathological intensity – was simply not to be outdone. As the grandiose representative of everyone who had come up short, he became the acclaimed star of the "movement."

Hitler's effect on the masses was therefore based on an appeal to collective feelings of fear and vengeance, fantasies of global power and hopes for redemption. But in order for these factors to have such resounding success, a certain historical framing condition must have existed – and this condition, which was recently impressively described by Sebastian Haffner, is the elimination of the private sphere. In his memories, Haffner (2000) describes how in the time between 1918 and 1933 the German people had difficulties finding their way back to everyday life and giving up their identification with the events of the great world stage (which had been even more reinforced by the injured sense of national pride). Private life, with its interpersonal relationships within the family, with friends, and in the workplace was almost entirely superimposed by the focus on political questions. In this respect, the state of the German population corresponded to the pathological structure of Hitler's psyche, which we have identified as being marked by the exclusive fixation on the public self. It was above all this

situation that prepared the receptive ground for Nazi propaganda. Of course, it was also necessary for the propaganda to contain a suitable message.

The appropriate message. Ethnic struggle instead of class struggle

Not every form of ideological propaganda could have been presented with such great effect. Hitler's ideology had to fit in with his psychotic personality structure; only in this way could he embody it convincingly and receive the necessary feedback. By way of elucidating this specific characteristic of the interaction between Hitler and his audience, we pose the converse hypothetical question: could Hitler have had a similar degree of success as a socialist agitator (a function that had certainly been suggested to him as the elected deputy Battalion Council representative under the Räterrepublik)? It is highly doubtful. Although Hitler came from a conservative family, he would have had sufficient opportunity in Vienna to come in contact with Social Democrats and to appropriate their thought – whether again out of the need to distance himself from his dead father, or because of his own situation of material need. Kubizek describes how he and Hitler were witness to a large hunger demonstration that took place, according to Hamann's research (1996, p. 136), on 26 February 1908: "One day, we saw a worker's demonstration on the Ring. [...] Policemen, mounted and on foot, rushed toward the demonstrators. We stood wedged in between the spectators [...] and had a good overview of the exciting picture [...] Is this the mood, so I thought with a racing heart, that Adolf called the 'storm of the revolution'? A few men walked ahead of the procession and carried a large banner that took up the entire street. The only word on it was 'Hunger!' There could have been no more stirring slogan for my friend than this to rouse his empathy for the miserable masses, for how often had Adolf himself suffered bitter hunger. There he stood, then, next to me and took in the image with all his senses. As strong as his empathy with these people may have been in that moment, he still held himself back in the extreme and, just like in his visits to the Parliament, took in the entire event with such objective coolness and thoroughness, as if he were only concerned with studying the dramaturgy of the whole, the technical execution of such a demonstration, so to speak. As much as he felt solidarity with the 'little people,' he did not consider in the least actually taking an active part in the demonstration" (Kubizek 1953, p. 246).

In front of the Parliament, the confrontation escalated. The mounted police who had accompanied the procession suddenly fell upon the demonstrators with swords drawn, and the latter responded with a hail of stones. The demonstration was only disbanded after the arrival of more police reinforcements. Hitler was

deeply upset, but he did not show his sympathy until they had returned home: "Yes, he professed himself on the side of the hungry, the destitute, the outcast. But he disapproved in the harshest tones of the men who arranged such demonstrations. *Who are the string-pullers who stand behind these doubly betrayed masses and bend them to their will. None of these shadowy back-stage men ever show themselves at such a procession. Why? Because their business is far better conducted in the semi-darkness and moreover – because they don't want to risk their necks [...] Who are the leaders of this destitute folk? Not men who have themselves experienced the hardship of the common man, but rather rapacious, power-hungry politicians – in part estranged from the people – who get rich on the misery of the masses.* An outburst of rage against these political profit vultures concluded my friend's embittered denunciation. That was his demonstration" (p. 247).

The projective character of this tirade, which even Kubizek allows to come through, is evident. It was not the demonstrators' problems that aroused Hitler's interest – much less his sympathies – but rather the "*string-pullers*." His sole line of inquiry, concerning the leaders of the masses, gives rise to the suspicion that he was envious and would have liked to see himself in this role. After all, he had kept as much of a distance from the demonstrating masses as the objects of his critique, whom he – from his distanced position – characterizes as politicians "*estranged from the people*," "*who get rich on the misery of the masses*." In a subordinate clause, the would-be power strategist certainly demonstrates that he has heard something of the political battle-cries "class" and "the people."

As Hamann reports (1996, p. 253f), Hitler oriented himself in particular on the pan-German worker's movement "Germania" – led by Franz Stein, the son of a Vienna factory worker – and its political organ, the newspaper *Der Hammer*. The special aspect of this movement among the Schönerians consisted in the juxtaposition of the anti-Habsburg and antisemitic struggle for national character with the social struggle of the (German) workers, presented in the form of an aggressive anti-parliamentary opposition. Ironically, the term "national socialist," which captured this strategic idea in one catchy formula, first came into use among the Czechs, who were the favored target group of German nationalist hatred next to the Jews. The Czech national socialists understood themselves as anti-German, antisemitic and anti-parliamentary, and their behavior in the k.k. Reichsrat was characterized by particularly stubborn obstructionism (Hamann 1996, p. 121f).

Hitler must have already decided against socialism of the Marxist variety rather early. An account has survived of the following episode from the men's home period: According to Hanisch's report, on 1 May 1910, while a Social Democratic fellow resident with a red carnation in his button hole was describing

the May demonstration, Hitler sprung up, waved about wildly with his hands, and shouted: "*'You should be thrown out; you should get a lesson*!' Hanisch adds: 'Everyone laughed at his excitement" (p. 184). And whether Hitler had arrived at the decision by instinct or insight: the struggle for national identity suited his aggressive, psychotic disposition far better than the class struggle. The reason for this lies in the differences between the conflict structures:

Belonging to a class in the Marxist sense is determined by whether or not one possesses the means of production. Although class affiliation is often socially inherited, it can in principle be altered during one's lifetime – that is to say, it is an acquired characteristic. This is even more the case for class consciousness, the mental precondition for participating in the class struggle. From the Marxist point of view, the petit bourgeoisie is particularly lacking in this consciousness; although it "objectively" belongs to the proletariat, it orients itself "subjectively" on the property-owning class and thus impedes the revolutionary polarization of society.

In contrast, belonging to an ethnic group – above all in a biologically-based racial interpretation – is a characteristic inherited through birth. If one doesn't have it, one remains an outsider even if legal citizenship, feelings of national identity, and personal declaration – and in the case of the German Jews, even the risking of one's own life in the World War – testify to the contrary. Whereas a cosmopolitan or class-based self-comprehension requires a modicum of theoretical awareness and a personal viewpoint, affiliation with an ethnic group has the appearance of a natural given and thus dispenses with the necessity of any personal effort of individual thinking.

The structural difference between acquired and inherited causes of conflict makes ethnic clashes from the outset – even when they are not grounded in racial-biological argumentation – more bitter than class struggles. History has borne out many times over that ethnic conflicts produce overwhelmingly violent forms of resolution, spanning from civil war to genocide. Class conflicts, on the other hand, have their ultima ratio in mass or general strikes; violence occurs only in exceptional cases. When Hitler set his stakes on the ethnic card, it was because he decided in favor of the more radical and violent form of conflict, as befitting his paranoid disposition.

In *Mein Kampf*, this motivation comes through in conjunction with a historical look at the year 1848: "*When the first revolutionary lightnings of a new era flashed through Europe, Austria, too, slowly began to catch fire, little by little. But when the fire at length broke out, the flame was fanned less by social or general political causes than by dynamic forces of national origin. The revolution of 1848 may have been a class struggle everywhere, but in Austria it was the beginning of a new racial war. By forgetting or not recognizing this origin and put-*

ting themselfes in the service of the revolutionary uprising, the Germans sealed their own fate. They helped to arouse the spirit of 'Western democracy', which in a short time removed the foundations of their own existence." (Hitler, 1925/27, p. 74).

Given the demographic ratio of ethnic groups under the Habsburg monarchy, in which some 10 million German-Austrians represented about a fifth of the entire population, the outcome of an ethnic conflict would have of course been extremely uncertain. In the German Kaiserreich, in contrast, one took hardly any note of the ethnic tensions and the radicality of the ethnocentric struggle in the Danube monarchy. A public mood in which the theses of ethnocentric nationalism could reach wider circles was first created by the defeat of 1918, the Treaty of Versailles with its attribution of blame for the war and the concomitant burden of reparations, the legend of the fatherland's "stab in the back" with respect to its soldiers on the front, and the conservative bourgeoisie's traumatic experience of the November revolution and Munich Räterepublik (cf. Kershaw 1998, p. 134). But there were at least two significant obstacles that would have called the ethnocentric agitation into question – if it had not been for Hitler, who effectively went up against these obstacles with the background of his experience Vienna, his aggressive orientation on enemy concepts, and the rigidity of his psychotic personality.

