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The Role of Dehumanization in the Nazi Era in Activating the Death Drive Resulting in Genocide

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Abstract

Dehumanization can be defined in part as a process by which a powerful individual or group (the victimizers) actively denies or withdraws a second individual's or group's (the victim's) sense of human worth or personal value. Dehumanization is an especially virulent form of denigration of the Other and is known to have harmful psychological consequences on victims.

The thesis of this dissertation is: Dehumanization, applied in an increasingly severe manner to demean, subjugate and control Jews in Nazi dominated territories during the Nazi era (1933-1945), activated a "death instinct/drive" (Freud 1920; 1923/1960; 1930) that was used to resolve an extreme power struggle that existed in the minds of Adolph Hitler, other Nazi leaders and some German people between the Aryan people and Jews. The result was a horrific genocide.

Dehumanization of the Jews in the Nazi era resulting in genocide was implemented across several domains: social, economic, educational, professional, personal. As shown in this dissertation, increasingly severe dehumanization may activate a virulent expression of the death drive resulting in murder and even genocide. Freud described the death drive as a universal tendency in human beings that involves dynamics of aggression and destruction that may lead to the death and negation of others. According to Freud, murder is the ultimate expression of the death drive and a means to establish dominance, control, subjugation or retaliation against the victim. The death drive is in constant tension with and balanced by what Freud called Eros or the life force that prohibits people from perpetrating harm, especially killing.

This dissertation proposes a modified form of Freud's death drive and uses a case study method to explore how increasingly severe dehumanizing tactics in Nazi Germany activated a death drive resulting in genocide. Increasingly severe dehumanization of Jewish people and other persecuted groups in the Nazi era gained traction through the following tactics: socially isolating the victim (e.g., in ghettos and then concentration camps), distracting bystanders through social upheaval and war and targeting victims with physical and psychological disabilities. This dissertation argues that the common denominator of these tactics involves the desire and ability of the victimizer to establish dominance and control over victims by making them weak and helpless. Those individuals who are weak and helpless are more easily killed. This case study may be used to explore how a modified form of Freud's death drive may be relevant to the study of other genocides. This case study may have implications for the psychological study of what is termed "evil" and the apparent tendency of human beings to harm and potentially kill one another under the guise of reprisal or self-justification, as occurred in the Nazi era when Adolf Hitler argued that Jews were the greatest existing threat to the Aryan race.

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The Role of Dehumanization in the Nazi Era in Activating the Death Drive

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Chapter One: Introduction

This dissertation is about the relationship between dehumanization and murder, emphasizing the characteristics and intricacies involved in this relationship. I use, as an example of these processes, the treatment of Jews in the Nazi era in Germany (1933-1945) and consider, to a lesser extent, the treatment of Jews in countries conquered by or allied with Germany.

This dissertation proposes a modified form of Freud's death drive and uses a case study method to explore how increasingly severe dehumanizating tactics in Nazi Germany activated a death drive resulting in genocide. The thesis of the dissertation is: Dehumanization, applied in an increasingly severe manner to demean, subjugate and control Jews in Nazi dominated territories during the Nazi era (1933-1945), activated a "death instinct/drive" (Freud 1920; 1923/1960; 1930) that was used to resolve an extreme power struggle that existed in the minds of Adolph Hitler, other Nazi leaders and some German people between the Aryan people and Jews. The result was a horrific genocide.

Background

The dehumanizing tactics used by Germany's Nazi leaders, abetted by many followers, targetted Jewish people as a centuries-long threat. Adolf Hitler (1925/1999) and his Nazi followers argued that Jews were representative of the Semitic race and were the oldest and most formidable enemy of the German people, the latter having descended from an ill-defined Aryan race (e.g. pp. 214, 312). For Hitler and his followers, Jews had

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to be eliminated from German (and European) soil if the Germanic people were to achieve the full potential of the Aryan race, although exactly what this meant also was an ill-defined construct that, nonetheless, resulted in genocide of Jews, and also murder of other nationalities, minorities and disabled individuals who were within the German sphere of influence.

Hitler's (1945) views on race, and on what he felt to be the Jewish menace and a threat to the Aryan race, were fanatical. They spanned his political career and were included in his final political testament shortly before his death. On ascending to power in 1933, he and the Nazi party made it clear that there was no place in Germany for any Jew and that all Jews were to be eliminated from the country. It was unclear what "elimination" meant in the early stages of these dehumanizing tactics. At the beginning of the Nazi years, elimination was taken to mean coerced emigration. Toward the end of the Nazi era, elimination came to mean extermination through various forms of murder, such as starvation regimens in ghettos, German death squads, and gassing in concentration camps (Landau, 1992/2016; Vesey, 2006)

The overall Nazi strategy regarding the Jews, therefore, was a policy of elimination that became total extermination, with the ultimate goal that Germany would become a country (and Europe a continent) free of Jews. The tactics to arrive at these goals of elimination or extermination involved a process of increasingly severe dehumanization that isolated Jews from non-Jews, restricted their livelihoods, activities and freedoms and increasingly convinced the German public (the bystanders) that Jews were a separate, subhuman or inferior people that were a menace to Germany and to the

Aryan people. I describe these processes of dehumanization and elimination (through emigration or death) in more detail in the following chapters.

A Case Study Method

The dissertation, therefore, uses a case study method (described more fully in Chapter 5) to identify the tactics and strategies used in a process of dehumanization leading to genocide. The Nazi leadership and those supporting its views used these dehumanizing tactics to engage in various types of behaviors that enslaved other people and justified the killing of other human beings, often by arguing that these enslaved or murdered other people were not actually people at all. The people being killed, in this view, were subhuman in either their personal, ethical or moral development; and/or they were animals, creatures that did not have the essential characteristics or moral or personal qualities that human beings have.

Killing such people, who are considered to not really be people, often is justified by the aggressor if the person or group to be killed or annihilated can be understood as hostile and dangerous to the group who has provided the subhuman categorization in the first place (Smith, 2011). Not surprisingly, the group considered subhuman usually has less power, making it weaker than the larger, stronger individual or group that argues it has been "forced" to defend itself against what it considers to be a sub-human 'monster'.

These deceptive tactics result in dehumanization of the victim but are often complicated and associated with other psychological processes such as lying to oneself and others, distortions, diversions, rationalizations, denial, and blame. Mental health professionals describe these psychological processes as "psychological defenses." These "defenses" are intended to ward off internal stress arising from anxiety, guilt, shame, or

other unpleasant feelings, often by externalizing stress by blaming others. so that the people employing these defenses are able to believe, act and react in ways that are most satisfying to them, regardless of what might be the unpleasant realities and consequences of their actions or beliefs.

In the Nazi era, many Germans believed Hitler (1939) when he accused Jews falsely of instigating the First World War or of conspiring with Jews in other countries to form a financial cabal to rule the world (Landau, 1992/2016). These claims had no merit but allowed those Germans who held them to deny their own political or military lack of power, to project blame for their failures onto a ready scapegoat and to divert attention from a realistic appraisal of their own wartime failures. Based on these groundless assumptions of Jewish treachery, those Germans holding these beliefs, who might otherwise have felt powerless or inferior were able to divert attention from themselves or other favored groups by inciting anger and blame toward Jews,contributing to desires for revenge.

These dehumanizing tactics may also have helped some Germans relieve their own senses of failure and inferiority and make themselves feel greater and stronger than they might otherwise have felt, given that Germany had lost a war and suffered great humiliation. Germans holding views of their own powerlessness that were difficult to accept would be more likely to blame Jews for their country's economic, social or political problems. Dominating the Jews, and "punishing" or expelling them from Germany might relieve the guilt and blame they would otherwise have attributed to their leaders or to themselves. The Jews were a strategic target, in that centuries of

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antisemitism could be used to incite conspiracy theories about the threat of their social ascendacy.

There are many scenarios that are important in the psychological tactics of tyranny of diverse types. In this dissertation I focus on the dehumanizing tactics of tyranny used by angry Germans who chose to blame the Jews for Germany's World War I defeat, then falsely accuse Jews of treachery around financial matters. These dehumanizing tactics depicted Jews as morally or ethically culpable and prone to act far below accepted standards of behavior. Jews might then be considered vermin or animals, lacking in human ethical or moral standards, or acting only for their own good as animals are often thought to act. These attributions, that Jews lacked moral and ethical standards or that they acted only in their own best interests, would possibly suggest or allow the aggrieved German to denigrate the Jew or to consider the Jew subhuman—a "dehumanized" part of society.

In this dissertation's case study, dehumanization tactics used in Nazi Germany are extreme manifestations of psychological defense mechanisms that protect the holder of the calumny from guilt and allow the victimizer to project their guilt (as well as other reactions, such as anger, fear, remorse) onto the Jew, who is then criticized as being less than human. Dehumanization then becomes a potential catalyst or justification for violence and murder and an activator of a death drive resulting in genocide, given that those who are considered less than human or as "animals" may be thought of as unworthy of usual human protections against violence and aggression, or perhaps as opportune targets of an inherent potential for violence, as discussed below.

The human vessels or caretakers for these types of psychological defense mechanisms may be entirely unaware or unconscious of these reactions that influence their own attitudes or behaviors, making them susceptible to take actions they believe are justified, but that in reality they do not fully comprehend. Calling Jews or any other dehumanized group vermin or dogs avoids an understanding of the chain of personal attitudes and reactions that have contributed to the aggressor's designations. Often, this form of psychological avoidance 'resolves' problematic power dynamics for the aggressor.

Hitler and the Nazis burned books written by psychoanalysts and were notorious for their antipathy to these forms of psychological analysis. Had they pursued this form of understanding further, they might have concluded that dehumanization was an externalizing tactic for 'resolving' internal power struggles, involving a series of behaviors and actions perpetrated against Jews to ultimately eliminate Jews from their midst, but was also an internal state whose judgments supported these external behaviors and rested on assumptions about themselves and about the attitudes and behaviors of their would-be-enemies.

Dehumanization is, therefore, both an (1) internal state that denigrates the victims' attitudes and behaviors and (2)external behaviors perpetrated against the victims that are justified by denigrations of the victims and their motivations. This internal denigrating appraisal results from a series of psychological defenses within the dehumanizer that are intended to shift responsibility, to whatever the degree possible, onto others who are usually individuals or groups with less power.

Dehumanizing tactics, as indicated here, deny victims "personhood"—a sense of their own humanity, their justification for being and their own identity in its various forms (Bastian & Haslam, 2011). This denial of personhood is justified by the aggressor by blaming the victim for sins and errors, as defined by the victimizer. Often, these sins and errors, as suggested earlier, have little or nothing to do with what the victim actually has done; rather, they reflect prejudice linked to innate qualities (such as skin color), religious identity/affiliation, or social status (such as living in poverty) that are used to justify persecution of the victim, even when the social condition is due to the actions of the aggressor. Regardless of the apparent unfairness of the immutable conditions of birth or the prejudicial actions of the oppressor, a series of moral and ethical failures are attributed by the victimizers to this individual or group who are now considered less than human. The victim group essentially has been dehumanized, a state that in severe form, as described throughout this dissertation, carries considerable mortal danger.

The mortal danger may become a reality when dehumanization becomes severe and victimizers need to blame others for their various misfortunes, and they target a dehumanized individual or group. In other cases, usually for reasons unknown to the victimizers themselves, but for reasons that seem to be a part of the psychological makeup of human beings (Freud, 1920; 1930), the victimizer wishes to harm or kill other human beings, perhaps to avoid considering their own mortality (Freud, 1933). The aggressor then chooses those with less power such as people who are frail and defenseless and least likely to put up adequate resistance to becoming their victims.

The impulse to murder others is what Freud (1920) called the death instinct (later termed the death drive), in a psychological study published one hundred years ago. The

concept has never been fully accepted within psychoanalytic circles, and remains controversial, but I believe it has much to consider, at least in the form I propose in this dissertation.

Proposing a Modified Form of the Death Drive

I have described a modified form of the death drive in Chapter 4 that is based on my reading of the psychoanalytic literature that includes the work of Freud and others that both support and criticize his formulation. Importantly, criticisms of Freud's concept of the death drive often emphasize the unproven nature of his biologially related speculations whereas I have focused my theoretical modification on observable phenomena. Freud (and others) also have attempted to support his views on the death drive by describing individual encounters, often involving patients, whereas I think that the death drive is more readily understood in the context of genocide, such as occurred in the Holocaust. In addition, the broader literature on aggression indicates that there are numerous phenomena that usual understandings of aggression and murder do not address satisfactorily. Most explanations of murder have to do with motivations such as financial gain, professional or personal competition, romantic rivalries or remorse, and revenge for presumed personal slights or disrespect. Murder, in some instances, such as in the genocide of the Holocaust, does not fit easily into accepted paradigms.

In my understanding of murder, and specifically murder as genocide exemplified by the Holocaust, I emphasize that the concept of the death drive is a metapsychological one, as Freud asserted. The death drive cannot be traced back to precise incidents or personal relationships with confidence. Rather, considering the death drive as an overriding concept suggests that a series of otherwise inadequately described behavioral

or socio-environmental events may lead to or activate the more abstract concept of a death drive, but that these other explanations by themselves are limited or inadequate.

In the formulation offered in this dissertation, I emphasize that the death drive refers to processes of aggression and destruction that lead to the death and negation of others and that are intended symbolically to demonstrate dominance, control, subjugation or retaliation against the victim. There are numerous instances cited in this dissertation and more extensively in the Holocaust witness literature in the bibliography that demonstrate instances of killing and murder that seem to be senseless by usual standards of human conduct, excessive to the situation, and even sadistically 'joyful' for the victimizer. Some Nazi personnel seemed to have had an almost zestful approach to the brutality they expressed or the torment they inflicted.

Hilberg (1992), for example, indicates instances when Jewish children were "hurled live into pyres of burning corpses" (p. 53-54). Jews were sometimes referred to as "playthings." Freud's (1923/1960; 1930) emphasis on the sadism that was associated with the death drive came to mind frequently as I read these accounts. The victimizer's dominance of the victim and the latter's helplessness in the face of the victimizer's actions also were striking.

As Freud recognized and spoke of in his famous letter to Einstein (1933), life has its creative and forward-looking components, but it also has its necessary opposite pole that involves a drive toward destruction and death.The extreme dehumanization tactics of the Nazi era) activated a death drive that resulted in genocide.

Freud's formulation of the death drive can be placed within the trajectory of his life and work as a Jewish psychoanalyst who fled his home in Vienna, Austria, in 1938,

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shortly after receiving an ominous visit from the German Gestapo. He died in England in 1939, around the time the Second World War began. Freud had presented his ideas about the death instinct formally first in 1920 and continued to write about his ideas that a striving for death, sometimes expressed through aggression toward others, was an intrinsic part of the mental make-up of all people. I argue in this dissertation that the Holocaust, which he did not live to see, provides a case study of a modified form of his death instinct activated by extreme tactics used to dehumanize Jews.

I review Freud's own formulation of the death instinct/drive in this dissertation as well as some of the criticisms of it in Chapter 4 on the death drive, but focus more attention in this dissertation on the dynamics of extreme dehumanizing tactics, described above, that activate a death drive resulting in genocide. I focus on the stated justifications put forth by Nazi Germans using extreme dehumanizing tactics to justify genocide. These dehumanizing tactics suppress prohibitions against killing and, in the case of Nazi Germany, genocide. I also argue in this dissertation that severe forms of dehumanization may activate an extreme death drive that is inherent in us all. The Nazi era is used as a case study because it is the best known and probably best studied genocide in the history of the world

Freud's discussion of the death drive includes a recognition of its polar opposite, Eros, or the life force. Freud argued that the death drive and Eros were counterbalancing life forces. Eros is the force of creativity, growth and positive movement or change. Ideally, these two drives compensate for or balance each other. One can look at the Nazi era as a case study of how extreme dehumanizing tactics, such as unprovoked aggression against the Jews, forced relocation to ghettos, and revocation of citizenship and its

protections suppressed and even prohibited Eros, disabling its function of balancing the ever-present death drive.

Background of the Author

Using Nazi Germany as a case study for understanding how extreme dehumanizing tactics activate a death resulting in genocide is personally significant to me. I am a Jewish person whose personal narrative and sense of deep, personal involvement with the Jews (and others) lost in the Holocaust, has been strongly affected by the events of the Nazi era. My story and that of my immediate family has had a happier ending than was true for distant relatives who remained in Easern Europe after my immediate family had immigrated to America over several years, but especially in the 1920s.

I did not know very much about the Holocaust growing up in America, and I now realize my parents and grandparents probably did not want me to know too much about this period, a time of enormous sadness and loss, guilt and shame, a time of dehumanization and death that, as Holocaust scholars realize, is in some ways beyond comprehension. I hope that in the pages to follow, as I convey aspects of the dehumanizing tactics that led to genocide during the Nazi era in some depth, I am able to describe the phenomena involved and the relationship between these two overlapping entitites. It is a relationship that proceeds in a fairly straightforward manner from dehumanization that can generally be described in behavioral terms to the death drive, that was one of Freud's last metapsychological concepts, one that by its very nature and the anxiety that death invokes, may create reluctance and hesitancy in some who would approach it too closely.

Most of the chapters of this dissertation deal, at least in part, with the psychological tactics of dehumanization used by Nazi aggressors: the lies, the distortions, the false beliefs, the self-serving assurances that were intended to accomplish nefarious goals of dehumanization and sometimes death of the persecuted and the helpless. This dissertation therefore describes the dehumanizing psychological and behavioral strategies Nazi aggressors used to mislead themselves and others as they intensified processes of dehumanization, resulting in genocide.

The remainder of this chapter summarizes major points in each chapter in order to highlight: studies of antisemitism relevant for understanding the dehumanizing tactics of Nazi Germany (Chapter 2); psychological studies of dehumanizing tactics and Freud's death drive (Chapters 3 and 4); the case study of the Nazi era (Chapter 5), the dehumanizing and ultimately murderous aspects of medical procedures and medical experimentation to further Nazi ideology (Chapter 6), and the implementation of dehumanization in school-aged youth in Nazi Germany (Chapter 7). Chapter 8 concludes the dissertation, as I interpret the information presented and further elaborate on the thesis.

Chapter Two (Antisemitism)

This chapter provides a brief sketch of antisemitism across the millennia. Antisemitism in antiquity and antisemitism in modern times bear considerable resemblance. Blaming the Jews for problems in the "host" country, fearing that Jews will form coalitions with Jews in other countries against the host, tolerating (and blaming) the Jews for the financial rewards Jews bring to the host country are all part of the psychological tactics of dehumanization that protect a source of income for the ruling

group, while periodically turning angry mobs onto Jews as ways to divert attention from anger toward or disenchantment with the ruling class.

These issues have resonance with similar issues in antiquity. Exodus 1:8-11 describes the Hebrews' sojourn in Egypt that reflects themes that reverberate across the centuries. The exodus narrative is a good example of the dehumanization of a weaker group that has become problematic for the ruling group and the subjugation of those who are considered potentially disloyal and who might side with enemies of the host country. The bible passage describes thoughts attributed to the Pharaoh and the fears he had of these foreign people who had seemingly grown too strong and whose numbers must be limited.

Chapter 2 traces a similar pattern in the modern era and notes a change in host country tactics, if not strategy. Through what has come to be called political antisemitism, Jews ultimately became not an avowedly despised religion, but rather a despised race. As in biblical times, members of a minority that had been allowed or invited to live in the host country became a threat to insecure citizens and rulers of Germany, the host country—especially after the Enlightenment and emancipation had "threatened" to invigorate and raise Jews' status and privileges.

The Nazi era provided a harsh cessation to emancipation and emphasized the inferiority of the Jew in the eyes of the regime. A severe program of dehumanization was instituted in an attempt to force Jews to emigrate from Germany, a country whose new government wished it to become a pure Aryan nation. It did not matter that the Nazi conception of what "Aryan" meant was flawed or that imposed pseudo-Darwinian

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notions of Aryan supremacy were misunderstood and inappropriately applied to Darwinian theory.

Hitler considered Jews vermin, smelly, criminal and loathsome. These dehumanizing tactics were supported by the ideology of Hitler and his followers that Germans comprised a superior race and that others, such as Jews, were inferior—subhuman—and ultimately of no importance. Those Jews who did not or could not emigrate by the late 1930s or early 1940s were deported to concentration camps and ultimately killed. Dehumanization over several years involved severe social, economic, educational and professional restrictions, coupled with social isolation from other Germans. I describe the dynamics of this process of dehumanization and propose a modified understanding of the death drive that propelled the Nazi rulers' murderous impulses to kill the remaining Jews. An important contextual factor making the ultimate murder of Jews possible was the diversion of the average German's attention toward the war effort, leaving the Nazis to do as they wished with the Jews who were helpless victims.

Chapter Three (Dehumanization)

Chapter 3 focuses on the psychological process of dehumanization. Dehumanization is defined and described; its central features are highlighted. Research studies related to dehumanization are summarized. I provide my own definition of dehumanization that emphasizes the interactive power dynamics of dehumanization between victim and victimizer. I highlight historical factors that contributed to dehumanization in the Nazi era, such as longstanding antisemitism, reactionary responses to the emancipation of the Jews in the 19th century, and the rise of political antisemitism

in latter part of the 19th century. The National Socialist Party and Adolf Hitler represent the culmination of the dehumanizing power struggles of German politics of this period. Excerpts from Hitler's writings in *Mein Kampf* emphasize an ideology that led to the increasingly severe dehumanization of the Jews and, as I describe, the activation of the death drive during the Nazi era.

I also provide illustrations in Chapter 3 of the tactics used by Hitler, the Nazi Party and their sympathizers to justify the dehumanizing treatment of the Jews. These tactics involved psychological defenses that avoided personal or national responsibilities for the humiliation Germany experienced in World War I and the interwar years. Blaming Jewish people justified anger and rage at the loss of standing and position that Germany was forced to accept following its defeat in World War I. Other dehumanizing tactics included propaganda conveying unfounded assumptions of a worldwide plot of Jews to take over the world through extensive and nefarious financial dealings; beliefs that Jews, despite being only 1% of the German population (although closer to 15% in certain professions), were a threat to the civic and professional status of those identified as Aryans; and beliefs that Jewish males would 'seduce' and intermarry with women identified as Aryans, thus diluting pure Aryan blood (Hitler, 1925/1999). Of course, the greatest calumny, and the one seemingly closest to Hitler's (1925/1999) heart was that Germans represented the racially superior Aryan race that was eternally in conflict with Jews as members of the powerful but inferior Semitic race.

Dehumanization was a way the Nazi party was able to demonstrate to the German people and to Jews themselves that Jews were considered inferior to Germans. These tactics were intended to elevate the social and personal status of the dehumanizer and to

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blame the result of the dehumanizer's actions on the alleged misdeeds of culpable Jewish victims—a tactic that would presumably enhance the sense of superiority of ordinary Germans and reduce the sense of worth of the average Jew. Dehumanizing actions were intended also to justify to both groups why Germany was no place in which a Jew should or could live successfully.

The specific illustrations in Chapter 3 are taken from concentration camp survivor accounts. In discussing these illustrations, I provide more extensive comments about the tactics and effects of dehumanization.

Chapter Four (The Death Drive)

This chapter discusses the death instinct, or as it is more appropriately termed, the death drive. Sigmund Freud (1920) proposed the existence of a death instinct in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, in part to understand humankind's insistence on aggression and destruction as essential components of life. The concept of a death drive, counterbalanced by Eros or the life principle, was controversial from the beginning, with some analysts rejecting all or part of Freud's speculative assertions about the existence of a death drive (Freud, 1920; 1930).

I review several criticisms of Freud's conceptualization of the death drive in Chapter 4, many of which center on its unfounded speculations about an organism's purposeful attempts to return to inorganic roots. I provide my own modified definition of the death drive in which I attempt to avoid unfounded speculations that Freud proposed. Several associated features of the death drive are discussed in this chapter and emphasized in my discussion of illustrations from Holocaust survivors.

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In using Nazi Germany as a case study I illustrate how the aggression and violence of the death drive in Nazi Germany is frequently accompanied by torture, sadism, narcissistic enjoyment of the suffering of the victim, and a sense of omnipotence, as Freud described (1923/1960; 1930). In the extreme dehumanizing tactics used in Nazi Germany, the perpetrator (or killer) clearly is the master and the victim is the slave, a condition the perpetrator wishes to emphasize, at times gleefully. For example, the actions on the part of some German guards in concentration camps served no apparent rational or functional purpose. Their jocularity, sadistic amusement and torture may be understood as dehumanizing tactics that reinforced these German guards' sense of omnipotence and superiority, activating a death drive leading to genocide. Using dehumanizing tactics to reinforce Nazi Germany's 'omnipotence' was part of Hitler's (1925/1999) apparent goal that the Aryan people would live forever, but in order to do this they must fight and win the eternal struggle against the Jews.

The chapter highlights the psychology of the Nazi persecutors who used psychological defensive operations, such as denial and projection, to act as if Jews were the aggressors rather than the Germans themselves. These psychological tactics made some German people fear for their own existence and become enraged by the largely non-existent financial assault on their lives attributed to the Jews.

The dehumanizing tactics used by Nazi persecutors motivated Germans to "fight back"—to annihilate the Jew before the Jew's alleged actions, such as their alleged instigation of war, could annihilate the Germans. In this scenario, the German people would emerge victorious from this extreme power struggle—this deeply imaginary, magical, and unconscious battle for survival and dominance— as the Aryan masters of

the world and Jews would be dealt the retribution the German persecutor believed they had long deserved.

Another important question addressed in this chapter on the death drive is the role of prohibitions in making people strongly resistant to killing other people. The following studies on prohibitions against killing are reviewed: Grossman (1995), Browning (1992; 2017), Goldhagen (1997) and Hilberg (1992) and used to understand what happened to these prohibitions in Nazi Germany. Resistance to killing was overcome for those perpetrating murder and genocide in the Nazi era through combinations of propaganda emphasizing the evils of the adversary, acceptance of the dictates of authority, social pressure and personal concerns about various kinds of alleged threats to one's livelihood. The role of psychological defenses is important here also. Killers were often encouraged by Nazi authorities to believe that the Jews were responsible through their own acts for their own deaths, not the heavily armed, highly resourced German forces and their allies that performed actual executions of unarmed civilians.

I provide a number of illustrations in chapter four of the extreme dehumanizing tactics that activated a death drive resulting in genocide in the Nazi era. In one instance, Goldhagen (1997) describes a scene of mass slaughter in Kovno, Lithuania, where the butchery of Jews was open for all to see.

> The immediate assault upon the unsuspecting, unarmed, and obviously nonthreatening Jewish community occurred immediately after the German army marched into Kovno on the heels of the Soviet retreat. With German encouragement and support, Lithuanians, in a frenzied orgy of bludgeoning, slashing, and shooting, slaughtered 3,800 Jews in the city's streets. …the killings, whether wild or systematic, had a circus-like quality, with bystanders observing at their pleasure the slaying, the cudgeling to death of Jews, watching with approval as crowds once watched the gladiators slaying their beasts. (Goldhagen, 1997, p.191-92)

Goldhagen (1997) makes the point that many of the Germans delighted in, volunteered for, and enjoyed the killing. The Germans' "devotion to annihilating the Jews was such that they would even postpone operations against real partisans, against the people who posed a real military threat to them, in order to undertake search-and-destroy missions against the Jews" (Goldhagen, 1997, p. 228). The Germans used valuable resources, material and personnel, to further and complete the annihilation of the Jews when armed military might on eastern and western fronts threatened them. This zealous determination to pursue the murder of non-threatening victims suggests the insistent internal pressure that also is characteristic of the death drive.

Chapter Five (Case Study)

Chapter 5 utilizes the case study format to describe the persecution of the Jews in the Nazi era and to demonstrate the role of extreme dehumanization in activating the death drive resulting in genocide. The timeline of the increasingly severe dehumanization of the Jews and the activation of the death drive that led to the murder of one half of the Jewish population of Europe is presented in some detail, focusing on several domains: economic, political, social, religious, family and personal. The events of the Nazi era are divided into three periods: 1933-1938, 1938-1941, and 1941-1945. These periods reflect the increasingly severe dehumanization leading to activation of the death drive resulting in genocide.

The first of the three periods emphasized legislative actions and other restrictions and persecutions of Jews such as harassment, violence, and propaganda efforts to force emigration, a milder form of elimination of the population. The second period is a transition to increasingly more severe dehumanization and State-sponsored murder.

Kristallnacht or the Night of Broken Glass occurred during this time when it became clear that Jewish life in Germany was increasingly precarious. The first ghettos also were developed in this period. Coursing through the discussion in this chapter is an emphasis on the increasing social isolation of the Jewish population in Germany. The third period is a time of deportation, concentration camps and death for Jews who did not (or were not able to) emigrate from Germany and the lands Germany had annexed or conquered.

The intense misery, anguish and trauma expressed by the few Jewish survivors of the concentration camp experience is reflected in well-known lines from Elie Wiesel's (1958/2006) book, *Night*, and discussed in this chapter. Wiesel is describing his first night in Auschwitz, a concentration camp, as his mother and sisters are being taken toward the crematorium.

> Never shall I forget that smoke. Never shall I forget the small faces of the children whose bodies I saw transformed into smoke under a silent sky. Never shall I forget those flames that consumed my faith forever. Never shall I forget the nocturnal silence that deprived me for all eternity of the desire to live. Never shall I forget those moments that murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to ashes… (Wiesel, 1958/ 2006, p. 34)

These words express, in the context of this discussion, the consequences of extreme dehumanizing tactics activating the death drive that results in genocide. Although Wiesel was to have a highly productive life after his Holocaust experience, it is hard to imagine full recovery from the sense that life had deprived him of the potential for joy that the darkness, death, pain and loss such an experience would have instilled in him.

Chapter Six (Medical Implementation of Aryan Ideology; Experimentation)

Chapter 6 deals with medical programs of forced sterilization and "euthanasia" that involved State-sponsored medical efforts to limit the capacity of individuals whom medical authorities felt to be "unfit" to reproduce or to live in an Aryan society. These judgments were usually made because of severe medical or mental conditions. Those affected included Poles, criminals, Jews and others. This was not a program of voluntary euthanasia intended to relive suffering, but medically supervised programs of negative eugenics intended to limit what the Nazi party and affiliated physicians and authorities felt were individuals whose lives were not worth living, according to their subjective standards. I also discuss medical experimentation conducted mainly on Jewish prisoners in concentration camps in this chapter.

Hitler (1925/1999) strongly emphasized the importance of a "pure" Aryan society that limited the existence of medically or mentally severely ill or undesirable people. He also emphasized the importance of what he considered to be the medical nature of actions taken in support of his mistaken notions of Aryan superiority. The manner in which the various medically involved procedures were done entailed extreme dehumanization of the individual affected and his or her family, as well as of the society, all of whom were kept in the dark as much as possible about the killing of those individuals who were selected as unfit or unworthy of life.

Physicians played a major role in many of these medical programs, and as a group, were the most represented of the professions in Nazi party membership (Lifton, 2000; Pross, 1991). They were involved with the planning and implementation of medical programs around euthanasia, "selection" and implementation of "medical" executions in

concentration camps, and the horrendous experiments in institutions that were performed on captive prisoners who were usually Jewish.

The attraction that the Nazi party and its agenda had for many physicians has been thought due to several factors, including the biological orientation of physicians, an acceptance and value of authoritarian principles, and a willingness to consider Darwinian notions of survival of the fittest that were mistakenly applied to humans. Jews were relatively more represented in the medical profession than their numbers in society would suggest, and competition for patients among physicians during the difficult economic times between the world wars is another consideration.

Additional factors related to the willingness of physicians to develop and implement horrific medical programs that were unethical at best and highly torturous at worst may reflect additional psychological factors, including the impact on physicians of their work with disabled individuals and what I believe to be the physicians' susceptibility to the death drive that is perpetrated on incurable patients.

The death drive is another factor that must be considered in thinking of physicians' outsized role in Nazi medical policies. In this type of totalitarian government that constantly emphasizes the importance of eliminating the chronically ill for the sake of the society, the counterbalancing forces of Eros and caring to prohibit any expression of the usually unconscious death drive are diminished. Killing becomes more acceptable when dehumanizing tactics activate a death drive that results in murder and, in Nazi Germany, genocide. Physicians, influenced by Nazi ideology and propaganda, may believe that they are 'healing' the society by killing the impaired individual.

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It must be noted also that patients and individuals with severe disabilities that render them weak and dependent may elicit, in physicians, their own sense of helplessness and fear of dependency, as Klein (1946) suggested in discussion of her view of the death drive from developmental perspectives. The helplessness of the seemingly strong and powerful Nazi doctor from this perspective conceals unconscious attitudes of weakness and dependency that are stimulated by the medically ill patient. The tendency to destroy or kill that which is weak and helpless in these situations actually is, in part, an attempt to vicariously destroy or eliminate one's own weakness and potential dependency.

Nazi authorities and physicians recognized, however, that their view of "healing" would not be shared by those individuals with disabilities who had the mental capacity to understand their situations, by their families or by many in society (the bystanders). Those medical programs and procedures that produced great suffering and deaths were done in as much secrecy as possible. Even medical killing in concentration camps was shrouded from the outside world to the greatest degree possible. The dehumanization of Jewish prisoners in concentration camps whose deaths and "selections" were supervised by Nazi doctors is discussed more fully in other chapters. The dehumanization of medically ill German patients is discussed in this chapter, as is the dehumanization of families and community members (bystanders) who were involved directly or indirectly in these processes.

Chapter Seven (Dehumanization in School-aged Youth)

This chapter discusses the racially charged environment of school-aged children in Nazi Germany. This discussion emphasizes that Nazi Germany, in its vitriolic hatred

of Jews, required total commitment of the non-Jewish population to its view of Aryan supremacy. This resulted ultimately in the dehumanization of Jews from before their births to after their deaths.

Hitler (1925/1999) and the Nazi leadership were totally committed to the "education" of German youth in what they saw as the supremacy of the Aryan race and the perpetuation of Aryan blood. Public schools were a crucial vehicle in the attempt to achieve this end. The *Law Against Overcrowding of German Schools* that was passed months after Hitler ascended to power made clear the intention to eliminate Jews from public schools and to orient school curricula toward an immersion in race-based doctrine. Physical health and physical fitness also were stressed, while purely academic subjects such as science were de-emphasized. Teachers who were members of the Nazi party were preferred and Jewish or non-Nazi teachers were ultimately eliminated.

Attendance at school was required for children aged 7-14 years in Germany. In an environment emphasizing the ideology of Aryan supremacy, Jewish children were dehumanized, ostracized and humiliated. They were harassed, beaten and denigrated. In some instances, Jewish children were forced to sit on special benches, were banned from German lessons, were given poor marks on school work that was done well, heard teachers describing Jews as criminals or traitors, and were not allowed to participate in ceremonies, festivals, concerts or plays (Evans, 2005).

Grunberger (1995) provides an anecdote that describes the dehumanized condition of young Jewish children in this period. He writes of teachers' practice at Jewish kindergartens in Berlin "of letting their charges spend their playtime among

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tombstones: the communal cemetery was the only patch of green from which wearers of the Yellow Star were not debarred" (Grunberger, 1995, p. 460).

These practices of dehumanization and humiliation of young children in and outside of public schools resulted in the transfer of Jewish youth to Jewish schools and the large-scale emigration of Jews from Germany whenever possible. The latter was consistent with the strategy of the Nazi leadership that used dehumanizing tactics as a means to eliminate the Jews from the country. Those youth and their families who did not or could not emigrate ultimately were deported "to the East" to suffer the deadly fate of all concentration camp victims.

Chapter Eight (Conclusion)

The conclusion summarizes and provides an interpretation of the information presented in the dissertation, and provides an alternative way to understand the relationship between dehumanization and the death drive. It also offers thoughts for future study.

Chapter Two: Antisemitism: Important Themes from Antiquity through World War II

Introduction

For most of their 3000-year history, the people we now call Jews lived among other peoples who considered them (as they considered their "hosts") to be alien or different. Usually, but not always, at least in the common era (C.E.), this difference or "otherness" was understood to be the result of the practice of Judaism, a different religion from that of the nations within which Jews lived. With the Enlightenment and Jewish Emancipation in the 19th and 20th centuries, assumptions about race, rather than about religion, helped to maintain presumptions of difference and otherness between Jews and non-Jews. These presumptions frequently led to hostile interactions and prejudices against Jews who lived among larger and more powerful groups.

This chapter briefly reviews the history of these negative attitudes, prejudices and behaviors towards Jews throughout their history that have come to be termed "antisemitism." The chapter is not intended to be a comprehensive review of antisemitism across the ages. Rather, it is intended to be a précis of key issues in antisemitic thinking from antiquity through World War II that lays the groundwork for an understanding of the dehumanization and elimination or murder of Jews that occurred in the Nazi era and that are described in detail in subsequent chapters. Antisemitism in Germany, therefore, is emphasized; a brief summary of major periods in German history

is provided for context; and a sample of the writings of influential philosophers and others that bear on the Jewish Emancipation and/or on antisemitism in Germany is offered.

Jews had periodically been criticized as members of a different race for hundreds of years prior to the late 19th and 20th centuries (Landau, 1992/2016), but the notion that racial differences, rather than religious differences, were paramount in importance when considering the nature of Jews or Judaism reached its peak during this post Emancipation period. This view contributed to what has been termed "political antisemitism," a phenomenon emphasizing that different political parties and segments of society held different views on the nature of Judaism and that the fate of Jews living within the borders of nations should be determined through the rule of law rather than by monarchical dictate or divinely inspired fate.

Political or racial antisemitism, coupled with traditional antisemitism based on religious differences and prejudices against Jews by other peoples who usually lived in close proximity to them, set the stage for Nazism and the Holocaust that was to come in the middle of the 20th century. The doctrine or acceptance of a belief in racial superiority led directly to the notion that the German, an Aryan, was a member of a superhuman people while the Jew, a Semite, was a member of an inferior or infrahuman people.

There are certain common characteristics that will be emphasized in this chapter that define the nature of antisemitism through the ages. These characteristics include: a) domination over Jews, as a smaller, weaker group by a larger more powerful group that inhabited the nation or land Jews had come to call home (sometimes at the invitation of the dominant group); b) a sense of otherness and alienation of a stateless people who

were ripe for exploitation and blame from a more powerful citizenry that was able to use the Jewish people as a vehicle for the expression of internal and external problems that had little to do with the Jews themselves; c) frequent charges that Jews, living in a widely dispersed diaspora, were rootless and "wanderers," having no particular loyalty to any country; and d) that Jews living in one region or country could and would plot with other Jews in a different country to gain, financially, at the expense of the host countries in which the Jews lived.

It is useful to note that while particularities and situations are important in understanding antisemitism across time, it is also true, as Ettinger (1988) says in speaking about antisemitic writings that "…anyone who reads anti-semitic writings of ancient times and then examines anti-Jewish arguments of the Middle Ages and the nineteenth and twentieth centuries will be astonished by the similarity of their arguments and reasoning" (p. 4). These patterns of domination of the powerful over the weak, of projection of blame onto those least able to defend themselves and of suspiciousness of the motives of the "other" are likely to be found more broadly in a discussion of prejudice on national or international levels, although the specific focus here is on the assumptions about, and the treatment and fate of the Jews, in the years before and during the Nazi era in Germany.

Antisemitism is a term that should be clarified at the outset. It is now applied to anti-Jewish and anti-Judaic attitudes and behaviors over the course of Jewish history. In actuality the term is more recent, having been coined by Wilhelm Marr, a German journalist, in 1878, and subsequently applied to prejudice against Jews through the millennia. Jews, in fact, are not considered a separate race or racial group by scholars or

anthropologists; "The terms Semitic and Aryan refer, not to racial categories of people, but to groups of languages, Hebrew and Arabic being Semitic tongues" (Landau, 2016, p. 29). These are facts that unfortunately were not accepted by what the Nazi party believed to be the "scientific racism" of the late 19th and early-mid 20th centuries. In actuality, as the book burnings in Germany at the beginning of the Nazi era in 1933 demonstrated, Nazi attitudes about race reflected not science but misunderstood and misapplied notions about evolution.

The Jewish people seem originally to have been a Mediterranean division of the Caucasian race. Jews are not a homogeneous group phenotypically or genotypically. After the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E. and the suppression of the Bar-Kokhba rebellion in 132 C.E., Jews, who already lived in some communities outside of the Holy Land, scattered across much of the known world. This dispersion is an important ingredient in the antisemitism noted above, but it is also important in understanding the varied physical appearances of Jews, where factors such as conversion, intermarriage, and rape have contributed to a biological mixing of Jews with local populations. This mixing of Jews and people in the lands of the Jewish diaspora over time has made it impossible to distinguish Jews from other local inhabitants of distant places (Landau, 2016), a fact that became apparent when Nazi doctors and scientists attempted unsuccessfully to establish defining physical differences between Jews and non-Jews in Nazi Germany (Cohen, 1990).

Antisemitism Across the Millennia

     Antiquity Through the Middle Ages.

Although the Hebrew Bible speaks of God's promise that the people whom we now call Jews would be given the land for as far as the eyes could see (Gen. 13:14-17), they were never the sole inhabitants of this Middle Eastern land of the Levant we now call Israel. Hostilities between the Jews and other Semitic peoples, such as the Canaanites and Edomites, were the rule. Famine also was present in this Promised Land and the Bible records a legendary experience of being the "other" when Jews lived among sometimes hostile strangers during a several century sojourn in the land of Egypt. This residence in a foreign land ended in hostility with the persecution of the Israelites and their ultimate escape from their former benefactors into the desert that was to be their home for forty years. The following biblical narrative and interpretation are instructive for an understanding of events to come:

> Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. He said to his people, 'Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and more powerful that we. Come let us deal shrewdly with them, or they will increase and, in the event of war, join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land.' Therefore they set taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labor…. (Ex. 1:8-11)

These aspects of the Egyptian sojourn broadly reflect characteristics of the antisemitic attitudes noted above. Jews were a minority that initially was welcomed into a foreign land, but later came to be feared and ostracized by the majority; Jews were used by the "host" country for labor or taxes; Jews engendered suspicion although it is not clear if this was because they practiced a different religion (monotheism or henotheism) or that they did not adopt the majority's polytheism.

The escape from Egypt and return of the Jews to the Promised Land was not without further conflict, albeit with different groups. Various tribes or nationalities, such as the Canaanites and Edomites, were never fully conquered, and the Israelites lived uneasily in the land that these other people claimed as their own. Finally, the legendary King David established a Kingdom that was expansionist and fought to establish and maintain its own identity.

In fairly short order, however, this Kingdom divided into Northern and Southern parts, both of which were conquered by larger empires to their east. The Northern Kingdom was conquered by Assyria, and its people were exiled to that country in the 7th century B.C.E. Later, in the 6th century B.C.E., after the Southern Kingdom was defeated by Babylonia, many of the people were deported to Babylonia. This initiated a roughly half century of exile and subjugation that, for many of their descendants, extended into a several hundred years period of diaspora and life among a far larger and more powerful empire that had different gods and customs.

Later, in 540 B.C.E., the Babylonian empire fell to the Persian Empire. Cyrus, the conquering ruler, permitted Jews and other peoples who had been deported from ancestral places to return to their homes in distant lands. The Jewish Temple that had been destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.E. was rebuilt in what was a relatively tolerant period of Persian rule for the next few centuries until Alexander the Great conquered the Persian empire in 331 B.C.E. and established control over the land of Israel. After Alexander's death in 323 B.C.E., the Jewish homeland was ruled successively by the Ptolemies and Seleucids until the latter were conquered by the Romans in the middle of the first century B.C.E. (Jaffee, 2006).

While not independent under Persia, the Jews were even less so under the Greeks. Internal conflicts, verging on civil war, centered in part on the issue of assimilation to the ideals and practices of the Greek state. This fostered a counter-reaction and the rise of the Maccabean revolt in 167 B.C.E. that was followed by a period of independence for the Jews.

Independence was short lived, however, as the Roman empire became ascendant. Roman rule over the land of Israel involved a series of conflicts, maladroit leaders, and ultimately a rebellion by the Jews. Continued opposition to Roman rule, rebellion in the first century C.E. that ultimately led to the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E., and a second disastrous rebellion that ended in 132 C.E. caused the banishment of the Jews from Jerusalem for a year and fostered their dispersion to other lands where their fate as outsiders without a homeland was highly variable.

From the Roman perspective, Jews seem to have been separatists, people "organized in their communities, living according to their customs, and demanding privileges based upon their religious tradition and a way of life molded by that tradition" (Stern, 1988, p. 15). Further, Jewish communities within the Roman empire had "very close ties with the religio-national center in Judaea… this connection was institutionalized to a great extent…" (Stern, 1988, p. 15). The perception was reinforced that Jews were separate and wished to remain apart from the dominant community. Indeed, "the religious and social separatism of the Jews was an argument used by their opponents" (Stern, 1988, p. 15). It was an argument based on a pattern of separation from the larger, non-Jewish community in the diaspora that sometimes was desired by the Jews and sometime required of them.

From the Roman perspective, there presumably was always the danger of cultural contagion or contamination. This remained true through the ages. Jews, at the time of the Roman empire, were thought to be proselytizers and this would have engendered hostility from the polytheistic Roman society. "It certainly is not accidental that antisemitism in Latin literature became fiercest in the period that Jewish penetration of the various levels of Roman society reached its peak" (Stern, 1988, p. 25). Prominence of the oppressed Jewish minority in this case, as was true in post Emancipation Germany nearly two thousand years later, was considered an existential threat to the status quo of both the host society and the Jewish minority.

The attitude of the larger Greco-Roman world towards the Jews at this time (and earlier) suggests that considerable conflict and competition existed between the polytheistic and monotheistic religions (Ettinger, 1988), but the ascendancy of Christianity as a monotheistic religion changed the character of the conflict with polytheistic Rome for religious adherents. "Christianity began to exploit the hostility to Judaism already widespread in Greco-Roman society in order to win support and popularity among the very extensive circles in which scorn or opposition to Judaism were already deeply rooted" (Ettinger, 1988, p.10). Church fathers often portrayed Jews in an entirely negative light. As Christianity spread in Europe

> the clergy became the bearers of the religious, cultural and ethical values of the entire people…. the negative stereotype of the Jews, crystallized in their writings and sermons, became the cultural 'baggage' of medieval Europe. (Ettinger, 1988, p. 10)

Scapegoating of Jews became a convenient means of redirecting anger and frustration from a host of life's problems, including the oppression of the people by unscrupulous landowners.

The separation between Judaism and Christianity was not accomplished rapidly, and ties persisted for many years. Separation and the potential for conflict became stronger in the 4th century C.E. when the emperor, Constantine, clearly favoring Christianity (and later, himself, converting to Christianity), promulgated an edict that gave Christians the right to practice their religion openly. Judaism suffered through Constantine's actions that were not only strongly pro-Christian but also anti-Jewish. This combination of hostility from both Christian clergy and Roman emperor was a volatile mix that held considerable threats for the Jewish population. Jews were portrayed as being unscrupulous, deicides, and a people forsaken by God. Later, in the Middle ages, usury, the practice of black magic and surreptitious relations with the Devil were charges added to the earlier prejudices (Ettinger, 1988).

Rokeah (1988) argues, also, that as contacts between Christians and Jews decreased over the early centuries of the Common Era, hatred expressed by Christians toward Jews increased. He believed that Christians came to despair of ever converting the Jewish people to Christianity, and therefore felt free to express their resentments toward their former co-religionists. A negative, demonic image of the Jew thus arose from these resentments (Rokeah, 1988). From this perspective, Christianity was dependent on Judaism and on the conversion of Jews to Christianity. "Since the origins of Christianity and the path to Christianity were intertwined with the Holy Scriptures of the Jews, the Jews' very existence, even without any action on their part, constituted a problem for the

Church" (Rokeah, 1988, p. 63). This "failure" of Jews "to see the light" was an important, albeit partial, explanation for much of the antisemitism through the ages, including that of the modern era and of the Middle Ages that is discussed presently.

Despite these tensions in the early Middle Ages, however, relations between Christians and Jews were often relatively harmonious for several centuries when Christianity was establishing itself as a dominant force in the western world.

The second half of the first millennium of the Common Era saw additional conflict and war as a new religious player entered the scene. Islam became a force during this time and ultimately became the dominant religion in the Arabian Peninsula. Jews and Christians were tolerated groups under Islam, although they were not considered equal to Muslims. As *dhimmi*, or protected people able to retain their original faith, they nonetheless had to pay extra taxes and obey certain restrictions.

Relationships in Europe with Christians became more contentious around the beginning of the second millennium of the Common Era. The church hierarchy, with increasing political power, opposed Jewish ownership of land. The Church also refused to allow Christians to charge other Christians interest on loans. This shifted economic practices between Jews and Christians. Increasingly, Jews became associated with financial practices, such as money lending, that Christians demeaned and that inevitably engendered anger and mistrust in Christian communities (Landau, 2016). As would be expected, this practice of lending to Christians and thereby having financial control over them, along with the excoriation of Jews as Christ-killers because of the charge that all Jews, for all time, were responsible for the events of almost one thousand years previously, provided fertile soil for the onset of more virulent anti-Jewish actions.

The Middle Ages were a time of often harsh and bitter enmity on the part of the Church towards the Jews (Landau, 2016). Jews became increasingly identified as "Christ killers" and as agents of the Devil. The situation was highly variable, however, depending on time and place. Medieval Spain, under Muslim rule, was far more hospitable to Jews than other areas of Europe that were under Christian control. Jews prospered under Muslim rule and engaged actively in government, civic, professional and cultural life.

The Crusades that occurred roughly at this time were ostensibly intended to win back the Christian holy land from the Muslim infidels. They failed in this purpose but established with clarity the enmity of many Christians for Jews who were massacred in their villages along the route of the Crusaders. The Crusades, from the Jewish perspective, were associated with "plundered homes, broken lives and… a new and depressing era for the Jewish people" (Landau, 2016, p. 42). This was an era that included "forced conversion, mass expulsion, and pariah status" (Landau, 2016, p. 42). Persecutions, expulsions and massacres were a not uncommon occurrence during the Middle Ages, the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492 being the most well-known.

Christianity reconquered much of Spain in 1300 C.E., however, and the treatment of Jews deteriorated. The Church made great efforts to convert Jews, and when the sincerity of the conversion and beliefs in Christianity were doubted, Jews were dealt with harshly, ultimately through torture and death in the Inquisition, which aimed to root out those *conversos* who were felt to be false or insincere converts to Christianity. Finally, as indicated earlier, at least 150,000 Jews were expelled from Spain in 1492. At this time, "there was a discernible racial ingredient in the manic rooting out of Jewish influence… which, to some extent anticipate the later 'biological' criteria of the Nazi genocide"

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(Landau, 2016, p. 42). Conversos were felt to have different physical characteristics, such as in their blood lines, that distinguished them from Christians who were not conversos. Increasingly, Jews held a subservient and reviled status in their communities through much of Europe. In 1215, for example, Pope Innocent III decreed that Jews must wear a special badge that distinguished them from Christians, an insignia reminiscent of the badges required elsewhere in Christian lands and notoriously in Nazi held lands in World War II and before.

Other calumnies, not tempered by any attempt at fact or truth, were characteristic of the treatment of Jews in the Middle Ages. The Black Death ravaged Europe in the 14th century, killing almost one quarter of the population. The Church chose to blame this tragedy on Jews, considered emissaries of Satan (Landau, 2016). Another calumny occurring at about this time was the "blood libel" accusation that Jews kidnapped and murdered Christian children in order to use their blood for ritual purposes. The diabolical Jew, in this scenario, was accused of abducting a Christian child, usually a prepubescent male, and murdering him, thus enacting symbolically the crucifixion of Christ. The child's blood, drained from his body, was supposedly used in the preparation of the unleavened bread (Matzot) of Passover (Landau, 2016). This and other false and scurrilous claims were widely debunked but nevertheless persistent.

Enlightenment and Post-Enlightenment Periods

The coming of the period of Enlightenment in the 17th-18th centuries was a hopeful sign for many Jews and others that a new era of tolerance for their religious beliefs would ensue. This hopefulness was not fulfilled, however, and much prejudice continued. In Germany, especially, the Enlightenment and later period of Emancipation

were slower to be accepted than in other Western European countries, and the economic and professional progress that was ultimately made by Jews was both conspicuous and resented (Landau, 1992/2016).

Given Germany's central role in the Nazi era and the period leading up to it, a brief digression and sketch of important aspects of Germany's history provides context for understanding later events of the Nazi era.

The land that we now call Germany has a long history that dates to prehistoric times. The borders of this land, situated in central Europe, have shifted frequently. There are major regional differences that are based less on geography than on various political, cultural or socioeconomic conditions (Fulbrook, 2019).

In the Roman era, this land mass was called Germania. During the medieval period, an imperial structure provided a loose framework for the many principalities and territories that constituted what became the "Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation" in 962, an entity that lasted until 1806 (Fulbrook, 2019, pp. 16-31). A high point of this period that was characterized by a decentralized Germany was the reign of the Great Emperor Frederick Barbarossa in what has been considered "a golden age of imperial greatness" and a high point of Germanic civilization to that point. Imperial powers declined in relation to princely territories in the late 14th and early 15th centuries, however, but Germany continued to have a less centralized form of governance than other European regional powers, such England and France.

In the 16th century, Martin Luther initiated the Reformation when he wrote a series of ninety-five theses alleging abuses by the Catholic Church and posted these for public viewing on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg in 1517 (Fulbrook, 2019).

This, and ensuing events, shattered European cultural and religious unity and led to the major and seemingly "unbridgeable schism" in Christianity in Europe that has continued to the present.

The Thirty Years' war that followed in the 17th century (1618-1648) was the result of numerous factors, of which religious differences certainly played a part (Fulbrook, 2019). This lengthy conflict was very divisive for Europe, with enormous casualties and devastation. It finally was settled with the Peace of Wesphalia in 1648. This settlement was a compromise to address conflicts among Protestants themselves and between Protestants and Catholics. It attempted to address broader European conflicts as well, but this attempt was less successful. The Peace of Westphalia remained the essential constitution of the German Empire until the Empire itself was abolished in 1806.

Military and political conflicts continued over the ensuing years, and it became clear over time that although there were numerous regions and principalities in Germany, two main power centers had arisen in Germany: a militaristic northern German region under Prussian domination and a southern German region under Austrian domination.

Napoleon's invasion of the region in the early 19th century initiated major and lasting changes that spurred revolutionary, nationalistic goals in Germany and elsewhere in Europe. As Fullbrook (2019) puts it: "attacked, overrun, occupied, reorganized, exploited, provoked, shaken up, by 1815 Germany emerged in very different shape; and the Holy Roman Empire, which had served as its loose political framework for so many centuries, had gone" (p. 96). As would be the case a century later after the end of World War I, political expectations of nations changed dramatically.

After Napoleon was defeated, there was an attempt to unite the German territories into an Austrian-led alliance of German states at the Congress of Vienna in 1815 that was strongly influenced by the Austrian chancellor and foreign minister, Klemens von Metternich (Fulbrook, 2019). One result of the Congress was the establishment of a German Confederation that replaced the Holy Roman Empire. The Confederation was a loose federation of numerous states and four free cities.

The period from the Congress of Vienna, to a series of revolutions that occurred among German states in 1848 is considered a period of transition (Fulbrook, 2019). In this time, the strength of Prussia increased significantly, setting up a potential confrontation with the southern state of Austria. Industrialization and conservative political orientations were two important aspects of this transitional period.

 1848 was a year of revolution across German territories (Fulbrook, 2019). Social unrest, political strivings for constitutional reforms, economic freedoms, and nationalism that involved German unification were all themes that drove the unrest of this time. Conservative leadership managed to put down areas of unrest, although some reforms did persist (such as economic liberalization).

The rise of a militarized Prussian state under the chancellorship of Otto von Bismarck resulted in the formation of a German empire in 1871 that was ruled by a Prussian monarch. This empire, whose unification had been delayed compared to other European territories, was highly industrialized, militarized and nationalistic in orientation.