The first obstacle was the environment in Bavaria after the defeat of the Räterepublik in May 1918 – notwithstanding the fact that the anti-socialist and counter-revolutionary regime, led since 1920 by Minister President Gustav Ritter von Kahr, had "turned Bavaria into a haven for right-wing extremists from all over Germany" (Kershaw 1998, p. 171). The so-called Bavarian "cell of order," with its many patriotic organizations, volunteer associations, paramilitary groups and armed Citizens' Defense Forces, offered an ideal breeding-ground for the nationalist attack on the Weimar Republic. However, at the same time Kahn engaged in "frontal opposition to the central government". This was nourished by an anti-Prussian feeling that had already spread during the war, and criticized the curtailment of Bavarian rights in the Reich constitution. The ethnocentric nationalist agitation therefore came up against a highly volatile conjunction of "'white-blue' particularist feeling with 'black-white-red' nationalist antagonism towards 'red' Berlin" (p. 171)

Hitler was repeatedly confronted with the Bavarian hatred of Prussia, which did not at all fit into his ethnocentric world-view – the first time, during his leave from the front in Munich in 1916: "*While the Jew robbed the whole nation and pressed it beneath his domination, an aggitation was carried on against the 'Prussians' [...] No one seemed to suspect that the collapse of Prussia would not by a long shot bring with it a resurgence of Bavaria; no, that on the contrary*

any fall of the one would inevitably carry the other along with it into the abyss [...] While the Bavarian and the Prussian fought, he stole the existence of both of them from under their nose; while the Bavarians were cursing the Prussians, the Jew organized the revolution and smashed Prussia and Bavaria at once. I could not bear this accursed quarrel among German peoples, and was glad to return to the front" (Hitler 1925/27, p. 193f).

It was this very point of contention that occasioned Hitler's verbal attack (described in the previous chapter) on Professor Baumann at his very first appearance at a DAP party meeting on 12 September 1919. He portrayed the political implications of the incident as follows: Baumann had recommended that the party "*take up the 'separation' of Bavaria from 'Prussia' as a particularly important programmatic point. With bold effrontery the man maintained that in this case German-Austria would at once join Bavaria, that the peace would then become much better, and more similar nonsense. At this point I could not help demanding the floor and giving the learned gentleman my opinion on this point – with the result that the previous speaker, even before I was finished, left the hall like a wet poodle*" (p. 219). In this way, Hitler had found a point that overtrumped a popular position with a significantly more radical one. Of course, he himself is compelled to stylize his aggressive right-wing populism as a heroic lone struggle, as the following passage from *Mein Kampf* documents: "*I believe that in all my life I have undertaken no more unpopular cause than my resistance at that time to the 'anti-Prussian agitation'. In Munich, even during the Soviet period, the first mass meetings had taken place, in which hatred against the rest of Germany and in particular against Prussia was lashed to such a white heat that it not only involved a risk of his life for a North German to attend such a meeting, but the conclusion of such rallies as a rule ended quite openly with mad cries of 'Away from Prussia!' – 'Down with Prussia!' – 'War against Prussia!'* (p. 558).

Hitler mastered his self-assigned task by taking the "*hatred*," the "*smear campaign*," and the "*insane shrieks*" that he ascribed to others, and countering these with the very same affects but in an intensified form and in a reversed direction, thus securing his exceptional status. By resorting to a radicalized antisemitism, he obtained an unbeatable image of a foe that even a convinced opponent of Prussia could not ignore if he did not want to be left looking like a useful idiot of foreign string-pullers. However, Hitler did not come to take this position out of mere calculation, but rather because of a psychological disposition. Due to his schizophrenic structure, Hitler was able to extemporaneously attack a conceptual foe as fiercely as if he had been personally affected. And this undoubtedly corresponded to his own lived experience. John Lukacs is also convinced that Hitler "not only wanted others to believe what he said, but rather he himself believed everything as he said it" (1997, p. 252). Only such a complete

identification with his public self could have made him into a cult figure. And he found resonance because this feature of his personality provided a projection surface for the collective loss of private self.

The function of the Führer cult

While Hitler was able to profile himself as the radical agitator against Bavarian hostility to Prussia on the one hand, he had to distinguish himself from the radicality of the ethnocentric nationalist movement on the other in order to secure his exceptional status. And that was precisely what aroused the sympathies of the masses. Although the public hooliganism was indispensable to the mobilization of one's following, it tended to put off the majority of the population outside the ethnocentric camp, especially when it led to assault and uncouth street incidents. In the run-up to the Reichstag elections of 1930, which granted the NSDAP a meteoric increase from 2.6 to 18.3 percent of the votes, and from 12 to 107 parliamentary seats, Hitler altered the tenor of ethnocentric agitation. Hate and "party squabbles" retreated into the background to make room for idealism and national community. The effect of Hitler's speech of 23 April 1932 in Hamburg had on his listeners becomes clear in the following entry from the diary of a teacher: "Then Hitler spoke. Main idea: out of the parties a people (*Volk*) will emerge, the German people. He castigated the *'system'* ... For the rest, he refrained from personal attacks and also unspecific and specific promises. [...] When the speech was over, there were roars of jubilation and applause. [...] How many look to him in touching faith as the helper, savior, the redeemer from overgreat distress. To him, who rescues the Prussian prince, the scholar, the clergyman, the peasant, the worker, the unemployed out of the party into the people" (quoted in Kershaw, p. 364).

Had Hitler changed his character or was he only pretending? Neither the one nor the other. He was consistently pursuing the interests of his self-aggrandizement. In the given situation, he could best serve this personal aim by emphasizing the German feeling of unity rather than the inner conflict of the parties. Thus, Hitler's aggressiveness had not disappeared, but had instead shifted itself onto opponents in his own environment. These included: insubordinates such as Ernst Röhm, with whom Hitler had already fallen out the first time in 1925 because of the role of the SA; the ethnocentric competition in the form of the Deutschvölkische Freiheitspartei (German National Freedom Party) active in Mecklenburg and Berlin, whose prominent members switched over to the NSDAP one after another in 1927; and the ideological rivals within the party, in particular the extremely religious gauleiter Artur Dinter and the editor of the *Ber-*

liner Arbeiterzeitung and the *NS letters* Otto Strasser, a devotee of a mystical brand of nationalism who not only placed the "idea" above the Führer, but also wanted to hold on to the aim of a social revolution with anti-capitalist objectives (p. 265, 296f, 326f).

Hitler's unity with the "movement" was built on a foundation of radicality, and the best way of extending this unity to the majority of the Germans was the Führer cult. This may sound paradoxical, since a longing for the "strong man" was by no means the prevailing motivation for choosing the NSDAP outside of the nationalist movement – not even for those who had joined the party before 1933. A review of the biographies of 581 early members of the NSDAP revealed that only around 20 percent stated the Führer cult as a dominant motivation for joining; in contrast, national community or nationalistic patriotism were each named by more than 30 percent, respectively (p. 332). That Hitler managed to bring the various motivations together in his person has to do with the particularities of his psychological structure. It made use of the mass desire for ideological harmonization by concentrating it on one individual. A crucial factor in the success of this combination is the fact (also emphasized by Kershaw) that although Hitler resolutely propagated the Führer principle, he did not explicitly suggest himself for the role. In this way, he circumvented the majority's distrust of a self-appointed Führer figure while at the same time making himself into an idol as the "drummer." In 1921, he had still refused the offer of Anton Drexler – founder and chairman of the DAP – to take over the chairmanship himself. Hitler – absolutely rightly – saw his strength in propaganda, not in organization, for which he did not want to be responsible (p. 156). In this connection, we recall that he had already turned down a considered promotion in the First World War. Although his megalomania had long since made him, in the subjective view, the monologic spokesman of a grandiose German revival, he still sought – with an instinctive feeling for his unfittingness – to avoid the reality test of an objective evaluation in an elevated position. This was also the case in the situation of 1921. The fact that he ultimately did take over the chairmanship shortly afterward was an unplanned consequence of his insistence on the role of primary propagandist. When he saw this threatened by Dickel's plans for merger, he reacted – as we have already mentioned – with a theatrical threat of resignation, through which the party saw itself blackmailed into making far-reaching concessions. And ever after he was promised the top position – in passing, as it were – Hitler continued to conceive of himself as the "drummer" and up to the period of the Landsberg incarceration he expressly drew a distinction between himself as the party leader and a future dictator. In a speech of 4 May 1923 he announced: "*What can save Germany is the dictatorship of national will and national determination. Here the question arises: is there a suitable personality? It is not our task to look for the*

person – he is either given by the heavens or not given. Our task is to create the sword that this person would need when he is there. Our task is to give the dictator – when he comes – a people who are ready for him!" (Jäckel and Kuhn 1980, p. 923f).

It was only with the growing public acclaim that Hitler increasingly gained the confidence to give in to the self-aggrandizing urge without risking a falsification of his delusions of grandeur. And the subsequent course of events also showed that Hitler's action on his own behalf was not a sufficient precondition for the attainment of leadership qualities; but his entourage made certain that this did not become apparent. He only had to speak and fire up his audience for the "movement."

The latter, however, increasingly threatened to wear itself out in internal disputes for lack of leadership. Ironically, Hitler's reserve with respect to the squabbling wings' expectations that he would take a stance was precisely what effected the consolidation of his position. By keeping himself out of the internal quarrels, he made himself de facto indispensable as the one single link between the centrifugal forces who was accepted by everyone. But this reserve, too, did not spring from strategic calculation. It was much more the case that in his putsch attempt of 9 November 1923 he had allowed himself to be pressured into action prematurely with rather depressing consequences. Active unrest in the SA and the Kampfbund, as well as the ambivalent promises of Bavaria's ruling triumvarate – made up of v. Kahr, who had been appointed General State Commissar, State Police chief v. Seisser, and Reichswehr commander v. Lossow – had motivated Hitler to attempt the putsch (cf. Kershaw 1998, 201–204). Of course, the trial itself – presided over by Judge Georg Neithardt, who openly sympathized with him – offered Hitler an ideal forum for propagandistic justification that gave his confidence a long-lasting boost. Kershaw ascertains: "the triumph at his trial; the torrents of adulation ever-present in the *völkisch* press or pouring unabated from letters sent to Landsberg, and not least the collapse of the *völkisch* movement in his absence [...] all these contributed towards giving him an elevated sense of his own importance and of his unique historic 'mission'" (p. 251). This, according to Kershaw, is the cause of the transformation from drummer to Führer: "Surrounded by sycophants and devotees, foremost among them the fawning Heß, Hitler now became certain: he himself was Germany's coming 'great leader'. [...] the growth of the Führer cult – though Hitler did nothing to prevent it, other than prohibiting its most tasteless excesses – was brought about by his followers" (p. 251, 261).