Unification in 1871 resulted in the submission of smaller states of southern and central Germany (save for Austria) to the leadership of Prussia in foreign affairs, defense

and the economy (Landau, 1992/2016). Germany, thus became an empire or federation in

under Prussian leadership. This unification was accomplished through Prussian

engagement in a series of brief wars in the preceding years. In 1866, Austria was defeated

in a war with Prussia that upended Austria's domination of southern German states and

allowed Prussia to dominate these states as well. France was defeated in another brief war

with Prussia in 1870, thus cementing Germany's position as Europe's foremost power.

As Fulbrook (2019) notes, however, German unification in 1871 was more an expression

of "Prussian expansionism and colonisation of non-Prussian Germany, in rivalry with an

excluded Austria" than an expression of German nationalism (p. 125). Germany,

nonetheless was now united, and a great industrial and military force in Europe.

Although Germany had finally achieved unification in 1871, it found itself in a

period of continual crisis, both politically and socially. Regionalism, economic

difficulties, and religious conflicts all surfaced. Urbanization, modernization and

industrialization all contributed to potential social upheaval. This crisis continued beyond

World War I, through the Kaiserreich (the second Reich or empire) and the later ill-fated,

democratic and socially liberal Weimar Republic that proved ineffectual and unable to

unify and address the country's many problems. The Republic finally collapsed and was

replaced by single-party rule with Adolf Hitler as Chancellor in January, 1933 (Landau,

1992/2016). Hitler, of course, began to initiate a highly conservative, antisemitic agenda

that would initially unify the country, destroy opposition groups, temporarily improve

Germany's economic condition, and ultimately lead the country and much of the world

into a ruinous war that dehumanized, enslaved and killed millions.

Enlightenment, Emancipation, Early-Mid 19th Century Philosophical and Political Writings.

The latter part of the 19th century, therefore, witnessed enormous social and political changes in Germany. The period of the Enlightenment and Jewish Emancipation that was associated with greater assimilation of Jews into the mainstream proceeded along with alienation and prejudice noted earlier. Older and newer forms of antisemitism (involving claims of racial inferiority of Jews) came to the fore in what became known as political antisemitism (R. S. Landau, 1992/2016) that is described below.

The Enlightenment had promised a change in how human beings viewed themselves, their world, and their gods. Humankind would now apply reason and scientific thought to human problems, creating a better world for all. Rationality, tolerance, and skepticism of old beliefs were what was important for the enlightened person, country, and civilization. Traditional religion was viewed more skeptically by many (including the Founding Fathers of the United States). The church came to have diminished authority over people's lives.

The values and ideals associated with the Enlightenment had far reaching consequences throughout western societies. They went hand-in-hand with the lessening of social, economic and political restrictions on the Jewish people that occurred along with the uneven and incomplete Emancipation of the Jews in Europe that occurred roughly during this same period. Depending on the countries involved, Jews increasingly had greater freedom of movement and enjoyed integration into the social, civic and economic activities of European societies. They were more welcome in urban life and less restricted to ghettos.

The writings of Johann von Herder (1744-1803), an influential German philosopher, convey this sense of openness to various religions and beliefs that were characteristic of the Enlightenment (Foster, 2019). Von Herder's views, for the most part, reflected the aspirations of the humanity that he thought was nature's highest achievement. He believed in equality, individualism and freedom, but rejected notions of racial superiority that would form a crucial aspect of the beliefs of political and racial antisemitism of a century later. Herder (1784/1800) wrote that "Every man is ultimately a world, in external appearance indeed similar to others, but internally an individual being, with whom no other coincides" (p. 139). Nations, cultures, and individuals differed, but these differences were the result of innate differences and cultural experiences that did not reflect innate superiority or inferiority. People had infinite variety and infinite individuality.

Von Herder (1784/1800) argued that there is no such thing as immutability, contradicting Hitler's (1925/1999) later arguments in *Mein Kampf* that Jews were the eternal enemy of the Aryan people. For von Herder, to consider Jews (or any other group) the eternal enemy of the German people was a misunderstanding of the nature of life. "The whole course of a man's life is change; the different period of his life are tales of transformation and the whole species is one continued metamorphosis" (von Herder, 1784/1800, p. 140). For von Herder (1784/1800), "*all mankind are only one and the same species*" (p. 140). There is homogeneity to the human species. He goes on to write:

> For each genus Nature has done enough, and each has given its proper progeny… O Man, honor thyself. Neither the pongo nor the gibbon is thy brother; the American and the Negro are; these therefore thou shouldst not oppress, or murder, or steal, for they are men like thee… (von Herder, 1784/1800, p. 141)

Equality among all peoples was a desired principle of the Enlightenment, and von Herder espouses this strongly.

Von Herder (1784/1800) also was a humanist who did not believe in exclusion or elimination of supposed enemies. He was not a racist, and in contrast to the racist beliefs of those rightists, Nazi sympathizers and Nazis who would become powerful in German in the latter part of the 19th century and beyond, he wrote, "I could wish the distinctions between the human species that have been made from a laudable zeal for discriminating science not be carried beyond due bounds" (p. 141). von Herder clearly did not wish to be seduced by a science that would come to support racist beliefs.

For von Herder (1784/1800), humans "are at last but shades of the same great picture, extending through all ages and overall parts of the earth" (p. 142). Innate superiority of one nation or group over another nation or group does not exist. Humanity develops through the exercise of reason, not, as the Nazis of a century later thought, through the perfection of one race and the elimination of another.

Von Herder is emphatic on the importance of reason for the progress of human civilization. He states: "*The human Race is destined to proceed through various Degrees of Civilization, in various Mutations; but the Permanency of its Welfare is founded solely and essentially on Reason and Justice*" (von Herder, 1784/1800, p. 384). Reason and justice were values espoused in the Enlightenment along with tolerance, individualism and a belief in human progress.

Auguste Comte (1798-1857) was an early-mid 19th century philosopher who also had an abiding belief in the intellectual progress of humankind. Comte was a French philosopher who is considered the father of sociology and "positive" philosophy. He is

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also considered instrumental in the development of the philosophy of science (Bordeau (2021). Comte's (1830/1988) *Cours de Philosophie Positive*, written over the course of more than 10 years, is a major work in which Comte emphasizes that all branches of knowledge evolve through three stages: the theological or fictitious, the metaphysical or abstract, and the scientific or positive approach (Comte/Ferre, 1988). In the third or what Comte (1830) called the "positive" stage, knowledge is evaluated based on observable criteria to which judgment and reasoning are applied. This development is what Comte considered a "general law of mental development." He argued that the evaluation of information according to these criteria is crucial for acceptance of and belief in the information presented.

The sciences or subjects Comte mentions that are applicable to positive philosophy are astronomy, physics, chemistry, and physiology. Comte (1830) argues that social phenomena also should be subject to positive philosophy and the empiricism and reasoning that it advocates, although this field of "social physics" (Comte/Ferre, 1988) is not yet at the level of the other sciences.

Comte is optimistic about the future of positive philosophy, emphasizing that positive philosophy had begun to "assert itself in the world, in evident opposition to the theological and metaphysical spirit" that he criticizes (Comte/Ferre, 1988, p. 11). Religious beliefs, myths and legends should not be accepted as facts, according to this view.

Comte (1830) describes positive philosophy as a "fundamental mental revolution" (p. 11). He goes on to say that "it only remains to complete the system of observational sciences by the foundation of social physics" (p. 13), by which he means "the study of

social phenomena" (p. 30). It is apparently through his interests in the application of positive philosophy and the empirical approach to social phenomena that Comte earns his reputation as the father of sociology.

Comte is in fact considered both a philosopher of science and a social philosopher. He wished to bring positive philosophy and observational data to human society. These goals were far reaching and included a reorganization of society according to a political philosophy that involved a study of social development and a program for social change based on humanistic principles (Bordeau, 2020).

Comte's goals were lofty, but their lack of specificity and potential for misunderstanding have been criticized (Bordeau, 2020). Who is to determine the ultimate goals and direction of a society? Who will enforce actions based on these goals? Do Comte's views open the society to the imposition of the will of the stronger onto that of the weaker? An extreme and distorted example of the direction Comte's goals might be taken occurred during the Nazi era that is being studied here. Dictatorial leadership decided that the Nazi agenda was of a higher moral value than democratic ideals. The Nazi government intended to remake society and to eliminate all Jews. Nazi leaders argued that these goals were justified based on their "knowledge" and observations that Jews were inferior and that they had corrupted Germany and the world through activities such as dishonest financial practices. Clearly Jews (and many others) would argue otherwise. Whose views should prevail? As Bordeau (2020) states, Comte's positive philosophy, while having much to recommend it in terms of encouraging rational judgment in society, also can be criticized for a seeming openness to dictatorship and minimization of human rights.

These promises of Enlightenment thinking, with their emphases on the individual and on freedom of expression and equality, remained to a large degree unfulfilled. In Germany, questions of racial superiority became important. The mid 19th century writer, Arthur Gobineau, represents a rejection of Enlightenment values, at least in terms of human equality.

Arthur de Gobineau (1816-1882) was an influential aristocrat, diplomat and traveler who took a deep interest in racial differences among groups. He is considered a proponent of "scientific racism," the belief that biologically determined racial differences explain why some groups, countries and civilizations thrive and others do not. In words that sound strikingly like those of Adolph Hitler three quarters of a century later, Gobineau (1853/1854) states,

> the racial question overshadows all other problems of history, that it holds the key to them all, and that the inequality of the races from whose fusion a people is formed is enough to explain the whole course of its destiny. (p. ix)

Gobineau (1853/1854) emphasizes that societies do not fail because of fanatical behavior, luxurious living, corruption of the morality of the people or religious differences; they do not fail because of poor governance. Societies and civilizations fail because of racial mixing, degeneration and dilution of the purity of their race (Gobineau, 1853/1854).

De Gobineau's (1853/1854) conclusions were seemingly based on his own observations, experiences and personal anthropological studies. They convinced him that "degeneration" among racial groups was due to mixing of the races that resulted ultimately in the reduction of intellectual capabilities and other positive qualities in "hybrid" peoples. De Gobineau (1853/1854) argued there were three main racial groups:

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white, black and yellow. Intermingling among these groups had been widespread and deleterious for humankind.

For de Gobineau (1853/1854), the three races differed in numerous ways, physically, socially and intellectually. He argued that the white group was the most advanced and influential in terms of world history and that it had contributed to the majority of civilizations in the world. Arguing, at least in part from a biblical perspective and using biblical terms, de Gobineau claimed that Adam was a white man (i.e., a Caucasisn, Semite or Japhetic) who was the first human. At some point, a splitting off or branching from the original white race occurred. Other racial groups, that he terms "black" (e.g. the Hamites) and "yellow" (e.g. the Mongols) were then formed (p. 143).

De Gobineau's view of human racial evolution, therefore, involved an initial biblical event (the creation of a white man) that was a monogenetic event to explain the origin of the races. This event was followed at some point by a division of humankind into the three distinct races mentioned above, thus conceptualizing a polygenetic origin of the races.

De Gobineau (1853/1854) argues that among the many ways racial groups that have been hybridized for generations can still be distinguished is through their speech and language development. He emphasizes that language also helps distinguish the allied feature of intelligence, which, along with language differences, provides convincing support for the racial superiority of the Caucasian group. In his view, "with regard to the special character of races, philology confirms all the facts of physiology and history" (de Gobineau, 1853/1854, p. 197). De Gobineau (1853/1854) goes on to say that:

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there is a perfect correspondence between the intellectual virtues of a race and those of its native speech; that languages are, in consequence, unequal in value and significance, unlike in their forms and basic elements, as races are also; that their modifications… like people's blood, disappear or become absorbed, when they are swamped by too many heterogeneous elements… (p. 198)

The mixing of races for de Gobineau, as it was for Hitler decades later, creates lesser forms of humankind. There is of course no evidence for this assertion.

The white race, for de Gobineau (1853/1854), has been shown by history to be the most influential of the three races. He says,

All civilizations derive from the white race, that none can exist without its help, and that a society is great and brilliant only so far as it preserves the blood of the noble group that created it, provided that this group itself belongs to the most illustrious branch of our species. (de Gobineau, 1853/1854, p. 209)

De Gobineau is speaking here of the "branch" of the white race known as "Aryans," although he does not define this group in any detail, save for its seeming origins on the Indian Continent and its association with the Germanic races among others. He provides no proof for these assertions, however.

De Gobineau (1853/1854) was highly influential in the 19th century and beyond. He was widely studied by late 19th century political racists and later by Nazi party members and sympathizers. His assertions, as noted above, often read like passages from *Mein Kampf,* especially when Hitler (1925/1999) writes about Aryan superiority and the dangers of racial mixing and the "monstrosities" that are borne of the mixing of races.

De Gobineau's racial theories, inappropriately presented as facts, would seem to have had the potential to incite those who wished to believe themselves members of a "master" or superior race to protect or defend their "superior" status at all costs from contamination or mixing with other races. Incitement of this type did indeed happen later

in the Nazi era as racists, using the work of de Gobineau and others, fueled the anxieties of some Germans about intermarriage with Jews, who were considered racially lesser than the Aryan, but still white.

Political and Racial Antisemitism in the Late 19th and 20th Centuries Prior to the Nazi's Rise to Power. Anti-semitic Writings, *Mein Kampf*.

By the 1870s, however, the promise of the Enlightenment and the Jewish emancipation into full civic life had become controversial within German society. The great forward movement of a society without irrational prejudices and old Jewish blasphemies, such as the blood libel described earlier, gave way to increased anti-Jewish sentiments. These new denigrations included the "old" prejudices and outlandish beliefs of centuries past but added new deceits to them.

Wilhelm Marr, a German journalist and antisemitic writer, coined the neologism, "anti-Semitism" in 1878 to describe the activities and behaviors of individuals who propagated these calumnies against Jews. Antisemitism in European countries seemed especially strong in Germany. Marr's term spread in part through the actions of the newly founded German Anti-Semitic League that focused on alleged racial distinctions between Jews and Aryans (MacMaster, 2001, p. 94). In addition to the old Jewish stereotypes about blood libels, Christ-killers, and the personification of devils to contend with, Jews were assaulted with more contemporary accusations than hitherto, including that Jews were interested in world-wide dominance, and that there was a world-wide cabal of Jews who were plotting to control the world through economic and financial tyranny. Jews, in this line of thinking, were not interested in the volkish or folk traditions of Germany, which were anathema to them (and with which they could not identify), but aligned

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themselves only with a secular state, modernity, and an urban way of life. They were felt to have no regard for German tradition.

It did not matter to individuals who were prejudiced or frightened about their own station in life if these characterizations were hyperbolic or false, or that the assumptions and term "antisemitism" was inappropriate since it did not accurately describe a people or apply to other "Semites," such as Arabs. The term "antisemitic" achieved wide usage and came to be applied not only to anti-Jewish activities of the 19th and 20th centuries, but, as noted earlier, to all anti-Jewish activities throughout history. Mass murders of Jews during the Crusades would, in this way of thinking, have been antisemitic acts although Christians of the time would have considered them actions against Jews, whom they believed were Christ-killers.

The term "antisemitic" had another advantage for anti-Jewish groups in the late 19th and 20th centuries. Terms such as Semitic and Aryan were used by Nazis in Germany and their predecessors, followers, and sympathizers to denote erroneous assumptions about racial differences among people. For rightwing political and social groups of this time, the term antisemitic did not necessarily imply actions or beliefs taken against those espousing Judaism as a religion. The term antisemitism conveyed an animus against a racial group, the Semites, who, as Hitler (1925/1999) indicates in *Mein Kampf*, were considered the eternal enemy of the Aryan race, and its "mightiest counterpart," a consideration that would have been inconceivable to Jews, themselves who, as described later, were an unarmed minority of about 1% of the German population at the beginning of the Nazi era.

For those Germans of the late 19th or early to mid 20th century who considered themselves to be modern, enlightened and perhaps not as swayed by religion as previous generations had been, this "new" scientific attitude about the world emphasized that people were racially different. Racial differences, according to this view, as it had been for de Gobineau decades earlier, determined identity and worth. The Aryan race (e.g. Germans), according to this line of thinking, had the right (and the duty) to dominate, control, and ultimately to eliminate Jews, the Semites who were the eternal enemies of the Aryan race.

This notion of the supremacy of the Aryan race gained support from numerous rightist thinkers and politicians who inappropriately used Darwinian principles to support their beliefs. The survival of the fittest was wrongly interpreted to mean that there was an eternal struggle for survival between the Aryan and Semitic races. The term antisemitic became largely synonymous with being anti-Jewish for these groups, and being Jewish was a matter of birth, rather than a reflection of stated or demonstrated religious beliefs. As in the Inquisition centuries before, stated religious beliefs were suspect. Jews by birth were Semites and were therefore automatically considered mortal enemies of the Aryan race by those who traded on these false "scientific" theories, Darwinian or otherwise.

The inconsistency of using the old religious hostilities to define the now objectionable racial group was apparently of little concern to those who chose to emphasize false notions of race to fuel their prejudices. These groups argued that Jews were Semites, as established through supposedly modern scientific and "rationalist" approaches; they therefore should be eliminated from Germany (or Europe) one way or

the other. Those who espoused this view to varying degrees came to use political platforms to advocate their positions, as indicated in subsequent paragraphs.

The condition of Jews in Germany in the early Modern Period before emancipation was one of isolation, servitude, and dehumanization. Jews were often forced to live in ghettos, discrete areas in a given location to which they were restricted for the most part. Ruderman (1997) identifies Venice as the city having had the first Jewish ghetto that was instituted about 1516, but Fulbrook (2019) identifies Speyer, in Germany, as having the first walled ghetto that dated to at least 1084.

There was certainly much to criticize about the actualities and the symbolism of ghettos over the centuries of their existence. Ghettos clearly expressed the goals of the Christian community that feared the "contamination" and influence of the Jew on the Christian population. Ghettos were known to be cramped, dirty, disease infested and insular, attributes often attributed to the Jews, themselves, by their Christian neighbors. On the other hand, the physical safety of Jews was often a question in medieval (and later) communities in Europe and living a sequestered and segregated existence behind a large wall that was locked at night was reassuring for some Jews who were afraid of or who did not wish to have contact with the larger Christian community (Ruderman, 1997).

Life in the ghetto for many Jews did expose them to Christians and Christian life more than would have been true for those living in even more isolated communities away from cities. Whether living inside or outside of the ghetto, however, many Jews were totally dependent on and beholden to Christian authorities who needed Jews for various banking and economic services they offered. A type of symbiosis between victimizer and victim was therefore a part of this picture of the Jew in medieval and later periods.

Jews often took pride in their ghettos; some were able to leave the ghetto during the day to attend to various activities, such as study in universities. Although some Christian clergy hoped that forcing Jews to live in the ghetto (where presumably more control, contact and supervision were possible) would result in conversion to Christianity, this does not seem to have occurred to a significant degree. The proximity to Christians did influence Jewish culture, however (Ruderman, 1997).

Grab (1984) describes several additional conditions under which Jews lived in Germany prior to Emancipation. Immigration and emigration were controlled by state authorities; there was a prescribed number of Jews who could marry in a given period; they could earn a living only through certain means. Jews were not allowed to produce material goods for sale; they could not cultivate the soil or join an artisan association or handicraft guild. They were, however, allowed (encouraged) to become involved in the economic activities of the state. Some Jews became financiers for the state, facilitating financial and business transactions and state activities such as wars. Some functioned as bankers, pawnbrokers, or traders of cattle. They charged high rates of interest for loans, but this was in turn regulated by authorities who required high rates of taxation from the Jews.

The period following emancipation in the 1870s was a time of limited assimilation of Jews into the German federation. Assimilation and integration were met with degrees of resistance both in the larger society and in Jewish communities, although greater integration offered potential benefits (as well as drawbacks) both to the society and to Jews themselves. The backlash against this integrationist scenario saw old stereotypes and prejudices coming strongly to the fore.

Mosse (1978) comments that:

The mystery of race transformed the Jew into an evil principle. This was nothing new for the Jew; after all, anti-Christ had been a familiar figure during the Middle Ages. But in the last decades of the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth, the traditional legends which had swirled about the Jews in the past were revived as foils for racial mysticism and as instruments of political mobilization. (p. 113)

As indicated earlier, one important part of this revitalization of prejudice that occurred in the political sphere was the institution of race into the old antisemitic mix.

Jews had been viciously and wrongly accused of ritual murder, blood libel and rootlessness for centuries; they were castigated as "wandering Jews" who were members of a world-wide conspiracy. These accusations and the threats implied by them were revitalized in the last decades of the 19th century. The notorious *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a tract written in Russia in the early years of the 20th century purporting to describe a secret meeting of Jews who were plotting world-wide domination was a new addition to older conspiracy theories and antisemitic accusations that came to the fore during this period (Mosse, 1978).

Racial insults themselves were not new invectives hurled against Jews during this time (Landau, 2016), but they arose with great force in a new pseudo-scientific and "rational" era. These calumnies were examples of the inappropriate and simplistic use of Darwinian theories applied in a socio-cultural sense. Nazism in the 1920s would take these views to greater extremes and hammer the ostensible linkage between race, blood, and the Aryan people: "The legends about the Jews… were kept alive, now as part of the race war that seemed imminent" (Mosse, 1978, p. 121). This racialization of anti-Semitic discourse "was one element within a complex ideology that was essentially an expression

of the anti-modernist and anti-democratic sentiments of social groups faced with crisis"
(MacMaster, 2001, pp. 86-87). These groups included "conservative Christians, decaying
aristocratic land owners, the *petite bourgeoisie*, small shopkeepers and artisans in
decline" (MacMaster, 2001, p. 87). The concerns of these groups ranged "from
xenophobia and radical nationalism to nostalgia for the passing of a traditional rural
order" (MacMaster, 2001, p. 87). Antisemitism, for many individuals at this time, became
an ideology spread by politicians, writers, academics, educated elites and others. It helped
these various groups, from conservative Christians to politicians, to shift blame for
aspects of their worlds that they were not able to control.

 An important aspect of the evolution of antisemitism in Germany and elsewhere
in this period was the development of political parties whose platforms contained, at
times, harsh antisemitic rhetoric. Antisemitism replaced anti-Judaism as a way to express
criticism, rejection and at times violent inclinations towards Jews. As Pulzer (1964/1988)
indicates, "The period of 1867-1914 becomes important because during it the movements
and ideologies developed which matured after 1918" (pp. ix-x). While the Nazi party did
not develop fully until after the First World War, it, like other less "successful" political
parties, had its roots in this period that emphasized nationalism, volkish (folk) interests,
fascism, anti-Marxism, anti-liberalism and racist and blood ties to agrarian and traditional
German values.

 The large number of rightist political parties that formed in this period contrasted
with leftist and more central parties. The Nazi party was distinctive, especially through
the use of violence to achieve its objectives; this party was notable for its sadism, cruelty
and "lack of scruples" that was used actively to rouse the masses and attract those of the

middle class that felt dispossessed or disillusioned. They were also effective in breaking

down barriers between older right-radical groups and the working class (Pulzer,

1964/1988). While other rightwing groups emphasized rhetoric rather than action, the

Nazi party was clearly also interested in action. Pulzer (1964/1988) reports that there

were over 100 Jewish cemetery desecrations and forty synagogue desecrations from 1923

to 1931. Most of these seemed to be connected with the Nazi party, an ominous sign of

what was to come.

The main party of the left prior to the rise of Adolph Hitler and the third Reich

was the Social Democratic Party whose views were progressive and more egalitarian. Not

surprisingly, this was the party that attracted Jews, many of whom had become involved

in banking and financial interests, commerce and industrialization after the Emancipation

of earlier times. These financial and banking interests would prove to be a decidedly

mixed blessing, as they allowed continuance of the stereotyping and criticism of Jews as

"bankers" and financial dealers who wished to control the world through financial webs

and worldwide networks that were dominated by international Jewry.

The assimilated, successful Jew in the capitalistic society of 20th century Germany

was rejected by the rightist parties, although the unassimilated Jew of the 18th and 19th

centuries also was not acceptable.

> The nationalist anti-Semites of the nineteenth century attacked the Jew for
> retaining his separate identity: they wanted him to be assimilated. The racialists of
> the twentieth century frantically tried to prove that the Jew must always remain
> different. What offended them was his all-too-successful assimilation. (Pulzer,
> 1964/1988, p. 318)

It is clear that Jews would be criticized by rightist and racist segments of the population

regardless of social or economic conditions in the society.

These shifts toward a new form of antisemitism and away from the traditional anti-Jewish bias on religious grounds were accompanied by and in some cases depended upon advances in science and industrialization, as well as a greater acceptance of secularism and a greater disaffection with traditional religious views. Pulzer (1964/1988) points out that early Christian conservative, antisemitism rejected Darwinism on religious grounds; with the turn of the century, however, "survival of the fittest" "became increasingly attractive to political anthropologists and increasingly useful to doctrines of racial superiority" (Pulzer, 1964/1988, pp. 286-287) even though Darwin's theories were misinterpreted and misapplied for political and racist purposes. Misusing Darwinian theory in these cases worked to the detriment of the Jewish segment of the society and to the benefit of those who chose to channel their prejudices along racial lines.

From these racial perspectives, the Aryan race was the world's superior race; Jews and Judaism, as examples of the Semitic and inferior race, were its enemy. Many Germans, especially those on the political right, argued that Aryans had been defeated in the First World War because of the treachery of others; often this explicitly meant the Jews. These rightwing, conservative parties were not only openly antisemitic, they also were against the Weimar Republic that had been formed in the wake of Germany's defeat in the First World War and the abdication of the Kaiser in 1918. One of the reasons the rightist groups were opposed to the Weimar Republic was because participation in governance was open to, and in their eyes, associated with Jews. These rightist parties wished to reverse the humiliation of Germany in the war, and considered Jews, now more socially noticeable and prominent than ever before, convenient to target as enemies of the German, Aryan state.

Arguments and vitriol against Jews were thus an attractive antidote for the challenges of changing times that included increased secularization, industrialization, economic catastrophe, social dislocation, loss of the monarchy, and humiliation around the defeat in World War I. This defeat resulted in significant loss of territory (Fulbrook, 2019).

Germany's lands had increased significantly with unification of the German Empire in 1871. As a result of the Treaty of Versailles that ended the First World War, however, Alsace-Lorraine was to be returned to France (from which it had been taken during the war preceding German unification); Poland, a newly reconstructed country, was to receive West Prussia, Upper Silesia and Posen; Danzig was to become free city that would be supervised by the League of Nations; and a "Polish corridor" that separated East Prussia from the larger German land mass was developed. African colonies that Germany controlled were lost and any union between Germany and Austria was forbidden (Beauchamp et al., 2014; Fulbrook, 2019).

The various stressors of the post-World War I period provided fertile opportunities for scapegoating, which always found a comfortable resting place in speaking of Jews, perhaps especially those who wished to become socially mobile in the post-unification environment. Considering the attitude of one of these many rightist groups, the Christian-Social Party, Pulzer (1964/1978) comments,

> Most of the party did not bother their heads about questions of detail. For them, anti-Semitism was an emotional and electoral necessity. They neither did, nor could, decide whether they hated the Jew as a capitalist or a Socialist, as the member of a false religion or of a foreign race. (p. 310)

Nazism and other rightwing parties thus benefitted from and seemed to foster

incoherence and social disruption as means to further their political aims.

Illustrative of the split in German society between rightist, antisemitic parties and

leftist, secular parties in Germany's post-unification period are the following excerpts

from the Antisemitic People's Party platform of Otto Bockel (1859-1923) and a

resolution of the Social Democratic Party (reprinted in Pulzer 1964/1978): "The Anti-

Semite Party is faithful to emperor and Reich, Prince and fatherland. It aims at the repeal,

by legal means, of Jewish emancipation, the placing of Jews under an Aliens' Law, and

the creations of healthy social legislation" (p. 328-329). The Anti-Semite Party platform

later said, "Only Christian German men (of non-Jewish extraction) are to be elected into

legislative bodies and to be employed in state or municipal offices" (p. 329).

In contrast, the Social Democratic Party resolution states:

Anti-Semitism springs from the discontent of certain bourgeois strata, who find
themselves adversely affected by the development of capitalism […]Social
Democracy fights anti-Semitism as a movement directed against the natural
development of society […] the petty bourgeois and peasant strata stirred up
against the Jewish capitalists must come to recognize that not only the Jewish
capitalist but also the capitalist class generally is their enemy and that only their
realization of Socialism can free them from their misery. (p. 333)

These two excerpts from political party statements show diametrically opposed views in

German society at this time, and the divergent, and perhaps irreconcilable, views the

parties held that included how to understand the Jewish role in society.

Another way to understand the turbulent political and social period that included

the years from the 1870s through the pre-Nazi era is to review prominent writings of this

time. One of the prominent political theorists of this period was Georges Sorel (1847-

1922). Sorel's work was notable for many reasons, including an instability of views that

reflected at least in part the shifting political and social winds of his time. Sorel's writings

have been described as "dispersed and unsystematic" (Vernon, 1978, p. 5), but are

especially interesting here for their emphasis on the value of violence to promote

revolution and social change and his later adherence to conservative, anti-republican and

antisemitic views. He also wrote on the importance of mythic formulations or social

myths, the distinctions between "knowing and acting" (Vernon, 1978, p.6), the concept of

syndicalism and his belief in the "general strike." Syndicalism involves the acceptance of

organizations of workers and of strikes by workers to achieve their ends.

Sorel's best-known work, *Reflections on Violence*, published originally in 1906

during the period of his greater interest in Socialism, emphasizes the importance he

attaches to violence. Sorel's sympathies seemed to lie with "those who argued for the

violence of a conspiratorial band aiming to reestablish traditional authority…" (Shils,

1950, p. 22). In this work, Sorel (1906/1950) emphasizes a commitment to violence as a

means to social change when he says,

> For a long time I had been struck by the fact that the *normal development* of
> strikes is accompanied by an important series of acts of violence; but certain
> learned sociologists seek to disguise a phenomenon that everyone who cares to
> use his eyes must have noticed. Revolutionary syndicalism keeps alive in the
> minds of the masses the desire to strike, and only prospers when important strikes,
> accompanied by violence, take place. (p. 57)

Statements such as these that seem so readily to accept violence can sometimes be

accused of fostering it.

Sorel emphasizes the bond between Socialism and proletarian violence. He

states, "It is to violence that Socialism owes those high ethical values by means of which

it brings *salvation* to the modern world" (Sorel, 1906/1950, p. 249). Violence for Sorel, at

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least at this stage of his writings, is a means to a higher social and ethical good. His later

adoption of rightwing, authoritarian Catholicism was accompanied by antisemitism,

however, and serves as a prelude to fascist totalitarianism that is part of his legacy

(Antliff, 2005).

Sorel was critical of rationalism and republican ideology. He promoted a concept

of revolution that was "premised on the agitational role of myths in transforming the

consciousness of working-class syndicalists engaged in strike activity" that became an

epic struggle against capitalism (Antliff, 2005, p. 307). Sorel's involvement with the

labor movement did not seem to last, however, and toward the end of the first decade of

the 20th century, he had a resurgent interest in Catholicism and he "forged a new political

alliance, premised on a mythic divide between a rationalist republic crippled by cultural

and political decadence and the regenerative ideology of national syndicalism" (Antliff,

2005, p. 307). For Sorel and his colleagues, Catholicism offered a means to confront

republican and capitalist ideals that he associated with Jews, who now were much more

prominent in business and financial activities in Europe than they had previously been.

Sorel's views in this latter phase of his career were, of course, conservative and

anti-republican. He considered proponents of social progress, Enlightenment values, and

a representative parliamentary system hostile to religion. For these modernists,

contemporary culture was superior to past eras and classical antiquity. His views,

however, came to be firmly in the camp of the "ancients" (Antliff, 2005, p. 309).

Complicating these issues and giving fuel to the writings and political agitation of

antisemitic forces such as those of Georges Sorel, was the Dreyfus affair in which

Captain Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish officer in the French army, was accused in 1894 of

passing military secrets to Germany. Dreyfus ultimately was found to be innocent, but not before he was convicted and sent to prison on Devil's Island. The Dreyfus affair and the apparent antisemitism that fueled his prosecution split France. The charges against Dreyfus "reflected both a climate of paranoid nationalism, as well as a consistent theme in European anti-Semitism which viewed the Jews as a treacherous internal enemy" (MacMaster, 2001, p. 111). By the end of the century, the Affair was the stimulus that split French internal opinion into disparate factions. Jews were associated with post-Enlightenment, rationalistic, egalitarian, universalistic and sectarian views. These perceptions were of course pitted against conservative Catholic and traditional forces (MacMaster, 2005). Antisemitism surged with writers such as Sorel, who was clearly on the side of the traditional, reactionary forces that lamented the loss of religious and social mores of the past.

For Sorel, the power of traditional Catholicism could reinvigorate France, but this desired renewal was undermined by rationalism, capitalism (e.g financiers), democracy and the proponents of the Enlightenment, prominent of whom were Jews: "For Sorel eighteenth-and nineteenth-century doctrines of progress facilitated the loss of class-consciousness, religious faith, and productivist ethics" (Antliff, 2005, p. 317). Ultimately, for Sorel (1950), "it was the Jewish intellectual who benefited most from Enlightenment concepts of citizenship" (p. 317). Sorel (1950), however, argued for a nationalist revolution that rejected Enlightenment principles and democracy, but that, in Antliff's (2005) view, "ultimately gave birth to various forms of fascism during the interwar era" (p. 317). Social justice and progress, in Sorel's view, therefore has the potential to activate reactive violence. This is a position that can be extended to the Nazi era itself

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and the writings of Adolf Hitler, who railed against the Jews who were more socially and politically prominent in the interwar years.

Another social commentator and writer at this time who had great influence through the First World War and beyond was Houston Stewart Chamberlain (1855-1927). Chamberlain's writings added a strong racial, mythic and spiritual dimension to the Germanic, Aryan emphasis on its own greatness and spiritual journey. Chamberlain was an English citizen who became disenchanted with his homeland. He travelled extensively as a young person and was strongly influenced by Richard Wagner, who himself "blended the racial mystique and the concept of Christian salvation most effectively" (Mosse, 1978, p. 104). Chamberlain met Hitler and greatly admired him. He ultimately became a German citizen, settled in Bayreuth, Germany and married one of Richard Wagner's daughters.

Chamberlain believed that "the Germanic race entered history as the saviours of mankind and as the heirs of the Greeks and Romans" (Mosse, 1978, p. 106). For Chamberlain, the essence of German religion was to bestow "infinite vistas upon the soul and […] to keep science within narrowly defined bounds" (Mosse, 1978, p. 105). It was the Aryan "race-soul" that Germans shared. Christ, in Chamberlain's view, had not been a Jew, but rather had been an Aryan prophet with an "Aryan race-soul" who lived among other Aryans in Galilee. Aryans, for Chamberlain, were to be the saviors of mankind. They were destined to wage struggles against their enemies in order to fulfill their mission in life. He considered Catholics an enemy of the German Aryans although he held that the greatest enemy of the Aryans were the Jews, who embodied all that was negative in the world (e.g. materialism, immorality) in comparison with the Aryan.

Chamberlain believed the "Jews were the devil and the Germans the chosen people" (Mosse, 1978, p. 106). For the world to experience a spiritual revolution, the Jews would have to be defeated and the Aryan race-soul would then dominate the world (Mosse, 1978, p. 107).

Chamberlain's writing, in his influential *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* (1911), does not provide a factual basis for what seem to be his many outlandish racial assertions. In the midst of his writings that are intended to be historical, there is a struggle to come to grips with the Aryan Christ growing up among the materialistic Jews whom he argues have been a successful people throughout the ages. Speaking of Christ growing up among Jews, Chamberlain (1911) says,

> It was in these surroundings that Christ grew up… He awoke in the direct presence of God and Divine Providence. He found here what He would have found nowhere else in the world: a complete scaffolding ready for Him, within which His entirely new concept of God and religion could be built up. After Jesus had lived, nothing remained of the genuinely Jewish idea; now that the temple was built the scaffolding could be removed. But it had served its purpose, and the building would have been unthinkable without it. (pp. 233-34).

Christianity apparently was the new temple.

Chamberlain (1911) goes on to assert, speaking of Judaism as a materialistic religion, "…yes, assuredly the most materialistic—religion in the world" (p. 234). This is a time-worn diatribe and/ or form of misinformation against Jews for which Chamberlain does not provide factual evidence. The lack of evidence for his claims unfortunately did not stop a receptive rightwing German audience, including Adolph Hitler, from speaking glowingly of his insights.

In other passages, Chamberlain (1911) emphasizes what he considers to be the historical superiority of the pure Teutonic people that had been compromised by Jewish

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blood. He also seems to rail against Emancipation and intermarriage when he maintains, again without facts,

> From the moment the Teuton awakes, a new world begins to open out, …one in which, in the nineteenth century especially, there have appeared new elements… as, for example, the Jews and the formerly pure Teutonic Slavs, who by mixture of blood have now become 'un-Teutonised'… (Chamberlain, 1911, p. lxvi)

He later writes, "We are left with the simple and clear view that our whole civilization and culture of to-day is the work of one definite race of men, the Teutonic" (p. lxvii), which for Chamberlain (1911) is "the one great North European race…" (p. lxvii). Race is for Chamberlain, as it was for de Gobineau, and as it will be seen to be for Hitler, the defining feature of human existence.

The Teutonic people and Christianity are inevitably superior for Chamberlain, and of course, being superior and "chosen," these entities are continually challenged by the inferior Semitic race whom they have allowed at times to defeat them.

> No people in the world is so beggarly-poor in religion as the Semites and their half-brothers the Jews; and we, who were chosen to develop the profoundest and sublimest religious conception of the world … have with our own hands firmly tied up the veins of life and limp along like crippled Jewish slaves behind Jehovah's Ark of the Covenant! (Chamberlain, 1911, p. lxxix)

Again, the reader is exposed to calumny and diatribe that has no evidence to support its claims, but that does have the potential to harness anger, and in some cases, rage, against the Jew, whose religion is considered "beggarly-poor."

Political parties and political activities that advocated virulent antisemitism reached their greatest influence under Adolph Hitler (1889-1945) and the Nazi party, whose efforts were influential in the 1920s even before the Nazi era (1933-1945). The best-known example of immensely influential antisemitic writing around this time is of

course Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (1925/1999), a book Hitler wrote (or dictated) while serving a prison sentence for his part in a failed insurrection against the German government (the Beer Hall Putsch of 1923).

Mein Kampf is a work of great passion, anger and vitriol. Repetitive, forceful, and devoid of documentation or historical support, this polemic castigates more than one enemy (e.g. Jews, Socialists, those Germans who "stabbed" the volkish people "in the back" in World War I) but has a major focus on the issue of Jews and race: "Without the clearest knowledge of the racial problem and hence of the Jewish problem there will never be a resurrection of the German nation" (Hitler, 1925/1999, p. 339). Again, there is little or no evidence provided for the hatred expressed here. This reader is left with the impression, amplified in subsequent paragraphs and chapters of this dissertation, that the fear of the Jews was an irrational and at times delusional anxiety about being undone or destroyed by them. In this sense, Hitler felt forced to eliminate the Jews because he feared they would eliminate him.

In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler condemns Jews as an inferior race, a designation that he believes is based on science and rationality. The Jewish religion is not Hitler's stated concern. Hitler is concerned with race and the blood line of the Jew. He argues that the Jewish blood line has been kept pure for the most part through the centuries but is one that, in his view, attempts to infect the unsuspecting Aryan who already has been contaminated by the degenerate Jew in other parts of the world.

For Hitler (1925/1999), the Jew is the "eternal mushroom of humanity" (p. 123), ugly, despicable, unclean and smelly. He believes that it is the Jew who threatens to bring down the German people, the volkish citizens of the pure Aryan race. Jews intend to

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accomplish their goals, he states, through a world-wide financial conspiracy in which international Jews will conspire with one another. He claims that Catholics will fight Protestants and countries will fight with one another, but in his view all are inspired toward the destruction of the Aryan race by the international financier of destruction, the wandering, worldwide Jew. "Catholics and Protestants wage a merry war with one another, and the mortal enemy of Aryan humanity and all Christendom laughs up his sleeve" (Hitler, 1925/1999, p. 561). Likewise, he charges that

> while the Jew sold the freedom of the nation and betrayed our fatherland to international high finance, now again he succeeds in causing the two German denominations to assail one another, while the foundations of both are corroded and undermined by the poison of the international world Jew. (Hitler, 1925/1999, p. 562)

Hitler is here urging potentially religious foes of his to unite against the Jew, whom he claims is really their (and his) greatest enemy.

In Hitler's (1925/1999) view, Jews comprise a nation within a nation, leaders of the communist movement, and advocates for civil rights and equality for all. These are political positions that Hitler considers inimical to the German state and positions that place the continuance of the pure Aryan race at risk. Jews, he claims, are advocates for the demise of the volkish state; they are parasites who choose an international Marxist order that is also simultaneously a capitalist order. Hitler emphasizes that it is the state's responsibility to preserve only the fittest of its citizens. Human rights mean preservation of the Aryan state,

> *No, there is only one holiest human right, and this right is at the same time the holiest obligation, to wit: to see to it that the blood is preserved pure and, by preserving the best humanity, to create the possibility of a nobler development of these beings.* (Hitler, 1925/1999, p. 402)

These last statements contain implicit threats against disabled individuals, Jews and others whom Hitler thinks do not "contribute" to or are detrimental to the ideal Aryan state.

Marriage, for example, should not lead to the defilement of the Aryan race but must reflect "*the consecration of an institution which is called upon to produce images of the Lord and not monstrosities halfway between man and ape*" (Hitler, 1925/1999, p. 402). Speaking of Jews, Hitler (1925/1999) says,

> this contamination of our blood… is carried on systematically by the Jew today… these black parasites of the nation defile our inexperienced young blond girls and thereby destroy something which can no longer be replaced in the world… The significance of this for the future of the earth does not lie in whether Protestants defeat the Catholics or the Catholics the Protestants, but in whether the Aryan man is preserved for the earth or dies out. (p. 562)

Hitler was not concerned with religious denominations, but rather with the willingness of everyone to support his notion of the supremacy of the Aryan people.

The atrocities to come in the Nazi era, including the dehumanization of the Jews (and others) and the ultimate sentence of indiscriminate death for millions can be imagined easily from the writings of *Mein Kampf* (1925/1999). This work culminated a tradition of political and racial antisemitism in pre-World War II Germany that built on centuries of antisemitism that itself was originally focused on religious prejudice, but which later also had elements of racial bigotry.

The following chapter discusses steps taken by Hitler and the Nazi government to add racial invective to long-standing antisemitism to dehumanize Jews and convince German citizens that Jews were an inferior, subhuman people who had always been aligned against the superior Aryan race. Hitler (1925/1999) argued that interactions

between Jews and Germans would in the end produce beings who were not really human at all, beings who were "*monstrosities halfway between man and ape*." (p. 402). The Jews therefore were threatening and dangerous to the Aryan race and from Hitler's perspective they were appropriate for and deserving of "elimination," a term that can be taken to suggest physical removal from Germany and Europe, or extermination and death. Both of these interpretations proved themselves to be well-founded.

Chapter Three: Dehumanization

Introduction

Jews were considered immoral, ugly, and corrupt by Nazis and their sympathizers during and before the Nazi era. They were denigrated as animals, vermin and as racially inferior beings, constantly scheming to take over the world. They were felt to be subhuman, and therefore treated as less than human. These attributions and the behaviors that resulted from them reflect a process termed dehumanization, a process Haslam and Loughnan (2014) describe as "the most striking violation of our belief in a common humanity: our Enlightenment assumption that we are all essentially one and the same" (p. 401).

This chapter will work toward a definition of dehumanization that is interactional and highlights the experiential dimensions of the victimizers' part in the interaction as well as the effects on the victim. It includes the internal aspects of the victimizers' bearing, especially their thoughts nad attitudes toward the victims. It also allows for the shaping of their thoughts and attitudes by historical and social trends. Then it points to the external aspect of dehumanization: the tactics that diminish the humanity of the victim. Finally the definition recognizes that such tactics can work on victims such that the victim feels debased from full humanity and deprived of markers of personal identity. In the Holocaust, these markers include loss of human accomplishments, bodily pride, and spirituality.

The description of dehumanization offered here indicates centuries-old themes, as well as factors unique to the Nazi era and the decades before it that contributed to the dehumanization of the Jews. Illustrations from Jewish conditions during the Nazi era will be given. The perspective offered is that increasingly severe dehumanization of the Jews facilitated their murder during the Holocaust.

Dehumanization—Definitions, with Specific Reference to Germany and the Nazi Era

Dehumanization is a widely used concept, but one that has been studied relatively infrequently (Smith, 2011). According to Smith (2011), who provides a comprehensive approach to dehumanization, this phenomenon refers to

> the act of conceiving of people as subhuman creatures rather than as human beings … When we dehumanize people we don't just think of them in terms of what they lack, we also think of them as creatures that are less than human. (p. 26)

Subhumans are believed to lack something special, a particular essence, often difficult to define, that makes them and members of their "outgroup" different and far less worthy and valuable than those who are in the "ingroup" (Smith, 2011, pp. 33-39). Members of the "ingroup" think of themselves and their own group as being more human than "others" who are in the "outgroup" (Smith, 2011, pp. 49, 71). Subhumans, according to this line of thinking, "can be enslaved, tortured, or even exterminated—treated in ways in which we could not bring ourselves to treat those whom we regard as members of our own kind" (Smith, 2011, p. 2; Volpato & Andrighetto, 2015).

Dehumanization for Smith (2011) is a psychological experience that is rooted in the biology, culture and architecture of the mind. Although Smith does not define what he means by "architecture," this presumably relates to structure and biology. To the degree

that biology and culture (especially) are involved, there must be various factors, personal, social and/or cultural, that contribute to and influence dehumanizing attitudes and behaviors, although Smith (2011) does not emphasize these considerations in his study of dehumanization.

Leyens (2009) and colleagues (Leyens et al., 2007) also have emphasized that ingroup members consider themselves to have a particular essence that differentiates them from outgroup members. Their studies fall in the realm of "infrahumanization," a less severe form of denigration than dehumanization (Haslam & Loughnan, 2014; Leyens, 2009). The development of the concept of infrahumanization is related to essentialism; ingroups believe that they alone have a fully human essence. Leyens (2009) says that essentialism is "to be understood as *fundamental, essential differences* between groups leading to the belief that the ingroup is more fully human than another group" (p. 808).

This view of essentialism potentially leads directly to the concept of "essential" racial differences among groups, as emphasized by the Germans in the period before and during the Nazi era. Using this formulation of essentialism emphasizes that the in group is more "human" and inherently better or superior to the outgroup, which is racially inferior and morally and ethically deficient. Jews would be, in this characterization, crafty, scheming, and corrupt. Hitler (1925/1999) and other German leaders believed that these attributions based on race must not be allowed to contaminate the pure and "essentially superior" German race.

For Leyens (2009), human "essence is what people are beyond contingencies," that is, once an "essence" is considered (such as being a member of the Aryan race),

particular social constructions or individual or group efforts or qualities, are not important (p. 808). In this context, the notion of essences is "completely opposite to the idea of groups as social constructions" (Leyens et al., 2007, p. 142). Essences are therefore considered immutable—for better or worse.

Leyens and co-workers have conducted a number of experimental studies focused on the perception of emotions in ingroups and outgroups. These experiments have shown that subjects believed that both more positive and more negative, uniquely human emotions are found in ingroups than in outgroups (Leyens et al, 2007). Leyens (2009) says that members of the ingroup see themselves as sharing "basic, human characteristics that mark them as inherently different, more human than outgroup members" (p. 814). An important aspect of the development of a sense of essence may be that people infrahumanize others or groups they do not like or with whom they do not wish to affiliate. Essentialism, then, is at the core of infrahumanization. It is also characteristic of dehumanization, which is considered a more severe form of infrahumanization. For Leyens et. al. (2007), "The belief in human essence is a poisonous symbol…" (p. 167). It is poisonous because it separates people and creates ingroups and outgroups that act upon their own sense of uniqueness. Both groups think of the other group as different. This sets up mischaracterizations, distrust and notions of superiority and inferiority between the groups. In the Nazi era, these "poisonous" symbols of superiority and inferiority were related to presumed racial differences that were used to justify the murder of Jews by those who called themselves Aryans.

This formulation posits a basic sense of difference that members of both the ingroup and outgroup have about themselves and the other. For the ingroup, the

imprecise sense of being somehow different, more human than others in the outgroup,

seems potentially to have significantly harmful consequences for the outgroup when

pressed beyond the bounds of infrahumanization to the more severe dehumanization. This

point will be illustrated in a subsequent section in this chapter on dehumanization and

ideology in the Nazi era where a belief in Aryan superiority and uniqueness had

"poisonous" consequences. It will also be important in considering the effects of "lesser"

forms of dehumanization in a later chapter.

Haslam (2006) and Haslam and colleagues (Haslam & Loughnan, 2014; Haslam

& Loughnan, 2016; Haslam & Stratemeyer, 2016; Haslam et al., 2013) have conducted a

series of experimental studies to elucidate the nature of dehumanization and to be precise

about difficult-to-define terms such as 'essentialism' and 'humanness.' Haslam (2006)

has argued that an understanding of dehumanization requires "a clear sense of what is

being denied to the other, namely humanness" (p. 255). Using participant ratings of a

large number of traits, Haslam and colleagues found two senses of humanness: firstly, a

series of personality traits that were uniquely human (UH) and that did not apply to other

species and secondly, a series of traits that the investigators felt were characteristic or

representative of some aspect of human nature (HN). UH characteristics

> define the boundary that separates humans from the related category of animals,
> but humanness may also be understood noncomparatively as the features that are
> typical of or central to humans. These normative or fundamental characteristics
> might be referred to as human nature (HN). (Haslam, 2006, p. 256)

Each of these two broad dimensions (UH and HN) can be characterized along what might

be considered positive or negative dimensions.

Positive qualities of the UH dimension include civility, refinement and moral sensibility. Negative (or opposite) aspects of this dimension include coarseness, amorality and irrationality. Positive qualities of the HN dimension include emotional responsiveness, interpersonal warmth and cognitive openness. Negative (or opposite) aspects of these characteristics include coldness, rigidity, and passivity (Haslam, 2006).

These two forms of humanness are related to corresponding forms of dehumanization when the corresponding qualities are not present. Haslam (2006) indicates that: "When UH characteristics are denied to others, they should in principle be seen as lacking in refinement, civility, moral sensibility and higher cognition" (p. 257). Their behavior is less cognitively mediated, and therefore more motivated by appetites and instincts. From a moral dimension, people lacking in UH characteristics are thought to be immoral or amoral. These individuals reflect animalistic dehumanization. When dehumanized, these individuals are often considered to be "unrefined animals" (Haslam, 2006, p. 258). When HN is perceived to be lacking, individuals are considered to lack warmth, cognitive flexibility and emotionality. They are considered cold, rigid and superficial. When dehumanized, these people are considered automatons or mechanistic; they may be considered as "soulless machines" (Haslam, 2006, p. 258) who are "distant, alien, or foreign" (Haslam, 2006, p.259).

Haslam and colleagues have made an important contribution in distinguishing between two forms of dehumanization: animalistic and mechanistic. Both forms are apparent in narratives of the treatment and perceptions of the Jews in the Nazi era. As Haslam (2006) says, it is not clear, however, whether this model provides a valuable framework for further research. Does a preponderance of one dimension distinguish

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between attitudes or behaviors toward a particular outgroup compared to the other dimension? The question of what is "essential" also remains unclear, although Haslam (2006) generally links it with the HN form of dehumanization.

In more recent work, Smith (2020) emphasizes the relationship between dehumanization and violence that is also of interest in this dissertation. He does not confine his studies to the Holocaust but does write that the Holocaust "represents the most explicit and thoroughly documented example of the dehumanization of a whole people" (Smith, 2020, p. 23). He goes on to write that much of what can be learned from the Holocaust is applicable to other cases of dehumanization, given the similarities of patterns of dehumanization in various conflicts. It is interesting to note in this context that while there is a paucity of recent literature about dehumanization in relation to the Holocaust, in part as a result of time passed and other instances of genocide that now command research attention, lessons of dehumanization and the Holocaust appear broadly applicable to other genocides, while recognizing that each instance of dehumanization and genocide has its own specific features to some degree.

Smith (2020) writes that it is the desire to harm victims that results in their dehumanization. He argues that dehumanization lets loose antagonisms that already exist and that subsequently result in violence toward the victim. In other words, as described in this dissertation, when dehumanization becomes severe, and other factors described in the next chapter on the death drive are present, extreme violence and murder may be perpetrated against the victims. The course of dehumanization in the Nazi era studied here suggests this is likely to be the case, at least in many instances. Hitler and the Nazi party certainly hated Jews and possibly desired their extermination even before the Nazi

era began but were constrained from large scale efforts at extermination until the German public was primed by the dehumanization that had occurred during the course of the Nazi era and distracted by the onset of war.

Consistent with the view expressed here, Smith (2020) argues that dehumanization may clear the way for "viciously destructive moral fury" (p. 93). As indicated above, it is not clear in the case of the Holocaust whether dehumanization was a conscious preparation for genocide or whether it was a strategy to coerce Jews to leave Germany. When it became clear that not all Jews could or would leave Germany, various factors, including dehumanization and its accompanying social isolation of Jews, paved the way for genocide. Smith (2020) argues correctly, I believe, that dehumanization facilitates a disinhibition of our "worst impulses." In accord with the thesis of this dissertation, it activated the death drive of those under the sway of the Nazi regime and resulted in the murder of millions.

Toward an Expanded Definition of Dehumanization

Haslam et al. (2013) have said that "Any theory of dehumanization needs an account of what it is that dehumanized people are denied or seen as lacking. 'De-humanization' implies that something is removed or lost in the process, presumably something to do with being human" (p. 27). Leyens et al. (2007) and Leyens (2009) have focused on what is essential to being considered human and studied more subtle forms of emotionality as offering clues to this question. Haslam and colleagues (e.g. Haslam, 2006; Haslam & Loughnan, 2014) have posited two forms of humanness (UH and HN) that, when denied, may result in the potential for corresponding forms of dehumanization: animalistic and mechanistic. The differences between these two dimensions are not

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always clear, however, although it does appear that dehumanization has at least these two types based on narrative descriptions of Jews during the Nazi era.

Haslam et al.'s studies focused on questions of what traits raters felt constitutes humanness, and derivatively what perceived traits are associated with those who might be dehumanized. These are important questions, although after reading numerous witness accounts of the treatment of Jews (and others) in the Nazi era, I question whether a purely experimental approach is able to capture the full impact of the experience of dehumanization that includes victims and perpetrators. Experientially, dehumanization of the victim affects several aspects of what it means to be human, including the victim's identity and self-worth. The experience of perpetrators also is important, but rarely studied.

My own contribution to a definition of dehumanization does not emphasize difficult-to-define terms that are associated with much ambiguity and debate, such as "essentialism." It does offer an experiential understanding of what might be considered "essential" aspects of the human experience from both the perpetrator's and the victim's experience and their interactions.

As I indicated in Chapter 1, this dissertation describes the dehumanizing psychological and behavioral strategies Nazi aggressors used to mislead themselves and others as they intensified processes of dehumanization that activated the death drive and resulted in genocide (p. 12).

> Dehumanization is both an (1) internal state that denigrates the victims' attitudes and behaviors and (2) external behaviors perpetrated against the victims that are justified by denigrations of the victims and their motivations. This internal denigrating appraisal results from a series of psychological defenses within the dehumanizer that are intended to shift responsibility, to whatever the degree

possible, onto others who are usually individuals or groups with less power. (p. 12)

Power dynamics are one of the important areas that should be recognized in discussions of dehumanization, although concepts such as cruelty toward victims and subjugation of those dehumanized may be more familiar. It is important to recognize that dehumanizing tactics are intended by the victimizer to establish and maintain power over weaker victims, thus supporting both the victimizer's and the victim's sense on internal and external levels of the greater power, "worth" and influence (psychological and/or physical) that resides with the victimizer.