The Bamberg Führer rally of February 1926 drew an interim bottom line in this development. Not only did a new political organization arise, subject alone to the will of its Führer, but moreover, the function of this personalization of a

political movement emerged clearly for the first time. The ethnocentric right must not be allowed to split apart again over dogmatic questions, as it did during Hitler's incarceration. Hitler hence declared the old 25-point party platform from 24 February 1920 as entirely sufficient: "*That stays as it is*," he supposedly said. "*The New Testament is full of contradictions too, which however has in no way hindered the spread of Christianity*" (Tyrell 1969, p. 108). Precisely a nebulous party platform was to Hitler's benefit. Clear maxims would have nailed him down and made him controllable. This way, he could follow his peculiar whims unchallenged.

The Führer principle was an instrument to put an end to any fundamental debate over the aims of the movement, and with it, to any possible criticism or deviation from what was assumed to be the Führer's will. In this respect, it is in accordance with that which Niklas Luhmann describes as the function of religious symbols and rituals: the preventative warding off of negation (1982, p. 87). Conversely, it follows that the Führer principle had to deck itself out with quasi-religious symbols and rituals in order to reliably nip ideological resistance in the bud. This occurred with bombastic variety and intensity. The Nuremberg party rallies, with their "political liturgy" (Schreiner 1998, cf. Bärsch 1998) offer as illustrious an example of this as the annually staged reconstruction's of the "march on the Feldherrnhalle" in Munich on 9 November, the cult surrounding the "old fighters" and the "banner of blood," the "German pilgrimage" to the Obersalzberg, the memorials and countless daily rituals (cf. Angermair and Haerendel 1993). And not least of all, the formulas of redemption and resurrection with which Hitler increasingly peppered his speeches helped to dissipate the beer-hall fumes that had lain over the earlier movement. For instance, on 11 February 1933 at the Berlin Sportpalast, he concluded his speech – which was broadcast nationwide for the first time over the radio – with a National Socialist adulteration of the Protestant Lord's Prayer. This was not meant in anything like an ironic, much less satiric, vein, but was rather an authentic expression of the degree of self-glorification that had been attained at this time. This self-glorification made use of Hitler's psychotic personality structure and at the same time concealed it behind the public cult: "*For I cannot break free of the faith in my people, cannot renounce the conviction that this nation will rise again one day, cannot distance myself from the love of this – my – people and hold the unshakable conviction that the hour will certainly come again in which the millions who hate us today will stand behind us and welcome with us the jointly created, hard-won, painfully gained new German Reich of greatness and honor and power and glory and righteousness. Amen*" (Domarus 1973, p. 208).

The most important function of the Führer cult, then, lay not within the "movement" itself but rather in the communication of its aims to the rest of the

population. Above all, it enabled the ethnocentric self-conceptualization – Hitler speaks of "*nationalization*" (1925/27, p. 33) – of the whole society. We pointed out above that the radicality of ethnocentric agitation and its modes of combat tended to put off the majority of the Germans, and was therefore counterproductive for the attainment of political power within the state. With the help of the Führer principle this course could be corrected. Thus, despite continual berating of parliamentarism, Hitler was able to attain power the legal way and to deplete the SA to the advantage of the Wehrmacht. Propagandistic swings (like the one mentioned above in connection with the Reichstag elections of 1930) and tactical maneuvers (e.g., the participation of the SA in the communist-led strike of the Berlin transportation services in November 1932) were now possible, since the will of the Führer demanded it. Hitler had successfully "shed the divisive image of a party leader" and was in a position to "appear to stand above party, for the nation" (Kershaw 1998, p. 511).

When necessary – say with the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 – Hitler could resort to juridical means in order to check the radicality of the isolated anti-Jewish actions taken in the name of the Führer's will, thus favoring the legalistic expectations of the majority. The latter may have been entirely in agreement with the antisemitic aims, but took offense at the methods. In February 1936, when the Swiss NSDAP District Leader Wilhelm Gustloff was murdered by a Jew, the retaliatory measures were dispensed with in consideration of the impending Olympic Games, and one made do with verbal attacks. Two-and-a-half years later, when the German counselor Ernst von Rath was also murdered by a Jew in Paris, this was received as a welcome occasion for the organized pogroms of the "Reichskristallnacht." The regime owed the flexibility of its responses as well as its organizational control to the programmatic unclarity of the Führer principle – a function that a disturbed personality such as Hitler was able perfectly to fulfill owing precisely to its nebulous ambivalences. As we have already touched upon in the previous chapter, his openness to interpretation offered an ideal projection surface for the hopes of redemption among the general population.

Certainly, this did not make all Germans spontaneously susceptible to Hitler's propaganda. Many found it downright repulsive. However, even the majority of these people became collaborators and ultimately enthusiasts – which may likewise be explained by the coincidence between Hitler's entirely public-based personality structure and the general tendency toward the elimination of the private (cf. Haffner 2000). Anyone who went along with the regime reluctantly – for fear of sanctions, or out of career ambitions – found himself in a state of cognitive dissonance: the public self-presentation did not correspond to private attitudes. In order to rid oneself of the shameful feeling of having become unfaithful to one's own convictions, one belatedly supplied the suitable conviction and fooled one-

self into a state of enthusiasm that one had not originally felt (p. 126). The concomitant relief of no longer being in contradiction with oneself, of "no longer belonging to the imprisoned and the hunted but rather to the victors and the persecutors" was, according to Haffner, "the most simple and gross temptation" to which many Germans succumbed (p. 186).

Hitler may be seen as the individual model – exacerbated to a pathological extreme – for this collective pattern of response. In the political long-run, it was only possible for him to keep up the role of the charismatic-distant Führer by means of the above-described mechanism for the mitigation of cognitive dissonance, which he had learned early on. Of course, this necessarily went hand-in-hand with the tendency to eliminate himself.

Complexity reduction to the death

For Hitler, the focusing of the governmental form on his person was a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the perfect correspondence between his own perception of his public role and the way others perceived it ensured that he remain clinically asymptomatic. Thus, the danger of negative feedback in dissonance with his own delusions of grandeur was clearly reduced at this time. The humiliating gap between self-presentation and public reaction tends to drive most less prominent schizophrenics into acute psychosis or isolation. Hitler was able to avoid this flagrant break with reality after 1933 because by then he already had enough power at his disposal to force his delusions onto reality. He himself experienced this – in a formulation later adopted by Leni Riefenstahl as a film title – as a "*triumph of the will*" (cf. Loiperdinger and Culbert 1988, p. 17f), as the realization of a heroic self-image the origins of which went back as far as his childhood. Now, he could live out this self-image unhampered. Illustrative of Hitler's successful assertion of his personal whims are his early foreign policy ventures – such as the surprising non-aggression pact with Poland of 26 January 1934, with which he broke through France's strategy of encirclement; the German-English naval treaty of 18 June 1935, which drove a wedge between England and France; and above all, the Reichswehr's reoccupation of the demilitarized Rheinland on 7 March 1936, which France left unpunished. With all these actions, Hitler was sure of meeting with approval from large segments of the population. And if, despite his propagandistic powers of fascination, he was not able to arbitrarily manipulate public opinion then, at the very least, he would claim the last word in the interpretation of social reality's feedback. During the food and supplies crisis around the new year, 1935/36, when his adjutant Fritz Wiedemann informed him of the bad public mood documented by the police reports, Hitler responded: "*The*

mood among the population is not bad but good. I know better. It is disparaged by such reports. I will not tolerate such things in the future!" (Wiedemann 1964, p. 90).

The reverse side of the Führer principle consisted in a hopeless overburdening of his role as the sole center of the regime. Since the will of the Führer was supposed to be the ultimate authority in all decisions everywhere, even a much more efficient head of state would have foundered sooner or later on the exorbitant amount of communication required by such a system. And this is much more the case for Hitler than for other dictators who do not manifest such a pronounced psychotic structure. His messianic megalomania was out of danger only as long as he lived up to the perceptions and needs of the masses. For the time being, that was taken care of. But the specificity of Hitler's psychosis came to light in yet another characteristic that threatened the functionality of the regime: his indecisiveness. It is typical for the schizophrenic that he speaks "only of great plans, high aims, works to be achieved, without himself knowing precisely the details that these entail. What he knows prior to the conretization of every plan is his self-comprehension, which is founded on his charismatic effect on others" (Paul Matussek 1992, p. 91).

Thus, although Hitler's diffuse cult status helped him to insulate himself against the overwhelming complexity of the demands of government, this naturally placed a great burden on the efficiency of the apparatus. Otto Dietrich, the press officer at the time, describes the alteration in the Führer's mode of communication after the seizure of power: While previously, those around Hitler "had the possibility of also presenting their diverging political opinions, as the head of state and person commanding respect he strictly resisted any unsolicited political commentary [...] Hitler began to hate objections to his insights and doubts about their infallibility [...] He wanted to speak but not to listen, he wanted to be the hammer but not the anvil" (Dietrich 1924, p. 44f).