With these points in mind, the following relatively concise definition of dehumanization is presented:

> **Dehumanization is the process by which a powerful individual or group (the victimizers) actively deny or withdraw a second group's (the victim's) sense of human worth or personal value. The victimizers' actions are intended to increase their own sense of power and personal worth at the expense of the victimized individual or group. Dehumanization results in the loss of the victims' sense of personal value, self-worth or "personhood."**

The victimizer's actions against their victims often are associated with extreme cruelty towards and suffering of the victim. Violence and a sense of revenge against the victim often accompanies dehumanization. The form dehumanization takes may reflect, both directly and symbolically, particular grievances of the perpetrator. Examples in a subsequent section of this chapter will be used to illustrate this definition and the

importance of unique conditions in and before the Nazi era that were reflected in the dehumanization of the Jews during this time.

Psychological and Social Contributions to Dehumanization of Jews in the Nazi Era

Dehumanization is at times a likely reaction when severe psychosocial stressors, such as war, poor economic conditions or social upheaval occur. This would be especially true when there is a history of long-standing intolerance and antisemitism that dates back over 2,000 years. When these difficulties occur, as discussed earlier, many people tend to assign blame for intractable or frightening conditions to a potentially vulnerable target, in this case, the Jews who controlled at least some access to loans, banks and other financial activities.

The sources of dehumanization in and prior to the Nazi era had familiar and longstanding roots as well as more contemporary ones. This section describes various sources of dehumanization at that time.

Longstanding Calumnies and Hostility Toward the Jews.

The previous chapter on antisemitism outlines a greater than 2,000-year history of antisemitism from antiquity into the modern period that intermittently erupted in mob violence, slaughter and pogroms against Jewish people living in particular locales. Jews were dehumanized as animals, Christ-killers, and murderers of children whose blood was used for ritual purposes. They were considered miserly money lenders and overseers and robbers of non-Jews' wealth. Popular prejudice had it that Jews wanted to control the world through an international web of deceit, illegal financial dealings and malign alliances with other Jews.

All of these antisemitic beliefs and biases led to the dehumanization of the Jews well before the increased vitriol of the Nazi era. The Jews were dispersed over much of the world as a result of religious persecution and ostracism, but this often led to the sense that this widely scattered group might be positioning itself for world domination. While conditions varied widely over the centuries and in different countries, the pattern of demonization and dehumanization was common. This was especially true in Christian Europe, although second class citizenship, higher taxes, the need to identify oneself as a Jew through clothing and deference to members of the dominant religion were present in Islamic societies also. The stated reasons for the dehumanization that occurred prior to the Enlightenment were linked to religion, but there were some racial overtones also (Landau, 2016).

The 19th and 20th centuries brought unique conditions that added further support in perpetrators' minds for the dehumanization of the Jewish people.

Emancipation of the Jews.

The Jewish emancipation that was a part of the larger Enlightenment began in the late 17th century. It offered promise to the Jews and to the larger German society through changing social and economic structures and interests. As Grab (1984) writes:

> The medieval compulsory regulations could not be maintained, because the dynamic new competitive and profit-oriented system based on economic efficiency and achievement demanded changes in the social relationships and tended to regard religious faith and ethnic extraction as a private matter. (p. 225)

It seemed for a time that changing social and economic conditions would improve the lot of Jews in central Europe.

Emancipation did not come about because of Enlightenment values, however, and does not seem to have been demanded by the German citizenry (unlike the situation in other European countries). German leaders felt that greater liberalization was in their own best interests. Capitalistic societies functioned better with greater freedoms. Grab (1984) continues:

> In Germany, however, where no successful revolution had taken place, the democratic consciousness of the people was less developed than in those countries which had liberated themselves from their traditional values. Without greater support of the people, the goals of emancipation would continually be threatened. (pp. 228-9)

Indeed, there was continued opposition to Jewish emancipation, integration and assimilation in the 18th and 19th centuries, although strides were made in these directions. "The battle for securing the emancipation of Jews had been long drawn-out and bitter" (Pulzer, 1964/1988, p. xix). Many Jews eagerly became involved in the larger society, joining the professions, attending secular education and participating more actively in civic society. The greater visibility and activity of the Jews in German society (and in the military) created problems, however. This became apparent in the latter part of the 19th century as Jews became scapegoats for economic misfortune. Jews also became identified with Bolshevism on one hand and with capitalism on the other. Familiar scapegoating was employed.

Antisemitism seems to have been especially prominent in the latter third of the 19th century into the 20th century. Its character changed, however, from longstanding prejudice based on religious intolerance. It became more political and racial in nature. As Pulzer (1964/1988) points out, speaking of that time,

> Modern political anti-Semitism is different from any earlier, sporadic outbreaks of Jew-baiting. It was brought about by conditions which had not existed before the last third of the nineteenth century; only then was it possible to organize political movements wholly or partly on the basis of anti-Semitism, and to make anti-Semitism part of a coherent set of ideas. (p. ix)

The "objective of all anti-Semites was to reverse the legal emancipation of the Jews, as enshrined in the Law of 3 July 1869…" (Pulzer, 1964/1988, p. xviii). This was not successfully accomplished, however, until enactment of the Nuremberg laws in 1933.

Religious antisemitism based on allegations against Jews for purported behaviors from centuries past did not cease, but racial antisemitism and the misuse of Darwinian theory became more prominent. Jews were subject to the familiar accusations that they were attempting to rule the world through their nefarious (mainly financial) activities. As would be true later in the Nazi era when Jews accounted for about 1% of the German population (Landau, 2016), but held a much higher percentage of positions in the professions and among educated elites, suspicions of Jewish influence and designs became prominent. By the first World War, these currents were clear in German society. Jews also would come to be blamed for the war or thought to be disloyal to Germany, or at least loyal only to the world-wide web of Jews and Jewish financial interests. Many Jews, perhaps attempting to prove their loyalty to Germany in the first World War through military service, served in numbers greater than their proportion in the population would suggest (Landau, 2016), but these efforts were often discounted and Jewish loyalty continued to be questioned.

For Pulzer (1964/1988), anti-Semitism of the Empire period (1871-1914) was a necessary but not sufficient condition for the Holocaust:

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The defeat of November, 1918 led to an extreme intensification of the anti-Jewish propaganda… Pan-German nationalists who had prepared the war and hoped to attain world hegemony, laid the responsibility for the defeat upon the Jews and accused them of having stabbed the brave German soldier in the back. (Grab, 1984, p. 232)

This is language similar to that used by Hitler in *Mein Kampf* as he described the Jewish role in World War I.

The success of the Jews, despite racial and political antisemitism, was evident through their visibility and activity in Germany society. Jews were appointed to high positions in the government, being both foreign and finance ministers. This success nonetheless was accompanied by their denigration that reached an ironic point in the Weimar Republic (1919-1933). It was at this time, as Grab (1984) indicates, "German Jewry reached the peak of its success in the Weimar Republic and was at the same time more threatened than ever before" (p. 232). This would become apparent with the rise of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nazi Party) in the 1920s.

It seems very likely that the dehumanization specific to antagonisms in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was in part due to the rising status and emancipation of the Jews, who were given full citizenship in 1871. Germans who preferred traditional volkish life and who were threatened by the Enlightenment and the Jewish emancipation that was a part of it, would have resented and felt threatened by the rise to equality and prominence of Jews in Germany.

Hitler (1925/1999) expresses this antagonism to the integration of Jews when he says in *Mein Kampf*,

In the course of more than a thousand years he has learned the language of the host people to such an extent that he now thinks he can venture in future to emphasize his Judaism less and place his 'Germanism' more in the foreground…

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> With this begins one of the most infamous deceptions that anyone could conceive of… Race, however, does not lie in the language, but exclusively in the blood, which no one knows better than the Jew… (p. 312)

It is clear here that in Hitler's eyes, there was no possibility of accepting Jews into German society and that Jews were a continual threat to the German people.

Dehumanization as a result of emancipation would have been intended to demonstrably and symbolically lower the Jew back to subhuman status, which would simultaneously affirm a higher status for the Aryan German citizen. Among the Nazis' first actions after assuming power in 1933 was to begin the process of withdrawing citizenship from the Jews, essentially lowering their status further compared to the Aryan. The full removal of citizenship was completed through the Nuremberg laws in 1935.

Ideology of National Socialism and Adolf Hitler

The development of the Nazi Party and the beliefs that governed the expression of its power and the power of its leader, Adolf Hitler, were based less on a carefully thought out philosophy and more on the implementation of actions based on romantic and mystical ideas that rejected the positivism and materialism present elsewhere in Europe at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries (Mosse, 1961). Romanticism had deep roots in German culture, and many of its citizens were unwilling to leave this cultural tradition behind under pressures of materialism and capitalism in the Enlightenment.

For many Germans who would come to value goals, ideals, prejudices and aspirations of the Nazi party and its precursor right-wing and ultraconservative groups, a clue to understanding and experiencing a sense of meaning in life did not come through Enlightenment goals and practices, but through "a belief in nature's cosmic life-force, a

dark force whose mysteries could be understood, not through science, but through the occult" (Mosse, 1961, p. 81). This ideology promised a national renewal and emphasized a unified German nation and a German people (*Volk*) that placed country above all else.

Many late 19th and early 20th century Germans believed individuals saw best with their souls rather than through the lens of modern rationality. These rightist views of the time, latching onto the much maligned 1871 Emancipation of the Jews, became fused with a glorification of an Aryan past. Views about the importance of mystery in understanding the world drew from both a romanticized vision of the past and from contemporary sources, such as the Theosophy of Madam Helena Blavatski, and the writings of Guido von List and Lanz von Liebenfels, that were deeply influential in promulgating racist ideas that the Aryan race was a master race that should rule the world, but was constantly thwarted by a materialistic and sinister Semitic race of Jews who continually plotted worldwide rule (Mosse, 1961).

In this way of thinking, the Jew stood in opposition to the volk: "The Jew, as an alien disrupter of the volk, represented capitalism and the Jewish ghetto…" (Vasey, 2006, p. 39).

> The volkish irrationality on which National Socialism was based found its epitome in the occult societies which flourished in nineteenth and early twentieth century….this activity took the form of a fusion of German volkish neo-pagan romanticism and the doctrine of Theosophy… (Vasey, 2006, p. 39)

National Socialism would provide a home for these unfounded, but influential, mystical traditions.

Theosophy "postulated a prehistoric past ruled by an elite of mystic initiates and inhabited by a succession of superior races… the latest of these superior races was the

Aryans" (Vasey, 2006, p. 43). Ariosophy is a doctrine that fused Theosophy, occultism,

volkish nationalism, Aryan racism and antisemitism (Vasey, 2006, p. 67, 68).

> The Ariosophists… combined volkish nationalism and racism with occult notions borrowed from the theosophy of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, in order to prophesy and vindicate a coming era of German world rule. Their writings described a prehistoric golden age, when wise gnostic priesthoods had expounded occult-racist doctrines and ruled over a superior and racially pure society. (Goodrick-Clarke, 1985/2004, p. 2)

It is clear that notions of Aryan supremacy had roots that were centuries-old.

Hitler (1924/1995) presumably did not object to Jews on the basis of religion, as

had so many before him. Hitler's antisemitism was based on notions discussed earlier of

race and the eternal conflict between races: the Aryan race and the Semitic race.

According to this view, Jews threatened the Aryan or Nordic race through assimilation,

contamination and intermarriage. Jews therefore had to be eliminated. Race, for Hitler,

was the key to understanding all of human history:

> The blood of every person and every race contained the soul of a person and likewise the soul of his race, the Volk. Hitler believed that the Aryan race, to which all 'true' Germans belonged, was the race whose blood (soul) was of the highest degree. (Vasey, 2006, p. 59)

It was not only a cleansing of the German people that Hitler sought, however. His

aim was a fulfillment of what he saw as Aryan destiny:

> *What we must fight for is to safeguard the existence and reproduction of our race and our people, the sustenance of our children and the purity of our blood, the freedom and independence of the fatherland, so that our people may mature for the fulfillment of the mission allotted it by the creator of the universe.* (Hitler, 1925/1999, p. 214)

For Hitler, the Jew was the greatest impediment to the aspirations of the Aryan race. He

wrote, "The mightiest counterpart to the Aryan is represented by the Jew" (Hitler, 1925/

1999, p. 300). Hitler felt it was crucial for the Aryan to focus on the malign presence of

the Jew in order to combat the influence of this Semitic menace. This was necessary to achieve the true destiny of the Aryan people and to produce a heightened form of civilization that would result after a successful confrontation with the Jewish threat. "Without the clearest knowledge of the racial problem and hence of the Jewish problem there will never be a resurrection of the German nation." (Hitler, 1925/1999, p. 339). Hitler is writing here of the elimination of the Jews.

For Hitler and the Nazis, "Aryans were, in essence, god-men on earth, but through blood poisoning lost their ruling position" (Vasey, 2006, p. 62). The greater mission of the Aryan race (and the German people) was to regain leadership in the world and to produce a higher civilization and higher Aryan culture. As Vasey (2006) writes, "If this were done, racially and thus spiritually pure human beings could be produced, ensuring Aryan world domination" (p. 62). The one major obstacle to the fulfillment of Aryan destiny was the Jew, "the poisoner of the blood (soul) of the Aryan race, thus inhibiting its spiritual growth and endangering its divine destiny" (Vasey, 2006, p. 62) Hitler believed that: "Once the Jew was purged from Europe, Germany would be able to produce pure Aryans, who would be physically and spiritually perfect human beings… demigod rulers…" (Vasey, 2006, p. 63). In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler (1925/1999) emphasizes, "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"* (p. 65). For Hitler, conflict with the Jews amounts to a holy crusade, a spiritual quest.

This desire, or one might say, "obsession" to raise the Aryan race to its rightful place as the master race of the world required a lowering or reduction of the Jew's status and the elimination of Jews from Europe. Hitler believed that the Aryan's fate was to rise

above mere human status to become what Aryans were, or potentially were: the master race. This aspiration required a dehumanization and diminution of the Jew, a member of the inferior Semitic race. The Nazi leader believed that as the Jew was humiliated, broken down and eliminated through various means (e.g. emigration, death), the Aryan's superiority over the eternal enemy would be confirmed. A cosmic war between good and evil, the spiritual Aryan and the materialistic Jew, would be decided once and for all.

This process of mortal hatred for an eternal enemy can also be understood from another, related perspective: Jonathan Haidt's (2012) Moral Foundations Theory. Haidt and colleagues emphasized evolutionary psychology, anthropological observations and experimental studies in the development of their theory. Cultural anthropologists have found that animals have specific responses to stimuli based on particular modules in their brains. Haidt (2012; 2013; Haidt & Joseph, 2011) argues that humans also react to conditions in their social lives that reflect specific behavioral modules. The reactions that animals and people have, at one point in their evolutionary history, can be modified or changed based on a particular event or stimulus' association with the original module. A given response may have original and current triggers. Haidt (2012) writes: "Cultural variation in morality can be explained in part by noting that cultures can shrink or expand the current triggers of any module" (p, 124). Animal neglect is a good example of a set of behaviors that are far more likely to induce disgust in the observer than would have been true to the current degree generations ago.

Haidt and colleagues have attempted to identify "universal cognitive modules upon which cultures construct moral matrices" (Haidt, 2012, p. 124). They determined adaptive challenges in people's social lives and focused on emotions and virtues

associated with the group of cognitive modules they identified, recognizing that cultural variations exist.

Haidt (2012) identified five adaptive challenges that stood out: care/ harm; fairness/ cheating; loyalty/ betrayal; authority/subversion; and sanctity/degradation. This fifth module, sanctity/ degradation, is often considered in discussing religious differences and conflicts among people. Haidt (2012) argues that the original adaptive challenge for this module was to avoid contamination. Waste products and diseased individuals were original triggers. Currently, taboo ideas, such as racism (for some), are triggers for this module, with the result being a sense of disgust in the affected individual. Cleanliness, piety and chastity are possible qualities that might be associated with those people whose personalities reflect the importance of this foundational module.

Haidt (2012) argues, based on this approach, that the emotion of disgust is important in understanding human responses to that which is thought to be filthy or impure. Disgust developed, according to Haidt (2012), to regulate consumption of food and to avoid contamination and infection from waste products that spread through physical contact or proximity. Disgust is the emotion that reflects the need to avoid contamination and reestablish purity. Original triggers predicting dangerous pathogens in other people, such as smell or particular sights, as in excrement, for example, would then be avoided.

Haidt argues that the Sanctity foundation renders some things "untouchable" in both good and bad ways. Objects that are dirty or polluted are to be avoided; objects that are hallowed or sacred must be protected from desecration. Haidt (2012) writes, "If we had no sense of disgust, I believe we would also have no sense of the sacred" (p. 149).

Hitler's reactions to the Jews were consistent with Moral Foundations Theory. Jews were disgusting, dirty, smelly (Hitler, 1925/1999, p. 57). They were unfit to live, but worse, through their living, they contaminated the pure Aryan race and prevented the Aryan race from realizing its purity and achieving the high station for which it, the superior race, was destined. This reaction was not only Hitler's personal reaction but was shared by other Nazis (and other citizens) who were eager or willing to eliminate the Jewish presence that they found disgusting from their midst. For Hitler, the increasingly severe dehumanization (and ultimate killing) of the Jews was entirely moral and reflected his attempts to rid society of "disgusting," impure elements that resided within it while also raising the Aryans' worth in order to become the master race they were destined to be.

As Hitler (1925/1999) wrote:

Thus, the highest purpose of a folkish state is concern for the preservation of those original racial elements which bestow culture and create the beauty and dignity of a higher mankind. We, as Aryans, can conceive of the state only as the living organism of a nationality which not only assures the preservation of this nationality, but by the development of its spiritual and ideal abilities leads it to the highest freedom. (p. 394)

For Hitler, the integrity of the Aryan race was paramount and must be defended at all costs.

Hitler argued that there was a major threat to the Aryan people and the vision he held for it, however. This threat was in the form of its eternal enemy, the Jews. "Only the total destruction of the Jews could thus save the Germans and enable them to enter the promised land" (Goodrick-Clarke, 1985/2004, p. 203). Dehumanization of increasing

severity was the road to this end. The following section provides examples of severe

dehumanization of the Jews in the Nazi era.

Illustrations and Comments about Dehumanization, Death and Murder of Jews in Ghetto and Concentration Camp Environments

The following accounts are mainly from Nazi survivor (witness) writings. They

reflect instances of dehumanization, as I have defined it earlier: Dehumanization is the

process by which a powerful individual or group (the victimizers) actively deny or

withdraw a second group's (the victim's) sense of human worth or personal value. The

victimizers' actions are intended to increase their own sense of power and personal worth

at the expense of the victimized individual or group. Dehumanization results in the loss

of the victims' sense of personal value, self-worth or "personhood." These examples also

reflect the unchallenged activation of the death drive and its resultant emphasis on killing

of the dehumanized vulnerable prisoner in ghetto and concentration camps.

Primo Levi (1996) was an Italian chemist. Speaking of his time after arrival at a

concentration camp, Levi (1996) says:

> One learns quickly enough to wipe out the past and the future when one is forced
> to… I push wagons, I work with a shovel, I turn rotten in the rain, I shiver in the
> wind; already my own body is no longer mine; my belly is swollen, my limbs
> emaciated, my face is thick in the morning, hollow in the evening; some of us
> have yellow skin, others grey. (pp. 36, 37)

There are several examples of dehumanization in this paragraph. Conditions were

apparently so horrible and frightening, with little food or suitable clothing, that Levi

learns to wipe out the past and the future. He is living in a timeless state, brought on by

these physical conditions and the trauma induced numbness he is experiencing. He is

denied living conditions suitable for a human being; his treatment is "inhumane." The

usual human experience consists of a past, present and anticipated future. He is no longer

human and has only the wretched present of starvation, pain, and useless work on which

to focus. Levi's body is "no longer mine." His body, an essential aspect of identity, is no

longer his. It has been separated from his sense of himself. He is dehumanized.

The following is Levi's (1996) description of the loss of identity one may

experience as a result of being tattooed with a number:

> He is Null Achtzehn. He is not called anything except that, Zero Eighteen, the last
> three figures of his entry number; as if everyone was aware that only a man is
> worthy of a name, and that Null Achtzehn is no longer a man. I think that even he
> has forgotten his name, certainly he acts as if this was so. When he speaks, when
> he looks around, he gives the impression of being empty inside… (p. 42)

People's names are essential aspects of their identity. The disregard for a person's

name dehumanizes that person and humiliates them. An aspect of their human identity

has been stolen. Compared to others who have names (the camp guards), the prisoner is

nothing, "Zero Eighteen." Levi was tattooed with this number, his body being used again

by others for clerical purposes and camp procedures. The tattooed number that is used to

call him begins with a zero, "nothing," as if that is who and what he is. As he says, he is

no longer a man. He has described the loss of further aspects of his identity as a human.

He has been dehumanized and treated like an animal, perhaps like a cow who is herded

into a cattle car and branded with numbers to keep track of them. The man who is

described seems empty inside. He has lost his human vitality, his soul. The man in Levi's

self-description has been dehumanized.

In this witness account, Levi, as is often the case, says nothing about his

tormenter. His energy, or what is left of it, seems focused on himself. Consistent with the

bidirectional approach to dehumanization emphasized here, however, it seems

appropriate to ask how the guard who tattooed Levi's arm and gave him a number he did not want might have reacted, or how a guard staring at a man who seemed "empty inside" might have reacted? We do not know the answers to these questions with certitude.

Browning (1992; 2017) does report that members of a police battalion commandeered to kill Jews generally (but not always) came to consider this a routine part of their jobs that most did not experience with either appreciation or revulsion. From a more analytic perspective, however, it must have been apparent to these men whose orders were to kill others, however dehumanized, that they, themselves, retained their names, ate suitable meals, had suitable surroundings and had not suffered trauma sufficient to make them "empty inside." On the other hand, the guards were presumably Aryan men whose superiority to the inferior Semitic Jew must have been reinforced for them. They were reminded through these measures that Aryans are supposedly meant to subjugate and dehumanize Jews who are not really people in any case. In many small ways, through the replacement of their names with numbers or the meager rations of food, for example, even in this one concentration camp, the Aryan wins the eternal battle with the Jews and humiliates them in the process. It is not the other way around.

The "Muselmanner" is an extreme example of individuals who were so dehumanized that they seemed to exist in a state somewhere between the living and the dead. The exact origin of the term is not known. The Muselmanner represents a stage of dehumanization even more severe than that described in the illustrations above. Levi (1996) describes the Muselmanner as individuals who have lost the "divine spark" and as individuals who are "empty", weak, existing, but no longer suffering. He goes on to write: "One hesitates to call them living: one hesitates to call their death death, in the face

of which they have no fear, as they are too tired to understand" (p. 90). The Muselmanner, feeble, emaciated and unable to do significant amounts of work, were among the first condemned to the gas chambers. This is not surprising. According to the Nazis' conception of human worth, the Muselmanner would be considered "useless" since both physical strength and motivation had left these individuals.

The Muselmanner had been starved by highly inadequate rations; they had been beaten, tortured and humiliated. They reflected the extreme trauma experienced by concentration camp prisoners. Food was rationed; hard labor was expected; illnesses went untreated, medical experimentation was torturous. Rigid obedience to dehumanizing procedures and rituals intended to demonstrate their (the Jews') inadequacy and guilt in relation to their Aryan tormentor guards were the norm. All of these factors contributed to what would have been physical, emotional and spiritual dehumanization. It does not seem from the accounts of Levi and others that this final stage, stepping from being barely alive to being totally dead, a heap of ashes in the crematoria, was at that point of much concern to the Muselmann whose fight for life had seemingly left him (or her), well before the gas was turned on. It is likely that both physical (physiological) and mental changes were at play in the exhausted and saddened condition of the bent over Muselmann who was often (but not always) shunned by fellow prisoners.

Bruno Bettleheim was a well-known psychoanalyst in America who had spent nearly a year (1938-1939) in Dachau and Buchenwald concentration camps. Bettleheim (1960) describes the Muselmanner as "walking corpses" (p. 151-152). They felt helpless and unable to affect their environment. Bettleheim (1960) considers the Muselmanner as "people who were so deprived of affect, self esteem, and every form of stimulation, so

totally exhausted, both physically and emotionally, that they had given the environment total power over them" (p. 151-152). The Muselmanner had been cruelly and willfully dehumanized. Their dehumanized state had activated both their own and their victimizers' death drives and they, themselves, based on these accounts, seemed indifferent to their own deaths—if even their impending death was a part of their awareness.

It must be recognized, however, that these accounts are based on a few descriptions from the mid 20th century of individuals who witnessed the Muselmanner directly. While not plentiful, there has been some recent scholarly work on the Muselmann from others who have reviewed archival records, photographs, other writings or witness accounts of the period. In general, these reports do not significantly challenge earlier accounts, but do add nuance and qualifications to witness accounts.

Becker and Bock (2020) emphasize that the Muselmanner cannot always be considered mute and passive prisoners. Not all Muselmanner were men, although it is likely that most were. Becker and Bock (2020) also report that some Muselmanner were pitied and allowed to rest from their duties, thus fostering rebound from their imminent demise.

While it seems from other accounts that Muselmanner were often avoided by fellow prisoners, sometimes they were integrated into the social system of the camps. It is likely that whether the Muselmann was integrated into the social system of the camp prisoners depended on the particular situation, the particular camps involved and the psychological and physical condition of the Muselmann. Becker and Bock's (2020) report that Muselmanner were sometimes able to regain their will to live suggests the

importance of social support for humans and the very negative impact of the loss of social support on prisoners.

Ultimately, however, it was death and dying, and the horrific and dehumanizing tactics that led to these outcomes that define the Muselmann. As Becker and Bock (2020) write: the Muselmanner embody a "shift of death into the realm of life" (p. 173). It is also the other way around, the Muselmanner exemplify a shift of life into death in the gruesome visions of their horrific conditions and their early passage to gas chambers that surprises no one after the dehumanizing tactics they had endured.

Shallcross (2020) also places an emphasis on the Muselmann's death as she writes about the "necrotopography" of the ghetto. She indicates that she coined the term "necrotopography" to indicate the presence of corpses as characteristic of the physical space of the ghetto. She considers necrotopography to define Holocaust spaces that "are saturated with either dying, or already dead, people" (p. 220). Death was omnipresent in the ghettos she describes, a conclusion that is not new or surprising but striking when the focus is placed squarely on death, one of the characteristics of the Nazi era that is the subject of this dissertation.

Jews cramped into ghettos were in unlivable conditions. Extreme crowding, illness infested rooms, exhausting work, unsustainable food rations, isolation from others, torture and death were the norm. Shallcross (2020) reports on the "Muselmanization" produced by the physical and psychological trauma present in the camps. She describes the Holocaust's "hostile sphere of isolation" (p. 222) and the corpses and near-corpses that seemed to be omnipresent.

Archival photographs, prisoner diaries and writings provided words and images of people lying on the street, emaciated, diseased appearing, nearly dead, sometimes begging for handouts and sometimes too far into their Muselmann trance-like state to seemingly be aware of passersby who try to avoid glancing at the horror of death and near-death all around them. Shallcross (2020) emphasizes that there were attempts, consistent with Jewish tradition, to care for the most downtrodden, to provide food for the needy, but it seems at some point much of the residents' energies of necessity went to caring for themselves and their families. This resulted in the isolation of the dead and dying Muselmann, but also to the isolation of other residents (temporarily in better conditions), from their even more unfortunate brethren.

Most important, from the perspective of this dissertation, is the sense that everything about the ghetto (and the concentration camp) ultimately revolved around dehumanization leading to death and dying. These were its ultimate purposes. As Shallcross (2020) writes in speaking about the horrific conditions set up by the Germans to sooner or later result in the deaths of all Jews in the ghetto:

> It is such conditions that produced the necrotopographic zone: dead and dying people collapsing suddenly and everywhere—in alleys, passageways, courtyards, gates, squares or on sidewalks—and becoming a common, variable, and sustainable physical presence that defies all past connotations of public space. (p. 225)

Death, fear of death and impending death commandeered the attention of all the dehumanized residents of the ghetto until some, the Muselmanner (or at least some of the Muselmanner), no longer seemed to have the mental or physical capacity to be concerned with such things.