As the quotations from Wiedemann and Dietrich demonstrate, the way Hitler attempted to master the crisis of complexity – which he had let himself in for with the assertion of the Führer principle – was in line with his psychotic structure, that is to say, with his tendency to deny reality. This could have only limited success, especially since the crisis was further exacerbated by the fact that Hitler additionally took over the office of President, making him the sole and absolute ruler. In this context, it is interesting to make a comparison with the working methods of other contemporary dictators. Both Mussolini and Franco maintained their cabinets, even if these had merely an advisory status. Stalin did the same with the Politburo, although he had potential rivals eliminated from it. Hitler, on the other hand, reduced the number of cabinet sessions between 1935 and 1938 from twelve down to one. The session on 5 February 1938 was then the last one.

During the war, it was even forbidden for the ministers to meet privately over a drink (Gruchmann 1973, p. 202).

To make matters worse, Hitler's working methods relapsed more and more into the slackness of the Vienna years the longer he stayed in power. Albert Speer, who was among those who stood closest to Hitler and probably knew him best, states: "I worked intensively and at first could not understand the wastefulness with which Hitler used his working time. Of course, I had every understanding for the fact that Hitler let his day end in boredom and pastime; but in my view, with an average of six hours, this phase turned out to be somewhat long, while the actual workday was pretty short in comparison. When – I often wondered – does he actually work?" Hitler's daily routine was for Speer a pure waste of time: "He got up late in the morning, took care of one or two official meetings, but after the subsequent lunch, he more or less dawdled away his time until the early evening" (Speer 1969, p.146). Wiedemann has similar recollections: "Later, Hitler usually made his first appearance shortly before lunch, briefly read through what the Reich Press Officer, Dr. Dietrich, had collated from the media, and then went to eat. Thus it became more and more difficult for Lammers and Meißner to obtain from Hitler decisions that only he alone, as head of state, could make" (Wiedemann 1964, p. 68f). There was only one exception: "When it came to the preparation of his speeches (which he wrote himself), he withdrew to his room and then worked often several evenings in a row, whereby he dictated directly to three secretaries at their typewriters and then carefully corrected the draft" (p. 85).

In view of this, one cannot get around the question of how a state could have functioned with such a bizarre misalliance of arrogated autocratic decision-making and negligent slackness at its top. As we mentioned at the outset, Kershaw has clearly brought out that certain framing conditions were necessary for this – namely, an army of helpers who worked "towards the Führer" on their own initiative. Here, we supplement this recognition by investigating how Hitler himself sought to escape from the complexity trap in which he was, *nolens volens*, caught. What strategies of complexity-reduction manifest themselves in the process? Three such strategies may be identified:

1. Sitting it out

The introduction of the Führer principle was in itself already meant to put a stop to dispute, that is, to reduce the complexity of the diverging party platforms, tendencies, and orientations. However, this worked only as long it concerned merely the "movement" and its propaganda. The solution turned into an even greater

problem after the seizure of power, when the state system took the Führer at his word and appealed to him for decisions. Hitler still responded by acting as if nothing had changed – that is to say, as if the matter at hand were, as before, merely the steering of the "movement" by means of propagating the Führer's will. He continued to dedicate all his time to his speeches and gave everything else free rein. After all, with the attainment of power, his aim had been fulfilled: the population had been integrated into the "movement." With his slackness, he limited himself to that which he considered most essential – whereby his experience showed that much took care of itself if he simply waited it out. This quasi-Darwinist process of minimizing administrative effort was apparently employed by Hitler quite intentionally, according to Speer: "As far as I could observe, he often let a problem mature while occupying himself for weeks with unimportant things, and then, after the 'sudden insight,' he would definitively formulate the solution that seemed right to him in a few days of intensive work; the roundtables certainly also served him as a means of playfully trying out new thoughts, of approaching them from different angles, of refining them before an uncritical audience and of perfecting them. Once he had made a decision, he would fall back into his state of idleness" (Speer 1969, p. 146).

2. Primacy of propaganda

In Hitler's eyes, the most essential thing continued to be the proclamation of ideology and not its organizational implementation. The "Führer" had basically remained a "drummer." The state was to be kept in motion by his ideas alone, the "how" was to be taken care of by others. That was why he hated everything that kept him from his propagandistic work, whether it be a cabinet meeting or the study of documents. In this way he could concentrate completely on his delusional idea that he was acting in the name of providence. As proof of his infallibility, Hitler liked to point to the fact that he had never diverged but a single step from his appointed path. A good example of this can be found in a speech that he gave in the Löwenbräukeller in Munich in 1942 (the Bürgerbräu had not been reconstructed yet) before his "old fighters" in celebration of November 9. It began with the words: "*It is, I believe, something rare when a man can go up before his old followers after some twenty years without ever having to undertake any changes to his program in these twenty years*" (Domarus 1962/63, p. 1933). Of course, Hitler was simply expressing a tautology: naturally, he did not have to undertake any changes to a program that contained nothing other than his own ambitions. The context of the celebration was in itself a symbolic reassurance of his political rise – a self-confirmation that Hitler must have been in need of in the

face of the looming catastrophe of Stalingrad. And thus he took the public disgruntlement with the course of the war – which threatened to give the lie to his status as "the greatest military commander of all time" (General Keitel in his homage after the victory over France, in Zoller 1949, p. 141) – as an occasion to blow his own horn in his usual manner as propagandist: "*I wanted to reach the Volga, and at a particular place [...] Coincidentally, it carries the name of Stalin himself [...] There, namely, you cut off 30 million tons of traffic [...] That's what I wanted to take and – you know – we are modest, we have it namely! There are only a couple of quite little places still there. Now the others are saying: why don't they fight faster, then? Because I don't want to have a second Verdun, but rather prefer to do it with very small offensive troops. Time is not of the essence*" (Domarus 1962/63, p. 1937f). But the fending off of the disgrace was only a home game before a hand-picked audience. The context was laden with memory, and the ovations served a self-image that compensated for the loss of public approval by the re-staging of past triumphs.

3. Suicide as consequence

Hitler's tendency to ignore the qualitatively increased demands in the transition from propagandist to dictator and to continue to play merely the propagandist led to a dilemma. On the one hand, the unwavering proclamation of his delusional ideas provided him with a great degree of public confirmation. On the other hand, he thus placed himself into a position that condemned him permanently to produce maximal results. The panegyric characterization of the "greatest military commander of all time" marked the point of culmination. It could not be surpassed. The slightest occasion for the relativization of this glorious summit would topple the entire delusional edifice. Consequently, Hitler had no choice but to continue the series of spectacular military victories. When these no longer materialized, the ultimate break with reality was inevitable. Hitler took refuge in an illusory world in which victory was imagined to be secure and obtained an ersatz for the lacking public jubilation in select circles. Nonetheless, he still had a huge apparatus of power at his disposal, which he could instrumentalize for the maintenance of his illusional greatness. But in the face of the extreme dearth of objective success, he lost his credibility as the propagandist of his own delusions. His grandiose public self, which he had managed for a time to reconcile with the perceptions of the environment, came under the pressure of an alternative – to see either himself or the others falsified. Hitler's psychotic structure manifests itself not least in the fact that he could only chose the second option. For the usual self-correction mechanisms when one has disappointed public expectations – apol-

ogy, retraction of statements, etc. – would have exposed his messianic sense of mission to degradation. In his extravagant presumption (*Verstiegenheit*), then, he was left with no choice but to condemn the nation and its people, who were not worthy of him. This gesture of turning away – conveyed in many of Hitler's statements, which we have already cited above – was tantamount to an advance notice of murder and suicide. For after losing the trust of his audience, which had previously borne the entire weight of an existence based solely on his public self, he was left with only the negative confirmation of his delusions: the others, ultimately the entire world, must be destroyed in order to dispel every last doubt about his greatness. And where this aim came up against the limits of feasibility, the extinguishing of his own consciousness – as the last witness of his disgrace – became unavoidable.

But why was he able to commit so many to the same suicidal course? Was the pathological tendency too well concealed by his ideology?

"Hitlerism" – a consistent world-view?

As we have already discussed, the objects of Hitler's hatred were of diverse kind and origin and were fused together with the help of a "psychotic transformation": the hatred of the immediate witnesses of his personal humiliations and the hatred of those supposedly responsible for the social anomie merged seamlessly into each other. How was it possible for Hitler to present to the world this amalgam of private and public motivations for vengeance without betraying himself in the process? Did he propagate an internally consistent ideology, or must his listeners have noticed that they were being presented with a bizarre delusional construction?

Many historians tend to the assume the former – such as Eberhard Jäckel (1969), who describes Hitler's world-view as a consistent concept of rule that provides an entirely logical underpinning for its doctrine of racial purity. Sebastian Haffner (1978), among others, has made considerable objections to this characterization. He notes the irreconcilability of two lines of argumentation in the "theory of 'Hitlerism'" (p. 99). On the one hand, Hitler maintained a social-Darwinist view of history with the credo: "*And all occurrences in world history are only the expression of the races' instinct of self-preservation, in the good or bad sense.*" (Hitler 1925/27, p. 296). In this simplistic view of history, biologically-based racial "purity" is everything, and the state is nothing more than the means to preserve and cultivate this purity: *"All great cultures of the past perished only because the originally creative race died out from blood poisoning. The ultimate cause of such a decline was their forgetting that all culture depends*

on men and not conversely; hence that to preserve a certain culture the man who creates it must be preserved. This preservation is bound up with the rigid law of necessity and the right to victory of the best and stronger in this world. Those who want to live, let them fight, and those who do not want to fight in this world of eternal struggle do not deserve to live." (Hitler 1925/27, p. 289).

In this view of history, life consists in relentless competition and struggle. Accordingly – as Haffner sums up – politics is "war and preparation for war, and what is above all at stake in this war is living space. This applies universally to all peoples, even to all living creatures" (1978, p. 100). The aim of this relentless struggle of the races against one another is, on this account, subjugation in the service of the rule of the strong, culminating in world domination by one single race. The role of culture is, for Hitler, also ultimately simply the expression of the biological quality of a race, which has developed in the course of history. He differentiates between the "*founders, bearers, and destroyers of culture*" and states: *"All the human culture, all the results of art, science, and technology that we see before us today, are almost exclusively the creative product of the Aryan. This very fact admits of the not unfounded inference that he alone was the founder of all higher humanity, therefore representing the prototype of all that we understand by the word 'man.' He is the Prometheus of mankind from whose bright forehead the divine spark of genius has sprung at all times, forever kindling anew that fire of knowledge which illumined the night of silent mysteries and thus caused man to climb the path to mastery over the other beings of this earth."* (1925/27, p. 290). Haffner assesses this world-view, to an extent, as "albeit somewhat narrow, rigid, and foolhardy in its conception, but of a piece with itself" (1978, p. 102). But even here, inconsistencies already emerge that Haffner ignores: the fight between the races has long since been decided in favor of the "Aryan," making it unsuitable to act as the driving force of history. With this a priori decision, Hitler shows himself to be a devotee of the ethnocentric propaganda disseminated by the pan-Germanists and German radicals under the Austrian monarchy (cf. Hamann 1996, p. 236–304). For them, the claims and interests of the non-German peoples in the Habsburg empire were in no sense a legitimate expression of a perpetual racial competition, but rather a reprehensible assault upon the privilege of the "Nordic master race." Consequently, the solution they strove for consisted not in coexistence – however marked by hierarchy it may have been – but rather in expulsion and extermination. This attitude comes to the fore most clearly in a statement by the philosopher Eugen Dühring, which the pan-Germans often liked to quote: "It is the duty of the Nordic man, who has ripened under a colder sky, to eliminate the parasitic races, just as one simply has to eliminate dangerous poisonous snakes and wild beasts of prey (from *The Jew-*

ish Question as a Racial, Moral, and Cultural Issue, quoted in Hamann 1996, p. 241–2)."

In this inconsistency, Hitler's social Darwinism corresponds exactly to his childhood experience, in which he saw himself surrounded by malevolent powers while simultaneously being assigned the role of the "little prince" by his mother. Hence, even this aspect of "Hitlerism" may already be read as a symptom. The following passage from *Mein Kampf*, for instance, clearly bears the traits of a rationalization of his own exceptional norm: *"Thus, the road which the Aryan had to take was clearly marked out. As a conqueror he subjected the lower beings and regulated their practical activity under his command, according to his will and for his aims. [...] As long as he ruthlessly upheld the master attitude, not only did he really remain master, but also the preserver and increaser of culture [...] As soon as the subjected people began to raise themselves up and probably approached the conqueror in language, the sharp dividing wall between master and servant fell. The Aryan gave up the purity of his blood and, therefore, lost his sojourn in the paradise which he had made for himself."* (Hitler 1925/27, p. 295f). The motif that becomes discernible here – in the expulsion of the master from paradise as the just punishment for the fact that he has forgotten his elected status and has associated himself with those who are destined to be his slaves – corresponds to the typically schizophrenic need to differentiate oneself from the others. For Hitler, the role of the threatening levelers was played by the Jews. Which brings us to what Haffner distinguishes as the second strand of Hitler's world-view: antisemitism.

According to Haffner, the contradiction between this second component of "Hitlerism" and the first, above-mentioned one is the decisive, tell-tale sign (1978, p. 104). Whereas social Darwinism emphasized the struggle of all the races for living space, here the battle takes place just between the Jews and the rest of the "white" races. And the stakes are no longer just dominance, but existence as such: *"[The Jew] was... only and always a 'parasite' in the body of other peoples. [...] His spreading is a typical phenomenon for all parasites; he always seeks a new feeding ground for his race. [...] And the effect of his existence is also like that of spongers: wherever he appears, the host people dies out after a shorter or longer period. [...] He poisons the blood of others, but preserves his own. The Jew almost never marries a Christian woman; it is the Christian who marries a Jewess. The bastards, however, take after the Jewish side."* (Hitler 1925/27, p. 304f, 316).

What made the Jews so dangerous in Hitler's eyes? Haffner identifies three central resentments harbored by Hitler (p. 106f). First, opposition to the supposed *"greatest lie, that the Jews are not a race but a religion"* (Hitler 1925/27, p. 307). Second, the concept of "world Judaism" as an ersatz state beyond re-

gional borders that is organized like a system of communicating pipelines and therefore capable of taking internationally coordinated action. Third, the fear that the struggle of the Jews against all other races undermined the "*natural*" struggle for living space – through pacifism, finance capitalism, communism, democratic parliamentarianism, and just in general through *"'disarming' the intellectual leader class of his racial adversaries"* (p. 316).

"The Jew" is thus for Hitler not just the enemy of the "Aryan," but rather of all non-Jews. Because he combats the competition between the races as such, he stands outside of the naturally given order, becomes a spoil-sport of natural selection, and plunges the world into chaos. In short: he carries out a re-evaluation of all values and effects anomie. Consequently, in his fight against the Jews Hitler felt himself to be the leading light of world-wide interests, indeed, of the entire non-Jewish world. The "*Jewish question*," he explained in late July 1924 to the German-Bohemian National Socialist Kugler, was a matter of life and death for all peoples, not only for the Germans: "*For Juda is the global plague*" (Jäckel and Kuhn 1980, p. 1242). Around the same time, he writes in his book manuscript: *"If, with the help of his Marxist creed, the Jew is victorious over the other peoples of the world, his crown will be the funeral wreath of humanity and this planet will, as it did thousands of years ago, move through the ether devoid of men. Eternal Nature inexorably avenges the infringement of her commands. Hence today I believe that I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator: by defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord."* (Hitler 1925/27, p. 65). And as late as 2 April 1945, he dictates to Martin Bormann: "*Seen in this light, they will be eternally grateful to National Socialism for the fact that I eradicated the Jews throughout Germany and central Europe*" (Hitler 1945, p. 122).

The way in which Hitler reacted to the disapproval of his bizarre world-redemption mission expressed abroad is also symptomatic. In his eyes, the threatened boycott of German goods occasioned by the events of 1933 did not falsify his conspiracy theory of "global Judaism" but instead confirmed it. He summoned Joseph Goebbels – who had shortly prior to this been appointed Reich Propaganda Minister – to Obersalzberg to discuss the situation. According to Goebbels' notes on the conversation, Hitler "has carefully considered the whole situation up there in the loneliness of the mountains and has now made a decision. *We can only get somewhere in opposing the foreign smear campaign if we can get the better of its authors or at least its beneficiaries, namely the Jews residing in Germany, who have thus far been left in peace. We must therefore take steps toward a large-scale boycott of all Jewish businesses in Germany. Perhaps then, the foreign Jews will think better of it when their racial compatriots come in for it*" (Goebbels 1924–45, p. 786f). There ensued an "appeal to all party or-

ganizations of the NSDAP for a boycott against the Jews," which was carried out under the leadership of a central committee chaired by Julius Streicher.

Thus, behind the official doctrine of "Hitlerism" – to which one may, with Haffner, justifiably ascribe an argumentational rupture – loomed a message of a different kind. The social Darwinist battle of the races is supplemented by the life-and-death struggle between the Jews and the rest of the world, and this incompatible amalgam becomes coherent only through the logic of psychosis hidden within it: Hitler's megalomania could not content itself with the prospect of competing but coexistent powers; he would have experienced any relativization of his singularity as an existential threat. The paranoid consequence was the complete obliteration of the others, no matter what the cost.

On Haffner's account, this fragmentary combination of the two ideological components – which were held together only by Hitler's defective personality structure – can also be seen in the strange errors in Hitler's war policies: "Accordingly, Hitler the politician pursued from the outset two very different aims: on the one hand, Germany's mastery over Europe; on the other hand, the *'removal'* of the Jews, by which he meant eradication. The one had nothing to do with the other; both goals even hampered one another [...] Anyone who wanted to conquer Europe could not afford to add to the number of enemies he thus [...] made in Europe by making even more – scattered but influential – enemies throughout the entire world" (Haffner 1978, p. 126f).

At the height of his power – in the fall of 1938 after the annexation of Austria and after the occupation of the "rest of Czechoslovakia" in the spring of 1939, but above all in the summer of 1940 after the victory over France – Hitler had almost achieved the first of his aims: a pan-German empire that ruled over extensive parts of Europe and forced onto it an authoritarian regime. As is well-known, Hitler did not give a second thought to securing conquered territory through an internal peace treaty. Instead – after the unsuccessful but ultimately less significant air campaign against England – he launched the attack on the Soviet Union in pursuit of the primary goal: the war for "living space" in the East.