Terrence Des Pres was a historian who was not, himself, a Holocaust survivor. His writing about the Holocaust is nonetheless deeply reflective and psychologically insightful. Des Pres (1976) comments about the treatment of Jews in concentration camps environments that were isolated and hidden from public view, making them tempting environments for heinous abuses as well as unacknowledged exterminations (Pingel, 1990). Phrased somewhat differently, these were environments in which the death drive, unbalanced by the life force, had free reign. They were, as Shallcross (2020) suggests, necrotopographic places, places in which activities devoted to the death drive commanded all available space and time, as well as all physical and mental activities.

Des Pres (1976) writes,

> Within the camp world all visible signs of human beauty, of bodily pride and spiritual radiance, were thereby to be eliminated from the ranks of the inmates. The prisoner was made to feel subhuman, to see his self-image only in the dirt and stink of his neighbor… In Auschwitz prisoners were forced to march in the mud, whereas the clean roadway was reserved for the SS. (p. 61)

Des Pres (1976) goes on to discuss the reasons for prisoner degradation,

> …here is a final, vastly significant reason why in the camps the prisoners were so degraded. This made it easier for the SS to do their job. It made mass murder less terrible to the murderers, because the victims appeared less than human. They *looked* inferior. (p. 61)

Dehumanized people, as Des Pres suggests, are viewed as less human, thus opening the door to activation of the death drive.

Des Pres writes about aspects of what it means to him to be human. There is human beauty; there is bodily pride; and there is spiritual radiance. Dehumanization robs the concentration camp inmate of all of these human characteristics. This theft of what it means to be human was intentional. The Jew was to think that he was dirty, unclean, and

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unfit to share the roadway with his SS guards. He was an inferior being whose righteous exploitation was justified. The SS guard was privileged compared to the Jewish prisoner because, although not stated explicitly here, the SS guard was a member of the superior race, entitled to walk on the clean roadway. The intentionally dehumanized Jews were required to walk in the mud, an apt symbol of their perceived worthlessness as human beings.

As indicated earlier, dehumanization should be understood from a relational, interactive perspective, whether this is direct or symbolical. The SS guard who walked on the clean roadway was made to feel superior to the prisoner marching in the mud. The SS guard and his life therefore were worth more in the sense of human currency than the Jew, who saw his self-image and worth in the dirt and stink of his neighbor. The Jew was one of a herd, whether it be like an animal on cattle cars coming to the concentration camps, working as a part of a road gang, living and sleeping in dense, crowded conditions or dying en masse in the crematoria. Dehumanization robbed the victim(s) of their individuality, and as the witness literature attests, interactions among them were sometimes of the lowest common denominator. As dehumanized humans who were now considered animals, they came to compete for resources (food) among themselves.

Human self-image is fostered in large part through human interactions. The self-image of the dehumanized Jew was now to be fostered through the dirt and stink of his neighbor. His interactional frame is of necessity that of the herded human animal, required to interact with other Jews as competitive animals and unable to interact in any meaningful way with the guards who walk on clean roadways.

The interactional frame by which dehumanization is understood in this chapter shows the coarse and subhuman interactions of the prisoners among themselves and the necessarily subservient posture of the prisoners towards the Nazi guards. The brief vignette quoted here also reveals that while dehumanization was horrific for the Jew, and potentially elevating for the Nazi guards, even the Nazi guards could not escape the fact that dehumanization was a fragile strategy for dominance. Des Pres (1976) comments that the prisoners were dehumanized in part to make them appear less human to the guards who murdered them indirectly as a result of the inhumane conditions of the concentration camp or directly in the gas chambers. The human interaction with the degraded, dirty, starving Jew made killing easier for the guards, but did not eliminate entirely the difficulty of killing another human being, however inferior and threatening the guard was made to believe the Jew was. Dehumanization as a strategy to make genocide easier was only partly successful. At least for Des Pres, dehumanization of the Jew affected both victim and victimizer, although obviously in vastly different ways and to vastly different degrees.

Emil Fackenheim was a Jewish theologian and philosopher whose emphasis on the importance of maintaining Judaism after the Holocaust has been important in post-Holocaust Jewish thought. He, himself, was imprisoned briefly in a concentration camp after Kristallnacht and ultimately made his way to Canada where he practiced as a Reform Rabbi and wrote extensively. Later, he emigrated to Israel.

Fackenheim's (1982/1996) understanding of the Holocaust and the motivation and psychology of the Nazis aligns well with the emphases in this dissertation. He condemns the moral vacuity of the Nazi enterprise and writes of the dehumanized

Muselmanner being the end product of the Nazi effort to murder human souls while their bodies were still alive. He emphasizes that the concentration camp was the "inmost essence of the Third Reich" (Fackenheim, 1982/1996, p. 99), during which torture and murder were committed on a scale previously unknown.

Unbelievably to Fackenheim (1982/1996), the "worship" of both torture and murder were the regime's goals. As he describes it, the Nazi enterprise was consistent with Freud's writings on the death drive. Murder was the goal, and torture and the zest for killing were features that accompanied gratuitous murder. The ends of "degradation, torture and murder… had no higher purpose but were themselves both highest and 'unshakable'" (p. 182). As Fackenheim (1982/1996) points out, even Himmler's desire to stop the genocide of Jews at war's end in order to use them as bargaining chips to make peace with the Western allies was unacceptable to Hitler. The death drive was blind in its tenacity and in its fury, possibly rivalling even the fate of the Third Reich itself in importance. Fackenheim (1982/1996) writes: "the 'extermination' of the Jewish people became an end more ultimate than the Third Reich's very survival" (p. 231).

As indicated in the next chapter, although Hitler and the Nazi rulers may not have planned for genocide with precise forethought, dehumanization served in many cases to demoralize and weaken the resolve of the Jews, deaden the response of the "ordinary" people of Germany to the ultimate fate of the Jews, and prepare both groups for the activation of the death drive that was enacted through mass murder. Ordinary people developed new ideals, which to Fackenheim (1982/1996) were ideals that resulted in dehumanization, torture and ultimately in murder. The Muselmann is considered the most characteristic and original product of this delusional system.

The Muselmann is also an example of the death of our notions of what we expect of human beings and how we expect human beings to treat one another. For Fackenheim (1982/1996), the notion of whom man is and whom God is died at Auschwitz. For Fackenheim, the horrific events of the Third Reich and Auschwitz go beyond barbarism. They are incomprehensible using usual human forms of understanding. In the language of the metapsychology that is employed here, the blind fury and incomprehensibility of the death drive, not balanced by forces of Eros, are on full display. Freud grasped these horrific truths in writing *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* after World War I. Human beings, at their deepest level, want to unite with others (Eros), but they also want to destroy and kill others. People create many delusional facades to cover the predilection to kill, although Freud argued that the tendency to kill others is a basic aspect of human nature. Fackenheim has expressed much of this understanding in his writings about the Holocaust that, itself, stands as a prime example of uncontrollable genocidal behavior.

Summary

Dehumanization is the withdrawal or removal from a person or group of that which is of essential human value. This brief definition provides an important description of dehumanization but raises immediate questions about what is "essential," what is "human," or what is "essentially human." Several investigators have tried to address these questions, most notably Haslam (2006) and his group (e.g. Haslam et al., 2013) who have concluded that a series of traits distinguish two forms of humanness, human uniqueness (UH) and human nature (HN). Haslam and his group have argued that dehumanization occurs when either of these two forms of humanness are denied to others. Haslam et al. (2013) emphasize that: "Human uniqueness- based dehumanization

represents the other as animal-like and human nature-based dehumanization represents the other as machine- or object-like" (p. 31).

My approach to a definition and greater understanding of dehumanization has been experiential and has emphasized victims' experiences as well as the experiences of perpetrators in what can be understood at least in part as an interactional paradigm. The literature on witness accounts and testimonies during the Nazi era provide many examples of dehumanization and the reactions of victims and to a lesser degree, of perpetrators. Comments such as that of des Pres (1976) provide a deeply emotional and broad view of the dehumanization experience that is not fully captured by experimental studies. As noted earlier, des Pres (1976) says, "Within the camp world all visible signs of human beauty, of bodily pride and spiritual radiance, were thereby to be eliminated from the ranks of the inmates." (p. 61) Dehumanization here entails loss of at least three aspects of personal identity: human beauty, bodily pride, and spirituality.

In this chapter, I have also suggested that the specific focus of dehumanization in the Nazi era went beyond the ongoing traditional dehumanization of centuries before and had specific recent antecedents in the culture. One such antecedent appears to have been the emancipation of the Jews, itself a product of the Enlightenment, that may have created an environment of fear about loss of position, status and stability that a segment of the German population was unwilling to accept. When dehumanization is understood in the relational paradigm suggested above, it seems that many Germans dehumanized the Jews, or further withdrew human status from them, to maintain the German citizenry's position of dominance. Dehumanization, in this sense, diminishes the status of the Jew in order to maintain the more exclusive position of the non-Jew.

I have also considered a more subtle but similar hierarchical and interactional approach to dehumanization and its manifestations when discussing spiritual aspirations of Germans in and before the Nazi era. It may be that the extreme antipathy Hitler and the Nazis had for Jews can be explained on the basis of centuries-long antisemitism along with issues of nationalism and resistance to emancipation of the Jews, although this is unlikely to account for the full picture of visceral hatred evident in Hitler's writings. The additional factor considered here is the development of Nazi ideology, with its strongly occult and spiritualistic influences that were prominent toward the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. The development of Nazi ideology emphasized that history was now calling the Aryan people to live out their destiny and establish the Aryan people as the world's dominant, master race. They were the chosen ones but faced the Semitic Jew, their eternal enemy and competitor for this status. In this view, the Jew had to be defeated if the Aryan people were to prevail. Dehumanization was a direct and symbolic step on this path.

Jews, of course, had long engendered hostility and been criticized for purportedly considering themselves to be God's "chosen ones" (e.g. Deut 14:2), who were somehow superior to others. Dehumanization of the Jews by the Nazis created a clear image and statement that refuted the notion of Jewish superiority and replaced it with Aryan superiority. Aryans now subjugated the Jews and gained revenge for centuries of Jewish statements of "chosenness." Aryans had come to see themselves as existing on a higher, ascendant plane of human evolution that looked down upon the Jews, who were lowered further into a dehumanized subordinate and subhuman position. Given the conditions (and opportunities) of war, dehumanization through ideology supplemented other more

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traditional and newer prejudices that had denigrated the Jews. Dehumanization and its

effects on Jews and Germans ultimately facilitated the activation of the death drive with

its resultant genocide and mass murder. The death drive, itself, is discussed in the next

chapter.

Before proceeding to discuss the death drive, however, a cautionary note about

the hypothesis suggested above that dehumanization of victims is associated with the

infliction of harm to these individuals, is appropriate. Over (2021) terms this assertion

"the dehumanization hypothesis" and she presents a series of challenges to this view.

These challenges affirm that comparisons to non-human entities are not restricted to

members of out-groups and are not necessarily negative (friends and enemies in the

ingroup can be thought of favorably or not favorably as "lions or tigers"); that not all

outgroups are described in non-human terms; that denying outgroup members some

mental attributes does not necessarily deny them other "human" traits that may be

positive; and that being seen as less than human does not automatically predict the

ingroup's desire to inflict harm. These challenges appear to me to express appropriate

caution about over valuing and over estimating the ability of dehumanization to explain

particular harmful or adverse outcomes, but do not invalidate it.

Goldenberg et al. (2021) respond to Over's (2021) challenges by agreeing about

the importance of specificity in describing the effects of dehumanization. They continue

to consider the dehumanization hypothesis valuable, but recognize it is not always true or

applicable to particular situations. They recognize that dehumanization is not the only

way outgroups (or ingroups) are marginalized. They point out that dehumanization alone

may not be sufficient to result in harm to members of the outgroup. Characteristics of the

ingroup, the outgroup and the conditions and beliefs of the parties involved are all important. Goldenberg et al (2021) emphasize that "the challenge…in our opinion, is to understand when out-group (and in-group) members are at risk of being dehumanized and when this is especially likely to lead to harm" (p. 17). This chapter has pointed out some of the conditions, such as long-standing antisemitism, resentment toward emancipation, the emergence of "political" antisemitism, and socio-economic and political stressors, such as the German humiliation in World War I as likely conditions leading to outgroup (Jewish) dehumanization. The following chapter on the death drive will emphasize conditions that appear to have facilitated the movement from dehumanization to activation of the death drive and murder.

Chapter Four: The Death Drive

Introduction

In 1920, shortly after the First World War had claimed millions of lives and a tumultuous interwar period was beginning, Sigmund Freud proposed a controversial addition to his understanding of the human mind. He was now considering whether there was a "death instinct" that would stand in contrast to Eros, or the life force that was a pillar of psychoanalysis. Freud actually had been considering the existence of a death instinct, a predisposition to violence, destruction and war that exists in humankind for some time, although he, himself, retained doubts about the validity of the concept.

Freud (1920) did not rigorously define the death instinct, nor did he provide details as to when or under what conditions it manifests. He did argue that activities and behaviors reflecting the death instinct interacted with its opposite, Eros or the life force, to produce a variety of behaviors that included milder forms of violence or destruction of property as well as producing more severe forms of violence, such as occurred in genocides (Freud, 1930).

Freud's "death instinct" came to be termed the "death drive" to avoid the assumption that the term "death instinct" suggests an instinct of unproven biological origin. The existence of a death instinct/drive nonetheless has been controversial from its beginning (Money-Kyrlie, 1955; Parens, 2011), with many psychoanalysts continuing to refrain from employing the term at all, even as a descriptor for an innate tendency of

humankind toward violence and destruction. Others, such as Kernberg (2009), consider the term valuable in a clinical sense. Laub and Lee (2003) argue that the term "death instinct" is indispensable in describing the clinical condition of individual patients who have suffered trauma, although they too demur from using the term in a more general sense.

This dissertation argues that a significant modification of Freud's notion of the death instinct is a valuable aid in understanding the results of increasingly severe dehumanization, such as that which was present in the Nazi era and associated with the murder of millions of Jews in the Holocaust. In this chapter, I provide my conceptualization of the death drive and address controversies that exist in psychoanalytic circles around the existence and nature of a death drive. I argue that there were strong psychological and social forces that activated and accompanied the death drive and contributed to the deaths of over fifty million people in the Holocaust (Dawidowicz, 1989; Landau, 2016). Illustrations from witness/survivor accounts in the Holocaust provide additional context for the conceptualization of the death drive that I provide. In accord with accepted practice, I use the term "death drive" to refer to what Freud originally called the "death instinct," unless the latter term is important for meaning or used in quoted material. I also avoid using the term "Thanatos" that is often used synonymously with death instinct/death drive since Freud, himself, apparently did not use this term in any of his writings (Lind, 1991).

As I wrote in Chapter 1,

In my understanding of murder, and specifically murder as genocide exemplified by the Holocaust, I emphasize that the concept of the death drive is a metapsychological one, as Freud asserted. The death drive cannot be traced back

to precise incidents or personal relationships with confidence. Rather, considering the death drive as an overriding concept suggests that a series of otherwise inadequately described behavioral or socio-environmental events may lead to or activate the more abstract concept of a death drive, but that these other explanations by themselves are limited or inadequate. (p.14)

In the formulation offered in this dissertation, *I emphasize that the death drive refers to processes of aggression and destruction that lead to the death and negation of others and that are intended symbolically to demonstrate dominance, control, subjugation or retaliation against the victim.* There are numerous instances cited in this dissertation and more extensively in the Holocaust witness literature in the bibliography that demonstrate instances of killing and murder that seem to be senseless by usual standards of human conduct, excessive to the situation, and even sadistically 'joyful' for the victimizer. Some Nazi personnel seemed to have had an almost zestful approach to the brutality they expressed or the torment they inflicted. Here, as is true in the understanding of tactics used in dehumanizing others, power dynamics are important. Killing others signifies that the victimizer is more powerful than the victim. The killer has lived, survived and controlled the fate of the weaker victim. Issues of power, dominance and control were especially important in Nazi Germany, where the strength and power of the "Aryan" individual and state were extremely highly valued.

I also indicated in Chapter 1 (p. 16), that

Freud argued that the death drive and Eros were counterbalancing life forces. Eros is the force of creativity, growth and positive movement or change. Ideally, these two drives compensate for or balance each other. One can look at the Nazi era as a case study of how extreme dehumanizing tactics, such as unprovoked aggression against the Jews, forced relocation to ghettos, and revocation of citizenship and its protections suppressed and even prohibited Eros, disabling its function of balancing the ever-present death drive. (p. 16)

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Shallcross' (2020) concept of necrotopographic zones (that are described later in this chapter) that were zones where death seemingly was omnipresent reflects a loss of the counterbalancing forces of Eros, or the life force. With these points in mind, the following is my own more inclusive definition of the death drive.

The Death Drive: A Modified Conceptualization

The death drive reflects tendencies toward dissolution, deterioration and death that occur normally in biological systems. It is in conflict with processes of procreation, creativity and growth that occur in these same systems. The death drive also refers to processes of aggression and destruction that lead to the death and negation of others and that are intended to symbolically establish dominance, control, subjugation or retaliation against the victim. Less extreme manifestations of the death drive result from conflicts with Eros, the life force. These conflicts are expressed in milder behavioral forms and often through verbal metaphors. These less extreme manifestations of the death drive demean victims, reduce their sense of personhood, self-worth and personal value and are continuous with and overlap with processes of dehumanization.

The following provides a description of the death drive, as conceptualized by Freud (1920; 1923/1960; 1930; 1933).

The Death Drive: Origins, Characteristics and Manifestations

Freud (1920) begins *Beyond the Pleasure Principle,* his first attempt to describe the death drive in some detail, with a restatement of a foundational belief in psychoanalysis: "In the theory of psycho-analysis we have no hesitation in assuming that the course taken by mental events is automatically regulated by the pleasure principle" (p.

7). Tensions in the mind that are "unpleasurable" ultimately result in "a lowering of that tension—that is, with an avoidance of unpleasure or a production of pleasure" (Freud, 1920, p. 7). Freud (1920) recognizes that this approach to theory is a "metapsychological"' one (p. 7). It is a broad, sometimes speculative approach that goes beyond or transcends an exploration of conscious processes and experimental work.

Although the pleasure principle is foundational, several experiences led Freud (1920) to question its monopolistic place in psychoanalytic thinking since these experiences could not be understood adequately on the basis of the pleasure principle. These events included the dreams of patients (often war veterans) who had had trauma that seemed to repetitively draw the patient back to the traumatic experience; the seemingly purposeless, repetitive push and pull nature of a game his young grandson was playing when the child's mother was absent; the repetitive regression to earlier levels of development in transference reactions his patients exhibited; and the self-injurious behavior exhibited by some people. Many of these incidents were repetitive and compulsive in nature.

Recurrent dreams of traumatized soldiers are a good example of the failure of the pleasure principle to explain all mental conditions. Freud's dream theory held that wish fulfillment in the service of the pleasure principle produced dream images that were intended to relieve anxiety. In the dreams of traumatized war veterans, however, this did not seem to be the case. The dreams of these individuals led them back to the situation that had been traumatic for them. The individual was not able to access the pleasure principle for relief of his suffering.

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Freud (1920) stated,

These dreams are endeavoring to master their stimulus retrospectively, by developing the anxiety whose omission was the cause of the traumatic neurosis. They thus afford us a view of a function of the mental apparatus which, though it does not contradict the pleasure principle, is nevertheless independent of it and seems to be more primitive than the purpose of gaining pleasure and avoiding unpleasure. (p, 32)

This was an exception to the rule that dreams are intended to fulfill wishes. These dreams recreated traumatic situations repetitively, rather than symbolically attempt to reduce anxiety

Freud (1920) goes on to speculate that perhaps he has come upon a universal attribute of instincts and perhaps of organic life in general which has not hitherto been clearly recognized or at least not explicitly stressed.

It seems, then, that an instinct is an urge inherent in organic life to restore an earlier state of things which the living entity has been obliged to abandon under the pressure of external disturbing forces; … it is…the expression of the inertia inherent in organic life. (p. 36)

Proceeding from this inherent inertia that Freud finds in organic life, and what he considers the tendency of life to restore an earlier state of being, he postulates that the "'*aim of all life is death*' and, looking backwards, that *'inanimate things existed before living ones.'*" (Freud, 1920, p. 38, ital. in original)

These highly speculative assumptions soon led to the conclusion that while sexual instincts conform to the pleasure principle, another instinct that came to be called the death instinct does not. The death instinct aims to "restore an earlier state of things" (Freud, 1920, p. 41), and human beings therefore have instinctual pressures to return to an inanimate condition. An instinct toward death would therefore be opposed to Eros, the prominent sexual or life instincts. Further, according to Freud (1920), these new

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developments in psychoanalytic theory have confirmed that the psyche is bipolar, as originally thought, but the poles now are life instincts (Eros) and death instincts rather than ego instincts and sexual instincts. Sadism, previously considered to reflect the sexual instinct, now is placed among the death instincts, a change that (as illustrated presently) seems to fit well with episodes of cruelty in ghetto and concentration camp settings.

Freud (1920) recognizes that his new scaffolding for psychoanalytic theory was highly speculative. He indicates that he, himself, is not sure of its veracity, but "some of the analogies, correlations and connections …deserve consideration" (p. 60). Oddly, perhaps, Freud speaks only fleetingly about aggression in this work. The emphasis is on his speculation that humans desire to return to their original inanimate state (or death). It was not until later that Freud emphasized the other aspect of the death instinct, aggressive behavior towards others, and at times towards oneself.

Freud (1923/1960) reviews his notions of Eros and the death instinct that he introduced in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* in his subsequent work, *The Ego and the Id.* The death instinct, he indicates, is represented by sadism. He again emphasizes that his conceptualization of the death instinct is supported by biological studies and reiterates his hypothesis that the task of the death instinct

> is to lead organic life back into the inanimate state… The emergence of life would thus be the cause of the continuance of life and also at the same time of the striving towards death; and life itself would be a conflict and compromise between these two trends. (Freud, 1923/1960, p. 38)

Freud (1923/1960) goes on to assert that in his hypothetical formulation the physiological processes of anabolism (i.e. metabolic processes associated with molecular build-up) are associated with Eros, the life force, and the processes of catabolism (i.e.

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metabolic processes associated molecular break-down), are associated with the death instinct. Both instincts are active in all living substances, although they are in unequal proportions. Freud (1923/1960) argues that the destructive impulses of the death instinct can be

> diverted on to the external world through the instrumentality of a special organ. This special organ would seem to be the muscular apparatus; and the death instinct would thus seem to express itself…as an instinct of destruction directed against the external world and other organisms. (p. 39)

Freud's description of the death instinct is not entirely clear in these passages. Phenomenologically, the illustrations he provides appear related, but these do not necessarily support the existence of a death instinct. He supports his hypothesis by using biological analogies without sufficient support or proof of their relationship to the psychological processes he describes. He only briefly mentions externally directed aggression that is a crucial part of how the death instinct came to be understood in the tumultuous times during the interwar years. Later work addresses this point but does not clarify his unsupported speculations related to biological analogies of the bipolarity of Eros and death instincts.

In *"Why War?"*, Freud (1933) had an opportunity to clarify his views, especially around aggression, as he responds to a letter written to him from Albert Einstein, the noted physicist. Einstein had written to Freud in 1932 under the auspices of the League of Nations. The physicist's goal was to develop a group of the world's intellectual leaders to address issues around the "war menace." He wished Freud to participate in this endeavor. Freud wrote a lengthy letter to Einstein that was later published under the title, *"Why War?"* In this letter, Freud discusses his views of the death instinct and his thoughts on

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this subject are expressed more clearly here than in his earlier writings. Freud's emphasis now is on the external expression of the death drive, although he does not omit his notions of humankind's strivings for an inanimate existence that he associates with a sense of peace.

Freud (1933) points out that "the slaughter of a foe gratifies an instinctive craving" and that there is the "possibility of using an enemy for servile tasks if his spirit is broken and his life spared. Here violence finds an outlet not in slaughter but in subjugation," a comment consistent with the earlier discussion in this dissertation on dehumanization in the Nazi era and on the enslavement of Jews in concentration camps before their extermination.

Freud (1933) describes the two classes of instincts in *Why War*. He recognizes that this framework is a "mythology" of psychoanalysis. These two instinctual classes are the familiar Eros and the death instinct that Freud considers within the broad concept of the law of opposites. This concept, as he suggests, is familiar to Einstein and the study of physics. The first class, Eros, is associated with a tendency to "conserve and unify"; the second class of instincts, the death instincts, is associated with the tendency to "destroy and kill." He writes to Einstein that these instincts are "the well-known opposites, Love and Hate, transformed into theoretical entities; they are perhaps, another aspect of the eternal polarities, attraction and repulsion, which fall within your province."

Freud (1933) goes on to describe aspects of the death instinct in its internal and external manifestations.

> We are led to conclude that this instinct functions in every living being, striving to work its ruin and reduce life to its primal state of inert matter....The death instinct becomes an impulse to destruction when, with the aid of certain organs, it directs

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its action outward, against external objects. The living being, that is to say, defends its own existence by destroying foreign bodies.

Freud (1933) seems to suggest here that violent, aggressive and destructive actions against others reflect an individual's resistance to his or her own death and to again becoming inert matter.

When Freud formally introduced his notion of a death drive in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle,* his emphasis was on an individual's internal movement towards dissolution and death. Subsequent writing showed that his view of the death drive included an aggressive component that could be channeled outward in ways that produced destruction, death and war. Freud's view of how the externalization of the death drive becomes manifest is clarified for both individuals and society in his book, *Civilization and its Discontents:*

> The inclination to aggression is an original, self-subsisting instinctual disposition in man… This aggressive instinct is the derivative and main representative of the death instinct which we have found alongside of Eros and which shares world-dominion with it…. the meaning of the evolution of civilization is no longer obscure to us. It must present the struggle between Eros and Death, between the instinct of life and the instinct of destruction, as it works itself out in the human species. (Freud, 1930, p. 122)

This dualism between Eros and the death drive (that is often manifested in aggression) is in a state of continual conflict in civilization and in the individual psyche. Speaking of aggression, Freud (1930) says, "It is not easy for men to give up the satisfaction of this inclination to aggression. They do not feel comfortable without it" (p, 114). The aggressive drive is persistent as it fights doggedly with Eros, the life instinct, "in the struggle for the life of the human species" (Freud, 1930, p. 122).

> Even where it emerges without any sexual purpose, in the blindest fury of destructiveness, we cannot fail to recognize that the satisfaction of the instinct is

accompanied by an extraordinarily high degree of narcissistic enjoyment, owing to its presenting the ego with a fulfillment of the latter's old wishes for omnipotence. (Freud, 1930, p. 121)

This narcissistic enjoyment and wish for omnipotence provide support for the expression of sadism that purveyors of the death drive often exhibit when unconstrained by social or personal inhibitions, as illustrated later by many incidents occurring during the Holocaust.

In usual times and circumstances that are not too stimulating to the individual, aggression is constrained through the development of "guilt," an internal state fostered by what Freud terms the super-ego. In this scenario, an individual's aggressiveness is taken over by the super-ego that, in the form of what is called "conscience," acts out the same aggressiveness against the ego that the latter would have displayed against other individuals. The individual experiences a sense of guilt, and in some cases, an acceptance of punishment. The sense of guilt and the fear of punishment are the mental states that aid civilization to obtain "mastery over the individual's dangerous desire for aggression by weakening and disarming it and by setting up an agency within him to watch over it…" (Freud, 1930, pp. 123-24).

The specific mechanisms and phases of conscience formation on individual and group levels are complicated and detailed from a psychoanalytic perspective, although the individual and group processes involved with the development of aggression are similar,

> When, however, we look at the relation between the process of human civilization and the developmental or educative process of individual human beings, we shall conclude without much hesitation that the two are very similar in nature, if not the very same process applied to different kinds of object. (Freud, 1930, pp. 139-140)

The development of conscience, therefore, is important for the individual, the community and the culture.