Under the direction of a psychotic dramaturgy, an initial climax in Hitler's war policy was attained in late fall 1941: the defeat before Moscow in early December definitively destroyed all hopes of being able to conquer the Soviet Union in a few months using the tried-and-true blitzkrieg formula. Just a few days later, on 11 December, Hitler declared war on the USA – according to Haffner, an "act of madness" for which there was no rationally plausible explanation (p. 148). Since the so-called Final Solution was set in motion around the same time, Haffner comes to the following conclusion: Frustrated by the failure of the blitzkrieg against Russia, Hitler turned his attention to his second enemy, the Jews, so that he might at least attain a victory there. The declaration of war against the

USA expressed the fact that he no longer felt it necessary to take into consideration the influence of the Jews in the Anglo-Saxon countries. His restraint in this regard had previously given him hope of being able to avoid the USA's entry into the war. In view of the unavoidable defeat, Hitler now exchanged the role of the politician for that of the mass murderer. Joachim Fest also subscribes to the theory that the faltering eastern campaign and the beginning of the Holocaust are directly related to each other: "It was no coincidence that the persecution of the Jews became radicalised at the end of 1941, when Hitler had come to the realisation that his entire strategic concept had foundered with the sudden onset of the winter catastrophe outside of Moscow." (Fest 1999, S. 194).

A possible objection to Haffner's and Fest's arguments is that the actual signal to initiate the Holocaust – in the sense of the annihilation of the Jews with no consideration of their origins – had already been given before the Russian campaign faltered. In this context, Hartog (1994) points out that Hitler had already began deportation of the "*Reichsjuden*" in July or, at the latest, mid-September 1941. Although they weren't yet to be murdered at this point, the decision to do so had undoubtedly been made; its implementation had only been postponed on strategic grounds. As late as 8 November, Hitler was completely confident of victory and proclaimed to his "old fighters" in the Löwenbräukeller that the Red Army had already incurred 8 to 10 million casualties: "*No army in the world can recover from that, including the Russian one*" (quoted in Zentner 1989, p. 283). Hartog comes to the conclusion "that Hitler made the decision to eradicate the European Jewry not at a time of political and military malaise, but rather at a time of achievement that was expected to culminate in victory over the Soviet Union" (1997, p. 42).

But such attempts to explain Hitler's decisions on the basis of acute contextual constellations simply would not go far enough. Hitler's frustration dated back to a significantly earlier time and was far too deep-seated to allow momentary success or failure to fundamentally influence its dynamics. Hitler's exclusive identification with his public self demanded that he continue to climb to more and more extravagant heights – as we have indicated with the formulation "condemned to produce maximal results." Occasional moments of elation, such as he "danced a joyful jig" in Bruly-le-Pêche after France's attempts to negotiate an armistice (Fest 1973, p. 633, cf. Zoller 1949, p. 141), did not actually arrest his dynamics of hatred but rather automatically brought on the need to find new objects for his structurally insatiable hunger for public self-confirmation. Although the psychotic crisis was mitigated by public acclaim, the concomitant expectation placed him under pressure to produce increasingly more spectacular results. This explains, for instance, his displeasure after England and France had made concessions in the Munich Agreement of 1938. Although this had granted him a po-

litical triumph, it had also robbed him of the hoped-for pretext for war (Fest 1973, p. 776). In the monologues shortly before his suicide Hitler gave this résumé: "*I should have made the decision myself in 1938 and not allowed it to be forced on me in 1939, for the war was unavoidable in any case. But it was not my fault that the English and French accepted all my demands in Munich*" (Hitler 1945, p. 72). Hitler's exclamation – "*Finally!*" – when news reached him of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor (Hartog 1994, p. 63) also points in this same direction. The reaction of relief, which lacked all political logic – after all, he would have had to avoid US intervention at all costs if his European military aims were to remain feasible – sprung from the psychotic logic of his feelings of vengeance.

Against this background, it emerges that – regardless of whether the Red Army already seemed defeated – the order for the "Final Solution" has its source in the schizophrenic need for permanent self-aggrandizement. Hitler had to go to extremes, whether in victory or in defeat. However, if the mass murder obeyed less the dictates of an external compulsion (and in what might such compulsion have actually consisted?) than of a hidden, inner necessity, then the question remains: why was the irrationality of this paranoid destructive tendency not recognized, or recognized too late? Why did the German's take away from Hitler's speeches something other than what was in fact so clearly revealed in them?

Underestimated determination

At an NSDAP rally in Günzburg on 11 October 1932 Hitler declared: "*My opponents are mistaken above all about my tremendous determination*" (Domarus 1962/63, p. 138). It is a part of the fatal dynamic of his delusional development that Hitler attempted to prove his determination all the more, the less faith people had in his prophecies. We drew attention to the biographical background of this response pattern in the previous chapter. Here, we will now examine the question from the other side. Why were Hitler's murderous threats and their paranoid consequences not taken seriously enough?

In a subtle analysis, Sebastian Haffner proposes three reasons that are in particular responsible for this. All three have to do with an unresolved cognitive dissonance between the private and public self. *Firstly*, the "flight into illusion: most commonly, the illusion of superiority" maintained through an attitude of "amused haughtiness" toward the dilettantism of NS rule in its initial stages, which then turned into astonished admiration after the unexpected success of the regime. *Secondly,* a resigned embitterment that helplessly, and occasionally with a cynical nihilism, let events take their course. *Thirdly*, the wish "not to [let oneself] be

emotionally corrupted by hate and suffering": "one would like to remain good-natured, peaceful, friendly, 'nice.' But how can hatred and suffering be avoided when day in day out one is bombarded by things that cause hatred and suffering? It can only be done by means of ignoring, looking the other way, stopping up one's ears, isolating oneself. And it leads to becoming hardened out of softness and ultimately in turn to a form of madness: to the loss of reality" (2000, p. 187ff).

But the danger was misjudged or ignored not only among the collaborators, but also among many of the victims of Hitler's propaganda of hatred. As a recent study has documented, even among resistance fighters the persecution and extermination of the Jews was not a primary concern. The author of the study shows that this was related to a constriction and repression of perception associated with fear as well as to the powerless feeling of isolation involved in oppositional activities (Keval 1999). These findings may be reinforced by the realization that something incomprehensible was happening. It was difficult to believe in Hitler's determination to go to the extreme since it made no logical sense from either an ideological or a strategic point of view. A compelling connection between Hitler's proclamation of the Holocaust and its inexorable implementation could only be recognized by someone who perceived its pathological signals. This seldom occurred. One exception is quoted in Alexander Hohenstein's *Wartheländische Tagebuch*, in the entry on 28 December 1941; here, a Jewish dentist describes her impressions of Hitler's war speeches: "I sense that we are heading toward a certain, disastrous fate, a horrible end [...] The rumors and fears do after all have a very real basis. None other than Hitler himself had said it clearly and unambiguously years ago: 'If America enters the war, it means the end of Jewry in Europe'" (Hohenstein 1963, p. 201). The Dutch historian Hartog comments: "The Jewish dentist was wrong in her statement of December 1941. Hitler never said that. Still, she was right: that's what Hitler meant. But who else had listened as carefully as this woman?" (1994, p. 77). According to Hartog, it is only possible to connect the threat of mass destruction with America's entry into the war if one combines a variety of statements made by Hitler in the speeches at the start of the war. But the link is provided by that obsessively repeated threat – which we have dealt with extensively in the last section of the previous chapter – that the "*laughter*" of the Jews "*would die down everywhere*" (Domarus 1962/63, p. 1663). Hartog also interprets it as the "sign of the pathological frustration of a man who did not want to be laughed at, but wished from the bottom of his heart to be taken seriously" (1994, p. 17). Only when one draws a connection between the military strategy and the personal defense against shame does a causal relation become evident between the war and the eradication of the Jews. For in his declaration of war on 1 September 1939, he made no mention of the Jews at all –

sheer antisemitism would have hardly sufficed as a plausible pretext for the attack on Poland (as is well known, this purpose was served by the faked raid on the Gleiwitz radio station). Instead, it was the course of the war that first retroactively provided a possibility of politically rationalizing the personal motivation: Hitler could now openly pronounce to the world the tactically plausible threat that he would kill the Jews as his hostages if one entangled him in a world war (p. 18). The persistent mis-dating of his later death threats against the Jews to the day of the war declaration testifies to this retroactive construction of motive. The war now offered cause for the Holocaust, whereas in reality it was the reverse.

This was not as easy to recognize as it may seem from the perspective of historical distance. For although Hitler in no sense hedged his aim of eradicating the Jews as such but rather repeatedly stated it loud and clear, he managed to link this aim so closely with the events of the war that it appeared not to lie in his hands alone. In this, Hitler realized an ambition that he had already announced on 29 April 1937 in a secret speech to the regional leaders of the NSDAP: "*I don't actually want to use violence to directly challenge an opponent to fight, I don't say: 'Fight!' because I want to fight; rather, I say: 'I want to destroy you! And now, Prudence, help me to maneuver you into a corner so that you have no chance to strike a blow, and then you get the thrust straight in the heart*" (Kotze and Krausnick 1966, p. 148).