From this perspective, Nazi Germany worked to reduce its own sense of guilt and the collective and individual guilt its citizens might have experienced in the Holocaust in part by dehumanizing Jews, and thereby denying them the humanity that might have energized the German conscience. The Nazi program also was successful because its various efforts (including dehumanization and systematized propaganda) invited aggression and fostered the ascendency of the death drive while it obscured the instincts associated with Eros, at least as related to non-Aryans. The situation then became favorable for what Freud called the "the greatest hindrance to civilization—namely, the constitutional inclination of human beings to be aggressive towards one another…" (Freud, 1930, p. 142).

Freud (1930, p. 122) emphasizes the importance of Eros as a balance to the drive toward death and destruction. This is true for individuals as it is for civilization. He writes,

> Civilization is a process in the service of Eros, whose purpose is to combine single human individuals, and after that families, then races, peoples and nations, into one great unity, the unity of mankind. (Freud, 1930, p. 122)

Mankind's aggressive instinct "is the derivative and main representative of the death instinct…" It is in conflict with Eros, and therefore is against this civilizing program of humankind. The life instinct and the death instinct challenge one another in the development of civilization. Eros provides energy toward creation, integration and progressive movement with others of the human species. The death drive fights against

these actions as it battles for dominance and control through aggressive and destructive behaviors and ideologies.

The lack of this balance as a result of the uncontrolled actions of the death drive and its associated destruction in the Holocaust is clear in Shallcross's (2020) discussion of places of necrotopography noted in the previous chapter. The Nazi developed ghetto and concentration camps, including the extermination camps, were, in the terms Freud uses here, dominated entirely by the death drive. Destruction, negation, sadism, torture and killing were the omnipresent characteristics of these necrotopographic sites. Eros was shunned and death was embraced. In terms consistent with *Civilization and its Discontents*, civilization became regressed and nearly annulled.

Civilization and its Discontents was published in 1930, during the interwar years. Fascism had already taken hold in Italy, but Hitler had not yet come to power in Germany. Freud had lived through personal tragedy (the death of his daughter) when he wrote *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* ten years earlier. He had witnessed the carnage of World War I and had treated soldiers suffering from trauma. Humankind's attempts to elevate Eros (and civilization's development) after World War I through the League of Nations would prove to be a failure. Hitler and the National Socialist movement offered false hopes of Aryan supremacy and world domination that rested on dangerous beliefs that rejected Eros and elevated the death drive to heights that would destroy much of Europe and the lives of countless millions.

Freud's (1930) tone at the end of *Civilization and its Discontents* about the future of humankind is noncommittal. He asserts:

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The fateful question for the human species seems to me to be whether and to what extent their cultural development will succeed in mastering the disturbance of their communal life by the human instinct of aggression and self-destruction. It may be that in this respect precisely the present time deserves a special interest. (Freud, 1930, p.145)

Freud writes that the "eternal Eros" will assert itself against the "immortal" death drive, but the outcome of this struggle is not clear. Will civilization become ascendant, or will its destruction come to the fore? Indeed, malevolent forces in central Europe did not want the death drive to be controlled since controlling the death drive would have meant that Hitler's plans for the aggressive quest for land in the East, elimination of the Jews from Europe, and domination of the world would all fail.

Surprisingly perhaps, the concept of the death drive expressed clearly in *Civilization and its Discontents* (as well as the topic of the death drive in relation to the Holocaust itself or to other genocides) does not seem to have gained the attention of psychoanalysts to the degree that might be expected. One of the reasons for this involves Freud's notion that sociology is mainly individual psychology applied to groups (Lothane, 2012). This is also true of the topic of the death drive in relation to the Holocaust. Freud wrote about both psychological topics that were intended to learn about and help the suffering of the individual and about topics that might be termed "applied psychology" or "social psychology," in which he applied psychoanalytic insights to social issues and social problems. *Civilization and its Discontents* is an example of this latter effort (Lothane, 2012).

Freud's belief that sociology was essentially applied psychology was a contention that was (and is) strongly disputed among many psychologists and non psychologists (including sociologists). Many psychoanalysts seemingly were not willing to join Freud

in travelling a road of social application of psychoanalytic principles that they felt were too speculative and ungrounded in clinical observations.

The use of the Holocaust in this dissertation as a case illustration that involves the death drive emphasizes the importance of considering the death drive in these larger social contexts, such as in large groups or wars. Evaluating the death drive in individual clinical situations sometimes obscures larger patterns since individual patients or contexts may always have mitigating circumstances that allow one to suggest there is no need to postulate a death drive if the perpetrator has an individual situation or clinical diagnosis (such as antisocial personality disorder or depression) that might help to explain one or more killing episodes.

A more distanced view of events involving mass killings and larger groups of perpetrators allows a different perspective that suggests less the involvement of an individual killer's psychopathology and more the phenomenon of a drive that is activated, supported or encouraged in a group setting, as seems to be true of the death drive. The example of a killing spree in *Neighbors* (Gross, 2001) noted later in this dissertation is instructive in this way.

It is also important to reflect on the question, why, despite appropriate literature searches, there seems to be relatively few references to the death drive in the psychoanalytic literature, given Freud's strong defense of it. Another question, and one that I believe is related to the first, is the question why there are relatively few references to the Holocaust in the psychoanalytic literature given the importance of topic. In this context, a recent text that is intended to provide a "more comprehensive psychology of the Holocaust" (Mastroianni, 2019) indexes only 5 pages out of over 400 pages total that

is devoted to "psychoanalytic approaches" to the Holocaust. This otherwise valuable text provides no indexed references to either the death instinct/drive or to Freud, himself.

Kuriloff (2014) and others have provided valuable perspectives on the question whether there has been a relative oversight or even avoidance of the Holocaust itself and the death instinct/drive in psychoanalytic literature. Kuriloff (2014) recognizes that the death instinct/drive had always been controversial among analysts even when Freud was alive. She indicates that other factors may have contributed to the avoidance of this topic, including the stress of relocation (usually to America or England) for Viennese Jewish psychoanalysts, who, like Freud, fled for their lives during the Nazi era.

Kuriloff (2014) also interviewed a number of analysts personally. She quotes Martin S. Bergmann (whose own work is referenced later) as saying that when psychoanalysis left its Viennese homeland, it was 'sanitized' by Freud's followers who wished to avoid "an awareness of the dark and destructive urges confronting human beings…in favor of a more 'optimistic' view" (p. 59). This was in keeping with the refugees' desire to identify with "prevailing American optimism. She also quotes the Holocaust survivor, Dori Laub, who is referenced in this dissertation around clinical uses of the death drive, as saying, "'Post war psychoanalysts, even emigres, have a difficult time with the Holocaust. They used theory as an armor against it'" (p. 59). Another perspective held by the Jewish emigre analyst, Erich Fromm, was that the notion of a death instinct considers human beings "passive recipients of their nature" (p. 60), a psychological condition that he felt should be confronted.

Freud, himself, Kuriloff (2014) argues, may have believed that Nazism was too threatening during the Nazi era to be addressed by those who were most vulnerable to

what it was and what it had done. The environment that received Freud and his followers in England and in America was strange to them and at times uninviting. It may not have seemed like a time to develop the field more creatively beyond (or in addition to) what Melanie Klein and her followers offered around her related but different notion of a death instinct in England.

Kuriloff (2014) writes about the abandonment of the death instinct as a useful concept by Freud's emigre followers. She writes:

> The emigres had available to them a theory that would have provided an avenue for understanding the terrible ordeal they had undergone; and they did not take it… Some version of a death instinct, some identification of a basic root of human destructiveness, would seem to have been what the situation called for. Yet, this theoretical opening was determinedly refused. (p. 62)

There is a suggestion here that in addition to the controversies around the death drive noted earlier, and despite (or perhaps because of) the horrific evidence of death that was all around them, emigre analysts preferred not to deal further with the topic. This view has continued to the present.

Similar reasoning may apply to the paucity of psychoanalytically oriented literature about the Holocaust, itself. There is of course a great deal of literature available about the Holocaust that is psychologically informed and produced by individuals of different academic fields, often, as shown in this dissertation, by historians. Kuriloff (2014) notes that most of the accounts of European analysts who found refuge in America "do not mention the impact of such ordeals on how they conceived and practiced psychoanalysis itself" (p. 10). These Jewish emigre analysts may have confronted different worlds that could not be bridged or integrated, forcing a degree of dissociation to occur.

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Some emigre analysts minimized their own Jewishness or what their own experiences in Europe had been or the effect of those experiences on them or the analytic work in which they were engaged. The prevailing psychoanalytic notion at the time that the analyst's personal experiences should not be shared with those being analyzed or that their personal reactions should not matter in the conduct of the analysis may have contributed to this relative resistance to delve too deeply into the nature of the Holocaust itself. Kuriloff (2014) writes that "The long silence in psychoanalytic theory and practice regarding the Holocaust illustrate the lengths to which a culture will go to maintain the status quo" (p. 30). The Holocaust was traumatic to Jewish emigre analysts, perhaps too traumatic for many to integrate personally, and too traumatic to enable further creativity around the understanding of the Holocaust for themselves or the larger society that looked to psychoanalysis for additional perspectives on one of the greatest tragedies of the 20th century.

Thomas Kohut (2020), a psychoanalyst and a historian, writes about his father, Heinz Kohut, a renowned Jewish emigre psychoanalyst from Vienna who developed the self-psychology school of psychoanalysis, but who was seemingly severely traumatized by the Holocaust. Thomas Kohut (2020) writes:

> I doubt that my father was conscious of the influence of the Holocaust on his psychoanalytic theories, or, even, of the degree to which he was psychologically affected and damaged by the history through which he had lived. I would be surprised if the Holocaust figured at all in his training analysis…. because its trauma was too close for both analysand and analyst. (p. 24)

Certainly there were some analysts, such as Bruno Bettleheim, who did speak about their experiences in the Nazi era, but many tried to move on in a new country, looking forward, and perhaps trying to avoid or psychologically deny the trauma of their past

experiences, their anxieties and their dislocations that would of necessity have influenced them and their analysands in their new countries.

Freud's Death Drive: Critiques and Controversies.

Freud was well aware that the death drive was controversial from its inception, and not fully accepted, even by psychoanalysts (Freud, 1930). Many objections were raised to the notion of a death drive as indicated above. Freud's metapsychological formulation was felt to be highly speculative, and to lack clarity or confirmation on clinical or empirical grounds. The following provides some of these reactions and criticisms, positive and negative. These critiques range from near total rejection, to partial acceptance (especially of the aggressive component of the drive), to acceptance of the drive in certain clinical situations involving trauma. The final critiques by Klein (1946; 1955; 1957) and by Rechardt and Ikonen (1993) were especially helpful in my own formulation of the death drive that was presented earlier.

In a thoughtful paper, Lind (1991) discusses the history and development of the concept of the death drive in Freud's writings. He is quite critical of Freud's effort and considers the latter's conception of the death drive inherently ambiguous, lacking in basic meaning, and ultimately impossible to integrate within the theoretical edifice of psychoanalysis as a whole.

Lind (1991) offers a number of readings of Freud's theory that simplify the concept, focus it and make it more intelligible. In one reading, human beings have an inherent wish for their own death that is in conflict with their will to live. At some point, people unconsciously choose to work toward their own deaths. This view need not

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involve a biological drive. The will toward death, in this reading, "is what we unconsciously choose and silently work towards" (Lind, 1991, p.78).

In another interpretation, the death drive actually is a drive towards aggression, perhaps an inborn one. This aggression apparently can be directed towards oneself or outward towards others, in which case guilt occurs. Aggression as understood by itself without the weight of an encompassing death drive is commonly seen in psychoanalytic practice (and in mental health practice generally). Freud's preference was to consider aggression a part of the death drive, but the theory becomes more complicated when this occurs. My own perspective is that aggression itself seems inadequate to explain the various forms of destructive behaviors of which humans are capable, as exemplified in the various forms of dehumanization occurring in the Holocaust.

De Masi (2015) emphasizes a theme that is common in the literature discussing Freud's death drive. He questions whether the concept of a death drive is necessary to explain aggression, which he agrees is a common aspect of clinical work. De Masi (2015) argues that aggression is likely to be the result of infantile trauma. Many clinicians, in fact, do not speak of or employ the concept of the death drive in their psychoanalytic practice. The death drive is a metapsychological concept that these clinicians consider unproven, unnecessary and lacking in evidence from a clinical perspective. An independent drive toward aggression, on the other hand, is more acceptable to many clinicians, but as Lind (1991) has pointed out, Freud emphasized the importance of the broader concept of the death drive that included aggression and that emphasized the organism's tendency to act to relieve its own tension to achieve a peaceful, nirvana-like state of calmness that resembled death. The death drive, in this scenario, was originally

considered a biological drive that was directed inwards, but when turned outwards, became destructive (DeMasio, 2015).

Caropreso and Simanke (2011) contend that the death instinct has always been important in psychoanalytic theory. They argue in fact that the death instinct forms an essential part of Freud's metapsychology. Death, for these authors, "lurks behind all life" (p. 142); indeed, the death instinct takes precedence over life instincts. Caropreso and Simanke (2011) argue that "…beneath this new instinctual dualism lies a sort of monism in which all instinct finally turns out to be death instinct" (p. 155). Freud was reluctant to accept this point, however, and he continued to maintain the parity hypothesis for life and death instincts.

Otto Kernberg (2009) approaches the issue of the death drive clinically. He emphasizes the relationship between the death drive and aggression, saying that "the negative affects of rage, anger, disgust, anxiety, and, later, envy and hatred motivate us to withdraw from dangerous objects or attempt to control or eliminate them" (Kernberg, 2009, p. 1010). Kernberg (2009) believes that the "the concept of the death drive, as a designation for the dominant unconscious motivation toward self-destructivenss is warranted in severe cases of psychopathology" (p. 1011). There is the presence of "deep self-destructive tendencies in human beings that clinically would support the concept of the death drive" (Kernberg, 2009, pp. 1017-18).

Kernberg (2009) seems to differ in a fundamental way from Freud, however, in his argument that aggression is primary and that the death drive is secondary to it. For him, aggression recruits the death drive, rather than the other way around. Kernberg (2009) argues that

aggression as a major motivational system is always present in the mind… but propose that it deserves the designation of death drive only when such aggression becomes dominant… The death drive, I propose, is not a primary drive, but represents a significant complication of aggression as a major motivational system…and as such is eminently useful as a concept in the clinical realm. (p. 1018)

Kernberg (2009) emphasizes that Freud's concept of the death drive "may not reflect an inborn disposition as such, but is eminently relevant in clinical practice" (p. 1021).

Laub and Lee (2003) address the importance of the death drive from clinical perspectives entirely, focusing on the issue of trauma. These authors argue that

the traumatic experience fuses or reconciles the two aspects of the death instinct as described by Freud: the inclination to quiescence as the end of the disturbance, and the destructive tendency to do violence both to the self and to others. (Laub & Lee, 2003, p. 437)

A dissolution of the empathic bond between people, a tendency to repeat aspects of the traumatic episode, resistance to remembering details of the episode and resistance to "knowing" what has happened all reflect activation of the death instinct by the traumatic events. Trauma therefore "dismantles one's capacity for witnessing, remembering, knowing and assimilating experience. Freud's 'return to quiescence' becomes in connection with trauma a return to (or limitation within) emptiness and obliteration…." (Laub & Lee, 2003, p. 439)

Laub and Lee (2003) present a strong defense of the death instinct as Freud described it. Unlike Freud, however, they do not speak of biological origins of the death drive, but rather focus on it psychologically. Their approach is descriptive and psychoanalytic. They emphasize the metaphor of a death drive and the loss or incapacity of essential mental processes that can be considered a foundation of life. Laub and Lee (2003) argue that not knowing, not remembering or exhibiting a paucity of interests in

oneself or the world can be understood as a drive toward stasis or quietude that strives for decreased tension and turmoil. Severe trauma, when understood metaphorically, can render a person emotionally immobile and essentially dead and unresponsive to internal or external worlds. Their analysis is compelling in the consideration of the death drive from metaphoric perspectives that do not require a physical urge toward self-destruction.

Richards (2018) discusses the death drive from historical and clinical perspectives. She provides ideas how to integrate the death drive concept into clinical work and encourages fantasies about death with patients when this is appropriate. She cites *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* in her discussion but has no discussion of *Civilization and its Discontents*. The omission of this work suggests (as noted earlier) that Freud's intent to apply psychoanalytic principles to social or political topics has had limited popularity with other psychoanalysts.

Perelberg (2020) raises the question whether psychoanalysis has the tools to understand social violence and collective trauma. The author is concerned with the effects of trauma and social violence on the individual, the analyst and the analytic relationship (as well as on society more generally). Freud was, of course, concerned with the effects of social conflict on the individual and this perhaps led to the title of Perelberg's (2020) paper, although this paper is not a critique of Freud's *Civilization and its Discontents* as such. Perelberg (2020) does say, however, that the death instinct can facilitate an understanding of events such as Auschwitz that challenge our abilities to represent them. Trauma associated with the Holocaust generally challenge victims' ability to symbolize the horrific events they have experienced.

Bergmann (2011) points out that Freud's death instinct theory has remained a psychoanalytic controversy. He believes that many psychoanalysts preferred to ignore dealing with the death instinct rather than state their opposition. Bergmann (2011) also argues that "Freud's death instinct theory has had a traumatic impact on the psychoanalytic movement because it greatly limited the belief in the curative power of our therapeutic work" (p. 684). This view is consistent with that of Kuriloff (2014) stated above.

Melanie Klein (1946; 1955), an Austrian psychoanalyst who emigrated to England during the years between the world wars, had a view of the death drive that was different than that of Freud based on her understanding of developmental considerations in infancy. While

> most analysts compromised with the death drive by accepting the theory of a primary instinct of aggression but rejected or ignored the self-directed aspect of the death drive theory… this was certainly not the case with Melanie Klein. She took the death drive as crucial in the psychosexual development of the individual, and it acquired a central and even founding role in her theory. (Sanchez-Pardo, 2003, p. 138)

Klein (1955) argued that infants, in the first months of life, had very active perceptual frameworks that were based on their own innate characteristics as well as their treatment by caretakers (mainly the mother). One of the important characteristics of infants during the first three months or so of life was persecutory anxiety, later considered within a specific term, the paranoid-schizoid position. Experiences of birth, helplessness and vulnerability impacted the infant to split their reactions and project emotions of love and hate onto the mother, and specifically the mother's "good" and "bad" breasts. The infant comes to introject and identify with the mother's good breast

when innate endowment and caretaking is good, warm, loving and supportive. The infant

also introjects and identifies with the mother's bad breast when caretaking is frustrating

and perceived to be cold, distant, or haphazard. Rage and later aggression result from

anxiety and fears of annihilation that are worsened by poor or haphazard caretaking

during these first months. These reactions, fearing death and annihilation when

caretaking is insufficient or uncaring, continue and are expressed through childhood and

adulthood.

Klein's understanding of the death drive, within the framework she developed,

involves aggression and rage that might include threats against oneself and others when

the perceived potential for annihilation and death of the self occurs. Klein (1946) argues

that

> Some of the functions which we know from the later ego are there from the beginning. Prominent amongst these functions is that of dealing with anxiety….anxiety arises from the operations of the Death Instinct within the organism, is felt as fear of annihilation (death) and takes the form of fear of persecutions. The fear of the destructive impulse seems to attach itself at once to an object—or rather it is experienced as fear of an uncontrollable overpowering object. (p. 100)

Severe anxiety, along with the fear of death, therefore occur ultimately due to the fear of

annihilation.

This developmental view of the death drive is very different than the one

proposed by Freud, but similarities are present, including the tendency to react with

violence, aggression and murder to perceived threats to oneself (or presumably to one's

group), and the sense that extreme forms of violence that are directed outward (such as

may occur in wars), reflect extreme anxiety that is perceived around the potential

dissolution or annihilation of oneself or one's group. Milder forms of threat to the

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identities of individuals or groups presumably engender milder forms of internal or outer directed responses along the same lines.

Rechardt and Ikonen (1993) consider Freud's death drive to be a major contribution to psychoanalytic theory. They argue that limiting the concept of the death drive to aggressive and destructive actions is not appropriate and that the death drive is far broader than such a limitation would suggest. The death drive need not include aggressive or destructive behavior, but rests on motivational activity that "reflects an obstinate and constantly active striving toward experienced state of peace: an endeavor to eliminate that which is experienced as disturbing or which maintains disturbance" (Rechardt & Ikonen, 1993, p. 84). Human beings, according to this understanding of the death drive, consider death "an extreme form of a state of peace, and destruction is but one particular means of striving toward a state of peace" (Rechardt & Ikonen, 1993, p. 84).

Peace is a central aim of the death drive and peace can be sought in different ways; aggression and destruction are only two approaches in the quest for peace. Rechardt and Ikonen (1993) do not consider this quest for peace from a biological perspective, which they argue is not a question that is within the purview of psychoanalysis. The quest for peace reflects a psychological striving; the struggle to return to "inorganic nature" should not be interpreted literally. It reflects the desire and determination to experience peace and relief from tension that occurs in unbound libido, as exemplified in states of regression or severe psychopathology.

For Rechardt and Ikonen (1993), "the death drive strives to eliminate the futile psychic act, to steer it onto an effectual path and achieve satisfaction in that way" (p. 90).

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This suggests that psychological defense mechanisms might at times be considered to reflect the death drive as they restrain unfettered libido. Affects that reflect the death drive include anxiety, rage, disgust, envy, guilt and boredom. Eros and Thanatos, in this modified understanding of the death drive, are "two functional principles, which are not necessarily opposites, but different and independent" (Rechardt & Ikonen, 1993, p. 97). They exist together and cannot exist without each other.

Rechardt and Ikonen's (1993) modified formulation of Freud's original death drive is helpful in a number of ways for the purposes of this discussion. These psychoanalysts recognize that the death drive need not involve direct aggression, but that other means of attempting to decrease internal tension (or anger or rage) can be used in the negation of life forces that may occur when a given person or situation is intolerable. The dehumanization of Jews who were not allowed to walk on the sidewalk in the presence of Germans is an example.

Rechardt and Ikonen (1993) clearly state that the death drive is to be taken metaphorically as well as literally, and that it exists on a continuum (p. 93). Many of the actions of the Nazis prior to the specific killing of Jews in the Holocaust involved destroying or robbing them of important aspects of their identities as, for example, tattooing numbers on their arms and thereby ignoring their given names. In this sense, the Jews' presence was disturbing and removing their specific identities murdered parts of them before these prisoners actually were physically killed.

Summary and Comments; A Modified Form of The Death Drive.

Freud's (1920) *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* was an attempt to shift the focus of psychoanalysis to a new metapsychology that includes the more familiar Eros, and the

newly defined drive toward death that Freud believed also was instinctual and found in everyone. He, himself, recognized that his intuitive understandings about this concept that involved two major components: 1. The actual efforts on the part of the organism to return to an inorganic state from which it had come, and 2. The organism's aggressive, destructive behaviors on internal and external levels that reflected the death impulse, were not entirely convincing (Freud, 1920). Freud continued to struggle with these concepts over the coming years, as did other psychoanalysts who provided limited, or at times, no support for Freud's arguments and speculations. The range of comments provided earlier reflect this disparity of opinions about Freud's death instinct that became known as a death drive.

Many analysts, as De Masi (2015) indicates, ultimately settled on the existence of an independent aggressive drive that fell short of the larger and more encompassing death drive Freud continued to espouse. As Money-Kyrle (1955) wrote, "The fear of death, or of dying, and the death instinct are logically distinct" (p. 509). He, like many psychoanalysts, is unsure if there is a death instinct at all. The bipolarity of life that Freud envisioned, Eros or positive life forces against, and along with, a destructive death drive, would seemingly have reflected, as Freud indicated in his letter to Einstein (1933), an example of the law of opposites that proved essential in understanding a variety of metapsychological principles in the world.

My own impressions are that Freud's attempts to support the death drive were unconvincing and hampered its understanding and acceptance by others. His unproven speculations and the ambiguity in his writings that are based, in part, on biological assumptions in non-humans confuse the concept of a death drive that has much to

recommend when the mass slaughter and destruction of the Second World War (and other genocides) are considered. The following amplifies further my own conception of the death drive that was presented earlier.

Amplification of My Own Conception of the Death Drive

My conception of the death drive is based on my research into the Holocaust, the literature noted above, and especially the writings of Freud (1920, 1923/1960; 1930; 1931/1932), Melanie Klein (1946; 1955; 1957) and Rechardt and Ikonen (1993) on this topic. It is further supported by literature on the effects of socially sanctioned killing of others and survivor/witness accounts of Holocaust experiences presented later in this chapter.

In my approach to the death drive, I attempt to avoid excessive and controversial speculations about biological roots of the drive and about human goals toward an ultimate state of inertia. I emphasize phenomenology and follow psychoanalytic understandings of motivation and defenses that are conscious and unconscious. I recognize human interdictions against murder and the strategies and beliefs employed by the Germans (and their allies) to weaken these strictures psychologically. My focus is on the expression of the death drive in the Holocaust.

There does appear to be a "drive" or movement toward death and disintegration in all people. This is the expected and inevitable biological and associated psychological movement (or drive) toward deterioration in various biological functions that yields to ultimate death. In humans, "death" can be understood both metaphorically and literally (Rechardt & Ikonen, 1993). The loss, defeat or removal of one's sense of oneself, of individual destiny, personal potential and the particular meaning of life that individuals

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and members of their group attach to life are all forms of death that sometimes accompany the physical aging process and sometimes exist independently of it.

The Holocaust illustrates how the human death drive and German (especially Nazi) reactions and resistances to their own deaths on literal and metaphoric lines came manifest during the Nazi era. The German people and its leadership had had humiliating defeats and losses but had also come to harbor grandiose expectations of their own achievements and future potential based on flawed theories of Aryan racial superiority.

My perspective is that the horrific murders of the Jews (and others) perpetrated by the Germans reflected, at least in part, reactions to and fears of the perpetrators' own deaths on metaphoric lines. These fears and losses had been blamed on the Jews, an old enemy, who became the German and Nazi victims. It did not matter that the Nazi sense of an eternal battle between Aryans and Semites (Jews) that they must win was a delusion; that a world-wide Jewish financial conspiracy against them was a delusion; or that they had, in Adolph Hitler, a delusional leader (Coolidge et al., 2007) who seemed to place the elimination of Jews as a possibly more important objective than military victories.

Jews, in reality, were not responsible for the personal or national losses in these various areas that the Germans experienced, but they nonetheless were associated with the perception of these losses in the German psyche that, for Hitler, were tantamount to the death of the Aryan ideal. Quoting again a passage from *Mein Kampf* is instructive:

> *What we must fight for is to safeguard the existence and reproduction of our race and our people, the sustenance of our children and the purity of our blood, the freedom and independence of the fatherland, so that our people may mature for the fulfillment of the mission allotted it by the creator of the universe.* (Hitler, 1925/1999, p. 214)

Hitler and the German leadership responded ferociously to ward off losses that symbolized a form of death for them. They did this through attempts that were largely successful to kill and destroy every Jew the Nazi forces and their collaborators could find. There were death marches, "Jew-hunts," crematoria and starvation regimens that did little or nothing to further the war effort but were required to maintain the ideological purity of the Nazi program and establish their retaliation against the eternal enemy, the Jew (Goldhagen, 1997). Understanding the death and destruction of the Jews along these lines helps to explain the brutality, sadism and slaughter that occurred, features that Freud (1923/1960) considered a frequent accompaniment of the death drive.

The murder of Jews (and others), as a direct expression of the death drive, occurred in several ways, including shooting the victims, clubbing the victims, starving the victims, overworking the victims, and gassing the victims in concentration camp crematoria. These murders sometimes became "routine" for the SS member or civilian policeman thrust into an unpleasant task (Browning, 1992/2017), but this was not always so. Some men could not engage in these tasks and were allowed to perform other duties (Browning, 1992/2017). Other men seemed to revel in their work and happily engaged in the extreme cruelty, barbarism and at times joyful amusement and sadism perpetrated by Nazi SS members as they tortured their helpless victims prior to or during killing episodes (Freud, 1923/1960; 1930).