Thus, although Hitler did not pursue aims that were "rational" in the military sense, the lack of such aims was covered up by the initial conquests. The "great military commander" was acclaimed as a hero with hardly a given to the global inferno he set off. The first concern was to satisfy the national pride that compensated the collective humiliations of the populace in accord with the individual humiliations of its Führer. Nonetheless, one might have known that it was not a matter of an imperialist military strategy, but rather of the satisfaction of murderous feelings of vengeance. Clear proof of this was, for instance, the exhortation of 10 October 1941 formulated by Field Marshal Walter von Reichenau, commander of the 6th Army, which Hitler considered exemplary and had circulated to all the battalions in the East: "The most essential aim of the campaign against the Jewish-Bolshevik system is the utter crushing of the means of power and the eradication of the Asian influence within the European cultural sphere. This also entails responsibilities for the troops that go beyond the usual, one-sided nature of soldiering. The soldier in the East is not only a fighter in accordance with the rules of warfare but also the bearer of an uncompromising national [*völkisch*] idea and the avenger for all the bestialities that have been inflicted on the German national being and related cultures. Therefore the soldier must have complete understanding for the necessity of the hard but just expiation of the inferior Jewish peoples. It has a further purpose of nipping in the bud uprisings in the core of the

Wehrmacht, which according to experience have always been instigated by Jews" (Streit 1978, p. 115). Even clearer was the version of the order issued on 20 November by General von Manstein, the commander of the 11th Army: "The Jewish-Bolshevik system must be eradicated once and for all. It must never again be allowed to infiltrate our living space. The task of the German soldier is therefore not just to crush the system's means of military power. He also acts as the bearer of a national [*völkisch*] idea and avenger of all the atrocities that have been inflicted on him and the German people" (p. 116).

The civilian population also frequently witnessed these explicitly compensatory acts of revenge. Thus, well into the initial phase of the Eastern campaign, even the weekly news reels – the ones from 19 to 26 June 1941, for instance – still reported openly about staged pogroms and scenes of lynch-justice against Jews as well as mass executions of "partisans" and their supposed Jewish helpers in the conquered territories (Zentner 1989, p. 391). Most of it however only became evident in a fragmentary way, through chance observations – even in the case of the deportations of the "*Reichsjuden*" and their fellow sufferers to western and central Europe. The partial focusing of perception contributed to the fact that the delusional system as such hardly came to light. In a letter to Lionel Curtis, Helmuth James von Moltke – the initiator of the resistance group "Kreisauer Kreis" – wrote on 25 March 1943: "At least nine-tenths of the population does not know that we have killed hundreds of thousands of Jews. It is still believed that they have merely been expelled and lead just about the same life as they had before, only further in the East, where they came from, perhaps somewhat more wretched but without air raids" (quoted in Mommsen 1999).

Fear and repression took care of the rest, both with observers and victims. Remarkable here is one of the few exceptions: those Germans – predominantly women – who were married to Jewish partners (cf. Stoltzfus 1996, p. 21) reacted unusually aggressively to the racial discrimination and threats of deportation. In February 1943, the impending deportation of Jewish spouses in conjunction with the so-called "final campaign of the Berlin Jews" produced a unique public protest against the politics of the Third Reich. For about a week the German wives gathered in the Rosenstraße in Berlin, where their Jewish husbands were being held, and chanted "We want our men back!" despite massive threats from the SS sentries. Goebbles – as the gauleiter responsible for Berlin – finally gave in with Hitler's approval and set some 2000 Jewish spouses free (out of a total of 10,000 detained and later murdered Berlin Jews. Cf. Stoltzfus 1996, p. 7ff). The regime had exposed one of the few places where – and how – it was vulnerable from the inside: in the demonstration of the unity of all ethnic groups in the population.

Hitler was also forced to break off the euthanasia program after public protests (Redlich 1998, p. 322). This gave the Nazis all the more reason to conceal

their crimes of violence, especially the factory-style destruction of the Jews and other victims of racial persecution. After the war had lost its "rational" basis – which, according to Haffner, it possessed until 1940 (1978, p. 138) – there were no more pretexts to plausibly justify these crazed rampages of a psychotic and his accomplices. With the inevitable collapse looming in front of him, the war had become for Hitler "a kind of race that he still hoped to win. Who would get to the finish line first: Hitler with his extermination of the Jews, or the Allies with their military defeat of Germany?" (p. 181f).

Precisely the tabuisation of Hitler's patently personal motives – even in the innermost circle of the executioners of his will – led to the fact that the mass murder was carried out in anonymous coldness, as an all-the-more-efficient machinery of death. The "*tremendous determination*" of the Führer was reason enough for them to implement the bizarre logic of a paranoid schizophrenic psychosis down to its last planned detail.

Concluding observations on the question of responsibility

To sum up the perspective of the Hitler phenomenon presented by our study entails a discussion of its consequences for the question of guilt. Because we postulate an interaction between an individual delusion and its collective confirmation, this might give rise to the suspicion that the guilt of both sides it thus relativized by means of psychiatrisizing. In the present section, we shall explain why it is rather the opposite of this conclusion that follows from our thesis. Admittedly, in the face of the enormity of the Nazi crimes, the fact that we employ criteria currently used in forensic psychiatry may in itself already seem like a trivialization. Nonetheless, we believe it is a necessary – although naturally not sufficient – tool in arguing against the still widespread attempts to cite psychological factors as reasons to exonerate the perpetrators and collaborators of their responsibility.

According to contemporary legal usage (the criteria for which go back to antiquity – cf. Plato, *Protagoras* 355b3–357e8) the criminal responsibility of a person is reduced if at the time the crime was committed, the perpetrator was incapable of recognizing the wrongness of the action or of acting on this knowledge due to a pathological mental disturbance, a deeply deranged state of mind, a mental deficiency, or another severe mental abnormality. Thus, if one assumed that these criteria apply to the individual and collective Hitler mania, it would be tantamount to an automatic moral exoneration. Accordingly, Wolfgang Treher – one of the few authors who certifies Hitler as suffering from a schizophrenic psychosis – asserts bluntly: "There was no moral responsibility on Hitler's part or on that of the German Reich after 1933" (1966/1990, p. 249). It is understandable that this in itself is reason enough for the great majority of psychohistorians to draw back from the diagnosis of schizophrenia; the conclusion drawn by Treher is completely unacceptable. But does it necessary follow? In our view of the specific course of Hitler's psychosis and the stabilization provided for it by the cultural-historical environment, there are four reasons that speak against a posthumous exoneration:

1. Continual readiness to commit acts of violence

As we have already mentioned, the number of schizophrenics who tend to violence is extremely small. In the criminal statistics, psychotics are patently under-

represented (cf. Venzlaff 1994). Analyses of schizophrenic case histories have revealed a rate of five to fifteen violent offenses per 10,000 patients (Böker and Häfner 1973, Lindquist and Allebeck 1990). The profile of the schizophrenic perpetrator is therefore all the more specific. The following are considered to be particularly at risk:

– patients "with a full-blown, usually systematized complex of delusional symptoms [developed] as a defense against purported threats;

– patients with (delusional) thoughts of hatred and vengeful feelings towards persons by whom they feel unfairly treated;

– patients with archaic, apocalyptic delusional experiences, which usually set in acutely, with a predominance of messianic and redemptive fantasies" (Deister and Möller 1998).

In view of everything that we believe we know about Hitler's personality, the above-mentioned criteria are generally applicable to him – naturally, with the reservation that it is a diagnosis made from a historical distance. He felt massively threatened by everything that placed in question his craving for recognition, was filled with raging hatred toward supposed persecutors, and persisted in his missionary megalomania with apocalyptic consequences. However, he deviates from this profile in one central point: schizophrenics generally commit acts of violence in an acute (full-blown) phase, and such acts are as a rule directed at close familiars or superiors (Rink 1981). Neither is the case with Hitler. Although his actions were motivated by feelings of vengeance, he did not murder in the heat of the moment, but with long-term calculation. And his hatred was not directed at people in his immediate surroundings but rather at an ideologically depersonalized group with which he had virtually no contact. His Jewish acquaintances during the Vienna period are no exception, for the fact that he was friendly with them despite his adoption of the antisemitic ideology demonstrates precisely how little his concept of the "Jews" had to do with personal experience. Additionally, his program of destruction was carried out without the presence of a concrete occasion for defending against purported threats. Certainly, he was pursued by the hallucinatory idea of the "laughter" of the Jews, but at the same time he knew that this did not correspond to objective reality. He murdered from a safe distance, more or less conscious of the fact that his victims played the function of an ideological substitute. This speaks against classifying Hitler under a typical schizophrenic criminal profile for which a defense on the grounds of illness might be legitimately proffered. The fact that he continually pursued his criminal intentions and planned them in the long-term even outside of the acutely psychotic phases – bizarre as these plans were in themselves – speaks against the applicability of the criteria for a psychoses-related diminished capacity plea.

2. Ability to recognize the criminality of one's actions

Now, of course, one might object that Hitler was so convinced of his messianic and redemptive fantasies that he had no understanding of the criminality of his actions. Hugh Trevor-Roper had already advocated this view in 1953 and confirmed it once again in an interview with Rosenbaum (1998), in which he stated that Hitler had been "convinced of his own rectitude" (p. 208). One of the standard symptoms invoked in support of this judgment is the cold methodical planning of the actions we just emphasized above. For this was declared by Hitler to be a self-sacrificing service to the people – and generally executed along those lines by his accomplices; Eichmann, for instance, appealed in his trial to Kant's ethics of duty (Arendt 1964, p. 174). Recall here, too, Hitler's response to Henriette von Schirach's reservations about the inhuman treatment of women during the deportation of the Jews: "*My responsibility is only to my people, and to no one else.*" Moreover, some authors consider Hitler's conviction in the rightness of his own conduct to be demonstrated by the fact that he repeatedly likened himself to the great virologists – for instance, in a speech made in August 1920: "*And don't think that you can fight the racial tuberculosis without making sure that the people [Volk] are free of the pathogen of the racial tuberculosis. The effect of Judaism will never wear off and the poisoning of the people will not end as long as the pathogen, the Jews, is not removed from our midst*" (Jäckel and Kuhn 1980, p. 176f). The equation of human beings with pathogens in itself makes clear that Hitler did not seriously feel bound by a medical ethos.

It is therefore unnecessary to take recourse to the commonly used qualification that Hitler would also carry the full responsibility for his crimes even if he did not consider them evil and believed that they served the best interests of the German people. Redlich, for instance, attempts to back up this construction with the following hypothesis: Since Hitler committed his inhuman acts in full possession of his senses and had always boasted of his rationality, he would have never pleaded diminished capacity before the Nuremberg court in the first place. Even a Robin Hood, Redlich muses on, would not have been exonerated of robbery charges because his theft was meant to help the poor – and certainly not Hitler with his theory of the global Jewish-Bolshevik conspiracy (1998, p. 338f). The inappropriateness of this argumentation is revealed in the fact that it circumvents the moral core of the problem by way of a legal technicality. This does not make obsolete the question of whether Hitler was prevented by illness from realizing that according to generally accepted norms he was a mass murderer. To answer this question in the negative one needs factual evidence and not hypothetical speculation.

We see one such piece of evidence in the fact that the "Final Solution" was kept secret. As we have discussed extensively, the motivation of fending off shame is the dark center around which Hitler's conduct revolved. He wanted finally to be taken seriously for that which he publicly proclaimed. Nonetheless, the ultimate proof that he was deadly serious was produced out of the public eye. Thus, it is evident that he quite consciously removed his crucial motivation from the moral scrutiny of the public because it was clear to him that it could not have been legitimated by any of his loudly pronounced hate slogans.

The clandestine pleasure in the satisfaction of personally motivated vengeance is also expressed in the cynicism of Hitler's executioners – such as the motto "*Arbeit macht frei*" (work makes you free) over the main entrance to the Auschwitz complex or the women's orchestra that accompanied the victims to the gas chambers in Auschwitz-Birkenau. This cynicism was only possible because a resolute will stood behind the propagated duty of the "*removal*" and "*elimination*" of the Jews (as we have already seen in the letter to Gemlich of 16 September 1919).

Thus, even if Hitler felt himself called upon to violate the basic dictates of humanity by virtue of an exceptional norm valid only for himself, this does not actually mean that he was unconscious of the violation. This also distinguishes him from the typical profile of violent schizophrenic criminals. In the presence of pronounced delusional symptoms, there is usually a lack of an "inner observer": "The patient simply knows that it is so and not otherwise; proof of it is not required" (Deister and Möller 1998, p. 59). He feels no need to substantiate the correctness of his perceptions or notions. Of course, as we have seen, there are repeatedly phases in Hitler's life in which this form of self-relativization apparently completely ceased to be in force – such as the Freinberg experience, his "winning" lottery ticket, or the unwavering certainty, despite the lack of evidence, that Hanisch cheated him in the sale of his Parliament picture. The numerous hate tirades that he recited with a monologic imperturbability, so that his environment could only react with ridicule of stunned bewilderment, also raise doubts about his capacity for self-reflection. However, in general he was certainly capable of introspection – albeit of a strongly symptom-related kind. This is testified to not only by his systematic efforts at self-presentation – such as his "student" costume in Linz, the alternating registration entries as "art painter," "architectural draftsman" and "writer," or the practicing of poses in front of the mirror, in his acting lessons and in Hoffmann's photo atelier – but also, and especially, by his strategies of secrecy: the great effort expended on the concealment of his origins, the Academy rejection, the Jewish contacts in the men's home, the interlude as deputy battalion representative, and finally, the instructions for the murder of the Jews. Anyone who is completely convinced of the rightness of his

perceptions and actions would not be capable of such a systematic investment of energies in pretense and mimicry. He would be so identical with his mask that the cognitive dissonance between it and his self-perception would not longer be apparent to him. In Hitler's case, this was true only to a limited extent.

3. Ability to control one's actions

The second criterion that is commonly invoked in defense of mentally ill criminals is the lack of ability to control their actions. The crucial point for the assessment of such cases, as one commentary has it, is "whether the perpetrator was capable of weighing the incentives and misgivings against one another and forming his decision accordingly, or whether even after summoning up all his powers of resistance he is still unable to control his will by means of reasonable consideration" (Deister and Möller 1998, p. 252).

This criterion, too, does not apply to Hitler. As we have demonstrated in various examples – such as Hitler's friendly conduct toward Jews when they were useful for him, or the moderation of his political rhetoric when it came to winning votes – his psychotic structure did not generally prevent him from consciously controlling his behavior. Whenever it seemed to him tactically appropriate to cover up his intentions, he did so – for instance, in his speech on the anniversary of the seizure of power on 30 January 1939 in the Reichstag: "*In Germany no one has till now been persecuted because of his religious views, nor will anyone be persecuted for that reason*" (Domarus 1962/63, p. 1058). With this deliberate ambiguity Hitler simultaneously satisfied the interests of a worried public as well as the surreptitious rancor of his followers – for in his twisted world-view, Judaism was not a religion but a race. He thus continued to maintain his "*tremendous determination*," which he had already proclaimed in the previously quoted speech of 11 October 1932; yet he was capable of controlling this tremendous determination over a period of years, to weigh incentives and misgivings against one another. An inability to control one's actions is therefore fundamentally out of the question in Hitler's case. No one builds concentration camps in the heat of the moment.

Of course, one also can't build them all by oneself. And that brings us to the last and most important point of our summation.

4. Confirmation from the environment

The main reason why the criteria for diminished capacity – the inability to recognize the criminality of one's actions and to control one's actions – are not applicable to Hitler despite the presence of delusional symptoms in his psychic structure lies in the stabilizing role of the collective. It provided Hitler's delusional fantasies with the confirmation necessary to keep them from breaking away from social reality completely. The integrative attitude of the environment generally increases the schizophrenic's chances of recovery, but in this special case it served to hopelessly compound the harm. The public acclaim – at first within the *völkisch* movement, and then in ever-wider circles of the population – spared Hitler from manifesting any clinically conspicuous signs of illness or symptoms that could have been discredited as being all to clearly psychotic. Through their active and passive approval, the Germans created a climate in which Hitler's mental illness remained relatively unspecified, allowing him to play out his frustration energies with great success in the political sphere: The aura of an other-worldly redeemer was projected into Hitler's affective vacuum, his bizarre srewiness were taken for a sign of grandiosity, his emotional ruthlessness was praised as determination, and his paranoid propaganda of destruction cheered as a mission of redemption. Dazzled by Hitler's megalomaniacal self-aggrandizement, the Germans delivered themselves up to the mercy of the Führer's will and equipped him with extensive instruments of power – whereby they subjected themselves and their nation to the dramaturgy of a psychotic tragedy that most people only recognized as such in the moment when the catastrophe was complete. For millions of concentration camp victims and casualties of war it was too late. The social integration that spares the schizophrenic the discreditation of being institutionalized stood here under the sign of its opposite: it was not the society that integrated the psychotic, but rather the latter who integrated the former. And due to the cultural-historical circumstances we have described, he was happily allowed to do as he pleased. The rare attempts to reprimand him – such as the order to exercise more restraint in the "political education" courses, the Bavarian authorities' threats of deportation and bans on speaking, or the conviction in the November putsch trial – remained half-hearted and mitigated by clandestine sympathies. Recall the remark of the judge: "A tremendous fellow, that Hitler!". Even the nationalist right felt uneasy about him, but they believed they could instrumentalize him as a useful idiot ("Now we've got an Austrian, he's got a real loud mouth." Very soon, the reaction of the masses went from disconcerted admiration and giving the oddball free reign to the imploring plea: "Help us!" The relinquishment of social control to an individual made it possible for Hitler's paranoid feelings of vengeance and apocalyptic messianic fantasies to be translated unim-

peded into action. Hence, if in the case of Hitler we can speak only to a limited extent of an psychosis-related inability to tell right from wrong and to control one's actions, this would then be entirely inappropriate in the case of his helpers. They bear full responsibility for Hitler's crimes; indeed, their responsibility is compounded by their reinforcement of that fatal interaction. And by "helpers" we mean not only the active accomplices intoxicated by Hitler's mania, but in particular also those who remained sober – those who saw through the murderous intentions of the Nazi regime perfectly well and nonetheless continued to look the other way until it was too late.

We have anchored our interpretation of Hitler delusions in a new explanatory model of psychosis whose orientation on the polarity between the private and public self makes fluid the boundaries between mental illness and health. All human beings exist in this polarity; for that reason, every individual must master the task of maintaining an appropriate balance between moments of retreat into inwardness and those of coming out into the public eye. The nature of what is appropriate, however, is determined by the cultural context. Depression and schizophrenia are forms of mental illness for which the respective environment has a shared responsibility. To lead the depressive out of his encapsulation and to bring the schizophrenic, with his excessive orientation on the public self, back to an ability to feel is an imperative not only of the individual but also of the social conscience. Thus, more vigilance is called for wherever a culture is in danger of losing these possibilities of reducing suicidal and delusional tendencies. The lesson of the irreparable catastrophe of the Hitler regime is as much a psychiatric as a historical one. To learn it means not only to direct our gaze backward, but to be mindful of the past by directing our attention to the present dangers of its return.

Appendix

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