Hilberg (1992) writes, "There were men who deliberately brutalized the victims, or tortured them, or derived excitement or amusement from their fate" (pp. 53-54). When the Germans were impatient, "small children were thrown out of windows, or tossed like

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sacks into trucks, or dashed against walls, or hurled live into pyres of burning corpses"

(Hilberg, 1992, p. 54) Sadism

> emerged in face to face contacts of those men who wanted to exhibit their mastery over Jews. Essentially these individuals played with their victims… they handed toothbrushes to Jews to clean sidewalks… they cut the beards of pious Jews or used Jews as ponies for rides. (Hilberg, 1992, p. 54)

They used Jews for target practice or women as sexual slaves. Narcissism co-existed with

sadism as the life and death of the prisoners centered on the will of the SS overseers.

> There was a "master of life and death syndrome:"

> The predominant type of German sadism was somewhat predictable and virtually institutionalized. It even had a name, 'to make sport' and often enough it took the form of staging 'gladiatorial' fights among inmates or of commanding prisoners to carry heavy stones from one place where they were not needed to another place where they were not needed. (Hilberg, 1992, p. 54)

This was another form of torment that reflected the death drive that served to amuse the

guards. Exactly when the game would be over, and the "action" taken to finally transport

the prisoner to the gas chamber was knowledge kept from the prisoner, but available at

some point to the guards, who comprised the ruling class.

These actions on the part of the German guards served no apparent rational or

functional purpose. The jocularity, sadistic amusement and torture did serve various

functions associated with the death drive, however, such as the reinforcement of the

German guards' sense of superiority over the Jews, the reinforcement of the Jews' sense

of inferiority and personal meaninglessness, the reinforcement of the process of

dehumanization that would make killing another human being (who now was no longer a

"human") acceptable. These actions of the guards and killers also served to deny (perhaps

for themselves) and reverse the inhumanity in which they were participating by

emphasizing joyful amusement (for the guards) that could be produced by the dehumanization of and infliction of suffering on the Jews whom they saw as subhuman.

The subjugation of the Jews and others is consistent with Freud's (1933) recognition of the use of the death drive not only to kill others, but to enslave victims and use them for the perceived needs of the victimizers, as noted above. Actions of the types that have been described confirmed for the Germans that they were the masters and the Jews were the slaves. For these Nazis and their sympathizers, there was only one master race and it had brought its main rival, the Jew, to heel through its control of the Jews' lives and the ability of the master race to humiliate the Jew at will. In the competition to retard death and to experience life, German "lords" exerting their power extended their own lives symbolically as the master race and thwarted death by sending Jews prematurely to die. The powerful Aryans, considering themselves superior beings, denied their own mortality by "enjoying" the death and tortured experience of others. Symbolically thwarting death, the Aryan race, in this grandiose view, would continue to live, to flourish and to enjoy the full expression of the instincts for life. It was winning the cosmic battle against the arch enemy. As Hitler is quoted above saying, it is important for the people to fulfill "*the mission allotted it by the creator of the universe*" (Hitler, 1925/1999, p. 214).

The joyful experience of torture and murder that is consistent with the death drive would not always have been sufficient to balance the experiences of guilt and stress that others felt as a result of their participation in mass exterminations, however. Browning (1993/2017) records the sometimes raucous entertainment and use of alcohol that awaited

the killers after their killings were over for the day. "Forgetting" or denying their actions seemed to serve most of the executioners well.

A related way to understand the apparently senseless murder of Jews who were powerless in the face of the German killing machine is to consider the application and relevance of Melanie Klein's (1946; 1955; 1965) notion of the death instinct to the murderous rage that some Germans, especially Nazis, seemed to have for the Jews. Klein argued that the earliest experiences of the vulnerable infant include the fear of annihilation and death, although these fears are of course non-verbal. The substrate for this fear of annihilation and death—and the rage and aggression that becomes the infant's/ child's/ adult's responses to it cannot simply be understood as erroneous or irrational behaviors from adult perspectives. Depending on factors such as the individual's biological endowment and environmental conditions, perceptions of impending personal destruction may become pervasive and severe. These reactions potentially are enacted throughout life in the personal and in the social sphere, or in the case of the Nazi era, in the socio- political sphere where the defeat and humiliation of the losses in World War I would be continuously present.

Although somewhat hampered by psychoanalytic language that makes it less accessible to many readers, Klein basically argues that fear of annihilation and death are perhaps the most basic of human emotions. She initially termed this earliest phase of human development the "persecutory" phase and then called it the "paranoid-schizoid" position. Her concepts of good breast and bad breast, good mother and bad mother, are easily understood as indications of the later existence of polar opposites of life forces and

death forces (Eros and death drive) in adulthood that stem from the supportive and caring actions of the mother, and conversely, from the mother's rejecting or indifferent actions.

From this perspective, and based on Hitler's (1925/1999) writings in *Mein Kampf* noted earlier, Nazis, on the one hand, strove for world mastery and domination to fulfill a presumed rightful place they believed they have or should have in the world; but on the other hand they were terrified of a perceived eternal enemy, the Semitic Jew, who had always been out to destroy the Aryan people and render them inconsequential. In Kleinian terms, the Nazis, leading for a time the most powerful military force in the world, were terrified of the Jews and feared that the Jews would annihilate them and destroy Germany, the greatest of the Aryan nations.

The German leadership argued that the Jews threatened the Aryan race through a world-wide web of financial dealings known only to the Jews themselves. Since there is no evidence for this, however, it must be concluded that the real fear the Germans (especially those in the Nazi party) had for the Jew rose from a deeper sense of vulnerability that selected particular events or situations to provide a rationale for the German leaders' actions.

In this context, it was necessary for the Nazis, fearing for their existence and enraged by the imagined potential assault on their lives and their very beings, to fight back—to annihilate the Jew before the Jew could annihilate the German. Given this perspective, particularly zealous Germans would have denied their own fears of helplessness and annihilation as they projected their anxieties and expressed their rage onto their perceived eternal enemy, the Jew. In this scenario, if the German people would emerge victorious from this deeply imaginary and unconscious battle for survival and

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dominance, they would become the Aryan masters of the world and Jews would be dealt the retribution they had long deserved.

Understood in this way, the heavily armed German soldier who murders the helpless and unarmed Jew sees the Jew only (or mainly) as a potentially murderous force that is out to destroy and annihilate Germans and the Aryan race. The unreasonableness of this perspective that culminated in the increasingly severe dehumanization of the Jews that activated the death drive and resulted in genocide required the Nazis to eliminate or destroy all Jews in Europe in order to fulfill the Nazis' view of their own inspired mission to be masters of the world.

As I indicated in Chapter 1 (p. 11),

dehumanization then became a potential catalyst or justification for violence and murder and an activator of a death drive resulting in genocide, given that those who are considered less than human or as 'animals' may be thought of as unworthy of usual human protections against violence and aggression, or perhaps as opportune targets of an inherent potential for violence.

Ian Kershaw (2001), a noted scholar of the Holocaust, describes these psychological events in somewhat different terms as he speaks of what he presumes to be Hitler's considerations around the time of Kristallnacht (Night of the Broken Glass) that occurred in November, 1938. Kershaw (2001) indicates that the upcoming war in Europe was coming into clearer focus for Hitler and that

since the 1920s he had not deviated from the view that German salvation could only come through a titanic struggle for supremacy in Europe, and for eventual world power, against mighty enemies backed by the mightiest enemy of all, perhaps more powerful even than the Third Reich itself: international Jewry. (p. 130)

In actuality, international Jewry, this "mightiest" of enemies, was a rather helpless and dispersed group of people that had no land of its own, few independent resources and few

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friends. Hitler's well recognized delusional beliefs (Coolidge et al., 2007) nonetheless helped lead millions to their deaths.

Germany, and Hitler's ambitions for the Aryan people, clearly are endangered in Hitler's mind. It is little wonder that the death drive, with its violence, sadism and brutality became manifest during this titanic fight between one of the greatest military powers on earth and the Jew, who in reality was mainly a poor unarmed inhabitant of the Pale of Settlement, a territory in western Russia in which Jews were granted permission to live. Hitler was overcome by the death drive and his quest to defeat the Jew, his greatest enemy, before this greatest enemy defeated and annihilated him.

It is important to recognize that from these perspectives, the murder of millions of Jews (and others) that resulted from the German death drive should be considered an active and not a passive phenomenon. Smith (2011) has argued that genocidal behavior against dehumanized populations may be understood as the result of a loss of perceived humanity of the victim that "allows" the aggressor to murder dehumanized individuals or groups who are no longer considered "human." In more recent work, Smith (2020) has argued that dehumanization facilitates a disinhibition of our "worst impulses." In the context of this dissertation, our "worst impulses" are the activated death drive that resulted in the greatest genocide in recorded history.

In the model I suggest here, the victimizer's actions created the dehumanized victim and encouraged an emergence of the death drive which became actively directed at the victim, in this case the Jew. Murder, in this sense, is a continuation of the dehumanization that resulted from the largely delusional beliefs that had gone on before.

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It is probable that many, if not most, German executioners had, at least initially, some reluctance to kill their victims. Killing another human being is usually defended against psychologically through the internalization of the taboo against murder (Smith, 2011). The death drive, from this perspective, needs to overcome the psychological barriers against the murder of other humans, as discussed further in the following section.

Killing Jews: Reactions and Behaviors of The Executioners

The Freudian view indicates that the death drive is countered by opposing life forces that are necessary to reduce harmful violence from gaining too much influence in human affairs. It is clear that in Freudian terms, the death drive was ascendant in the murder and atrocities exhibited in the Holocaust. In *Civilization and its Discontents,* Freud (1930) recognized the enormous personal and social struggles that ensued when murderous aggression was unleashed in the society. Given Freud's statements about the ensuing guilt and persecutory feelings of conscience that may result from excessive aggression and violence, one might predict that the victimizers and killers of Jews would have had enormous psychological burdens to endure. On the other hand, there was the charismatic (but delusional) leadership in the form of Adolf Hitler and many social forces that have been enumerated earlier that encouraged and supported the murder of Jews on individual and collective levels.

Several authors have addressed the relationship between violence and destruction in the Holocaust and psychological attitudes and reactions in those who perpetrated this violence. Tentative conclusions about the impact (or lack of it) of killing Jews in the Holocaust will be offered at the conclusion of this section. I emphasize the importance of the death drive in these descriptions of mass murder and genocide that follow.

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Dave Grossman's (1995) *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society,* addresses this question through the statements of veterans of wars and through a review of the literature. The situation is not directly comparable to the Holocaust, for the most part, since the latter did not involve Jews as combatants in a war between states or entities. Nonetheless, the impressions of Grossman, a retired military officer and a psychologist, are instructive. They do speak specifically to the Nazi killing of Jews to some degree. Grossman (1995) recognizes that there exists "a powerful, innate human resistance towards killing one's own species" and that there also are powerful "psychological mechanisms that have been developed by armies *over the centuries* to overcome that resistance" (p. xxi).

Grossman (1995) cites research conducted with soldiers in the World War II era that found only 15-20% of American riflemen fired on the enemy during combat. Many soldiers would intentionally miss the enemy as they shot their guns (often firing over the heads of the opposing soldiers). These soldiers did not run from the enemy and they would act heroically to rescue comrades, but they would not fire to kill opposing forces if they could help it. It took later training and conditioning techniques in the Vietnam war to increase the willingness of American soldiers to fire on the enemy. For Grossman (1995), the resistance to killing another human being is a combination of factors that are instinctive, hereditary, rational, environmental, cultural and social. These factors are not easily overcome for most people.

The situation is especially difficult for those who are expected to kill at close range compared to those whose job it is to kill at greater distances. Grossman (1995) writes:

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> The resistance to the close-range killing of one's own species is so great that it is often sufficient to overcome the cumulative influences of the instinct for self-protection, the coercive force of leadership, the expectancy of peers, and the obligation to preserve the lives of comrades. (p. 87)

Many people are not able to kill those whom they can see directly.

Grossman (1995) indicates that destructive aggression and killing seem to require emotional withdrawal. Various factors that facilitate this emotional withdrawal include: cultural distance (e.g. racial differences that facilitate dehumanization); moral distance (a sense of moral superiority), social distance (eg. social stratification), and mechanical distance (e.g. killing through a sniper sight).

Grossman (1995) dissects factors that contribute to the psychological morbidity of combatants and the intense guilt felt by those who kill their enemies in war. He also speaks of the impact of hate in Nazi death camps and argues that the hatred the Jews felt from their Nazi guards was crucial in creating the psychiatric morbidity and post-traumatic stress experienced by Jewish survivors. Overseers in concentration camps also contained a "remarkable concentration of aggressive psychopaths… and the lives of victims of these camps were completely dominated by the personalities of these terrifyingly brutal individuals" (Grossman, 1995, pp. 78-9). The death drive can be seen here to express itself variably, depending on situation and person.

In remarks consistent with my discussion of dehumanization in Chapter 3 and with Freud's (1923/1960) comments on sadism being a hallmark of the death drive, Grossman (1995) comments,

> the victims of these camps had to look their sadistic killers in the face and know that another human being denied their humanity and hated them enough to personally slaughter them, their families, and their race as though they were nothing more than animals. (p. 79)

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In this case, victims recognize that they are not considered human, or perhaps they are

even worse than a subhuman creature, not worthy of any compassionate consideration at

all.

Christopher R. Browning (1993/2017) describes the killing of unarmed Jews in

Nazi held territory in World War II. *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the*

Final Solution in Poland is a narrative about a reserve police battalion of the German

Order Police that was incorporated into the German military and tasked with mass

murders/exterminations and deportation of Jews in Poland during the first years of World

War II.

There is limited information about the men of the battalion, but it seems that

about 60% of the rank and file were of working-class backgrounds, and about 25% of

these men were Party members. They were generally middle-aged. Most did not have any

education beyond the ages of fourteen or fifteen and most came from Hamburg, a city

that was not considered to be highly nazified. The majority of the men "came from a

social class that had been anti-Nazi in its political culture" (Browning, 1993/2017, p. 48).

Browning (1993/2017) comments further that recruitment of those who would commit

mass murder on behalf of the Nazi world vision from this group of men would have

seemed unlikely prior to their actual participation in the killings.

Browning (1993/2017) describes the first major action of these men, a "massacre"

of Jews in the town of Jozefow, Poland in detail. Some men, a minority, had intense

emotional difficulties around the task of shooting helpless and unarmed Jewish civilians.

Some found it repugnant. When they spoke up and asked to be excused, the command

structure was supportive of them and allowed them to be relieved of this duty. Some policemen, as would be expected from Grossman's (1995) study above, did not formally request release from the firing squads, which was a common way to murder the assembled Jews. They took various forms of evasive actions, such as firing past their intended victims (Browning, 1993/2017). These men who evaded or asked to be relieved of their killer duties seem to have suffered no consequences from their superiors, although their fellow policemen were sometimes denigrating to them. The leaders of the reserve police battalion were aware that these murders might be difficult for the men and alcohol was readily available after completion of their duties to try and relieve their emotional burdens.

In reflecting on their experiences about twenty years later, the men reported that discussions about what they had done was not encouraged by either the men or their superiors at the time. Some reflection about the morality of their actions rose to the fore years later. Based on what they said, some participated in the mass murders out of fear of being called a coward by their comrades. They were not overtly concerned about what the Jews might think of them and,

> with few exceptions the whole question of anti-Semitism is marked by silence. What is clear is that the men's concern for their standing in the eyes of their comrades was not matched by any sense of human ties with their victims. (Browning, 1993/2017, p.73)

The fate of the Jews was, in an odd way, not thought of as their responsibility.

Browning (1993/2017) estimates that in addition to the small number of policemen who spoke up at the beginning of (or prior to) an operation to extricate themselves from it, a larger number (estimated at 10-20%) either tried to evade the

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shooting in a less conspicuous way or asked for release once the firing had begun. This

would leave about 80% of the men who continued to shoot until all the Jews had been

killed. When this was discussed nearly one quarter of a century later,

> those who did quit shooting along the way overwhelmingly cited sheer physical rrevulsion against what they were doing as the prime motive but did not express any ethical or political principles behind this revulsion. (Browning, 1993/2017, p.74)

Nonetheless, recalling a specific early massacre, a sense of resentment and bitterness

was felt by many of these men because of what they had been asked to do. Ultimately,

the policemen were relieved to a degree of the horrors of the killing process itself. They

became more involved in clearing Jews out of ghettos and in the deportation process (that

itself entailed considerable violence).

In time, after the Jozefow massacre, battalion members divided into groups based

on their eagerness/willingness or unwillingness to kill Jews. Browning (1993/2017) reports

that:

> Many had become numbed, indifferent, and in some cases eager killers; others limited their participation in the killing process, refraining when they could do so without great costs or inconvenience. Only a minority of non-conformists managed to preserve a beleaguered sphere of moral autonomy that emboldened them to employ patterns of behavior and stratagems of evasion that kept them from becoming killers at all. (p. 127)

Ultimately the killings, deportations and hunts for Jews came to an end.

> With a conservative estimate of 6,500 Jews shot during earlier actions like those at Jozefow and Lomazy and 1,000 shot during the 'Jew hunts,' and a minimum estimate of 30,500 Jews shot at Majdanek and Poniatowa, the battalion had participated in the direct shooting deaths of at least 38,000 Jews. (Browning, 1993/2017, pp. 142-43)

The battalion also had been involved in the deportation of about 45,000 Jews to Treblinka.

In sum, as Browning (1993/2017) points out, a battalion of under 500 men had been

responsible for the ultimate deaths of at least 83,000 Jews. The policemen's obedience to authority and perceived social pressure appear to have been important aids in the expression of the death drive, given the policemen's personal ambivalence or reluctance to kill their victims.

Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's (1997), *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust,* exhibits none of the grayness of motivation that Browning finds in those "ordinary men" turned executioners. Goldhagen reviews much of the material that Browning has reviewed, although his published work is much larger, more detailed, and less willing to give the ordinary German leeway in considering genocidal motives.

Goldhagen (1997) emphasizes the widespread involvement and complicity of ordinary Germans in the huge killing operation that was the Holocaust. He implicates Germans at all levels, be they lower level administrative personnel to higher level commanders to the actual executioners and those deporting Jews to concentration camps in the killing operation that emptied Poland of its Jewish population, a group that accounted for about 10 % of Poland's prewar populace. He emphasizes the massive nature of the operations involved in the largely successful elimination of Jews from Europe that ultimately resulted in their deaths (Goldhagen, 1997, p. 167). There were, for example, at least 10,005 German "camps" (including ghettos), not all of which housed Jews; 941 forced labor camps in Poland that were specifically for Jews; and 230 additional camps for Hungarian Jews that were not in Poland itself. There were nearly 450 ghettos in Poland (mainly), and in Galicia and Lithuania. Main concentration camps numbered 52, with over 1200 satellite camps. Auschwitz had 700 guards at various times;

over 400 guards and other personnel were at Dachau, with many other German personnel

staffing various other locations. It is clear that all of these sites, with their millions of

prisoners, required an enormous expenditure of German energy and resources that was

devoted mainly to killing those people whom they considered undesirables, largely the

Jews whom the Nazis considered subhuman.

Goldahgen (1997) also chronicles the "requirements" of the institutional killing

machines that were mobile, such as the Einsatzgruppen, an "itinerant killing institution"

that followed the German army on its invasion of eastern Europe and sought Jews in

newly conquered territories for murder. He also reports on the thirty-eight police

battalions having at least 19,000 men that participated in the slaughter of European Jews

through deportations, elimination campaigns and "Jew-hunts. Ultimately, and this is

Goldhagen's (1997) main point,

> Unknown thousands of other Germans contributed to the genocide in their roles as
> administrators of many varieties: railroad officials; army soldiers; police and other
> security forces who deported Jews from, among other places, Germany and
> western Europe; and the many who contributed to the slaughter of Jewish slave
> laborers working under them in production facilities. (p. 168)

Goldhagen (1997) concludes that "the number of Germans who contributed to and, more

broadly, had knowledge of the regime's fundamental criminality was staggering" (p.

168). Goldhagen's (1997) argument is that antisemitism was broadly and deeply resident

within the German psyche, and that the various murderers of Jews willingly engaged in

the completion of a task that essentially was willed and supported by the German people.

Goldhagen's observations suggest also that as the killing increased it seems likely that the

death drive came to reflect the activities of an increasingly large percentage of the

German population.

Goldhagen's (1997) report of the killing operations of the Police Battalions of the Order Police describes the willingness, or rather the frequent eagerness, of these men to ferret out, kill and /or deport Jews to their slaughter. In one example, he reports that after a group of Jews had been transported to the execution area, each member of the police battalion involved in the executions "would choose his victim—a man, a woman, or a child" (Goldhagen, 1997, p. 217). The pair would walk to a clearing where the killing would occur and await the squad leader's orders. Goldhagen (1997) writes that:

> The killing itself was a gruesome affair. After the walk through the woods, each of the Germans had to raise his gun to the back of the head, now face down on the ground… pull the trigger and watch the person, sometimes a little girl, twitch and then move no more. The Germans had to remain hardened to the crying of the victims, to the crying of the women, to the whimpering of the children. At such close range, the Germans often became spattered with human gore. (p. 218)

Blood, bone and brain would sometimes spatter against the German executioner. Nonetheless, the executioners returned to fetch more victims, "and to begin the journey back into the woods. They sought unstained locations in the woods for each new batch of Jews" (Goldhagen, 1997, p. 218). Except for the period after the initial executions when (or earlier) a minority of men had opted out of this task, many of the executioners seemed to enjoy their murderous duties.

In another execution Goldhagen (1997) describes, the scene of mass slaughter was Kovno, Lithuania, where the butchery of the Jews was open to all to see.

> The immediate assault upon the unsuspecting, unarmed, and obviously nonthreatening Jewish community occurred immediately after the German army marched into Kovno on the heels of the Soviet retreat. With German encouragement and support, Lithuanians, in a frenzied orgy of bludgeoning, slashing, and shooting, slaughtered 3,800 Jews in the city's streets. …the killings, whether wild or systematic, had a circus-like quality, with bystanders observing at their pleasure the slaying, the cudgeling to death of Jews, watching with approval

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as crowds once watched the gladiators slaying their beasts. (Goldhagen, (1997, pp.191-192)

Goldhagen (1997) asks, in discussing an incident that involved torture, beating and humiliation of old men before killing them, "Why degrade and torture the Jews and especially these old Jews?... Cold, mechanical executioners would have just killed their victims" (p. 228). He makes the point that the Germans were not just functionaries. Many of them actually delighted in, volunteered for and enjoyed the killing.

One answer, or at least a partial answer to Goldhagen's (1997) rhetorical question is that these killers and the higher-level officers and leaders of the German regime, were acting in accord with what Freud (1923/1960; 1930) identified as features that may accompany the death instinct/drive: sadism, narcissistic enjoyment, and a sense of omnipotence.

Goldhagen (1997) comments that the Germans' "devotion to annihilating the Jews was such that they would even postpone operations against real partisans, against the people who posed a real military threat to them, in order to undertake search-and-destroy missions against the Jews" (p. 228). Germany's leaders believed they must engage in an "exterminatory pursuit of the remnants of a particularly pernicious species that needed to be destroyed in its entirety" (p. 238). German leaders thus used valuable resources, material and personnel to further and complete the annihilation of the Jews. From the perspective proposed here, the death drive, unchecked by the lifegiving force of Eros, required the Nazi leadership and the German army to fight the crucial battle against their eternal enemy, the Jew, despite having to fight simultaneously the Russians in the East, and the allies, ultimately including the United States, in the West.

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The elimination of the Jews had been a long-standing obsession for Hitler and the Nazi leadership. The outcome of the world war and the destruction of the Jews in Europe apparently were linked for him. As Kershaw (2000) says in speaking about Hitler's views in the late 1930s as war seemed immanent:

> Since the 1920s he had not deviated from the view that German salvation could only come through a titanic struggle for supremacy in Europe, and for eventual world power, against mighty enemies backed by the mightiest enemy of all, perhaps more powerful even than the Third Reich itself: international Jewry. (p. 130)

Describing this battle as a "titanic struggle" appropriately describes the strength of the death drive that consumed and enveloped Hitler, the Nazi leadership and ultimately the world in war.

This understanding of the Germans' self-destructive obsession with the Jews may seem fantastical to many observers — as it must have seemed to the poor Jewish peasant whose head was about to be blown off by a German battalion policeman standing over him. The German pursuit of the annihilation of the ancient and eternal enemy was all consuming, however. Following the modified conception of the death drive presented here, the obsessive, zealous and horrific focus on the destruction of the Jewish enemy that the German leaders believed had always threatened the Aryans was necessary. The apparently helpless condition of the Jews whom the Germans slaughtered meant little. The Germans saw the Jews as enemies, not as helpless victims. The torment and humiliation inflicted on the Jews before killing them expressed the German rage at the threat they believed was confronting them and their fear of it. This was a third front against an imaginary enemy that Goldhagen (1997) describes in a stark and horrifying narrative of destruction and death that defies logic and self-interest.

Jan T. Gross (2002) presents another stark description of the murder of Jews by members of their own ancestral community of Jedwabne, Poland in 1941 in his book, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland.* The killers in this case were not officials of the government but people who had lived with and known the Jews for many years. Gross's (2002) description brings to mind the slaughter of Jews in Kovno, Lithuania that is mentioned above. As noted above, the slaughter in Kovno also was perpetrated by civilians (Goldhagen, 1997, p. 191-192).

Jedwabne was a small farming community inhabited before the Second World War by both Jews and ethnic Poles. Its population of about 2,500 was composed of two-thirds Jews, with the remainder being ethnic Poles, who were Catholic (Gross, 2002). From September 1939 until June 1941, the area was under the control of Soviet forces. When the ensuing war between Germany and Russia led to the flight of the Russians, Germany seized the town. As Gross (2002) indicates, the German occupation was welcomed by the local Polish population, while the Jewish population, although not very much involved in the politics of the war, had seemed to favor the Russians. This is not surprising considering the German threat to the Jews of Europe was well known.

Soon after the arrival of German troops in the area, a series of pogroms occurred. These seemed to be incited by the Poles, who ignited longstanding stories of Jewish atrocities involving the use of Christian children's blood to make matzoh for Passover. Egged on by Polish elites, a plot apparently was hatched by local Polish leaders of Jedwabne (including the mayor) to attack and slaughter the Jews of the town. This was done on July 10, 1941. Jews were killed with clubs, knives, and other weapons. The massacre culminated with the herding of a large number of Jews into a barn and setting

the structure on fire. Ultimately, although the figures are disputed, the total killed was about 1,600 people (Gross, 2002). There were only a handful of survivors.

The murderers of the Jews of Jedwabne were their "neighbors;" German authorities had allowed the incident but did not seem to incite it or participate in it. The reasons for the massacre remain unclear to the present. Jewish property was taken over by people in the town, but it does not seem that there could have been a great deal of material value to gain in this small rural community. Gross (2002) does not mention anything about actual grievances the Poles had about the Jews except for the antisemitic slurs that were centuries old.

An important part of the pogrom for this discussion about the death drive involves the behavior of the Poles, dozens of whom participated in the slaughter, while others remained passively viewing the spectacles (Gross, 2002). Some people from surrounding communities also came to witness the murders, while others from these communities may have participated. There seemed to be a holiday type atmosphere. Jews were made to humiliate themselves and some were required to perform exercises before being killed. Others were tortured.

These behaviors are consistent with the sadism, narcissistic enjoyment and sense of omnipotence identified by Freud (1923/1960; 1930) with the death drive, although the precise reasons for the sudden massacre of Jews by their ethnic Polish neighbors remains obscure. Whether the mayor and other community leaders wanted to ingratiate themselves with the Nazis is not known. The occurrence of this type of massacre suggests that the perpetrators were caught in a frenzy of rage and hatred that would be consistent with the expression of a deeply held unconscious drive.

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The massacre of the Jews of Jedwabne serves as an example of how seemingly easily the death drive can be activated when the environment is ripe. Did the various issues such as old calumnies against the Jews, that are noted above, serve as a catalyst for smoldering resentments and petty grievances in an already charged environment of war? There seems to have been little to restrain these "neighbors," but there was also little that they appear to have gained as a result of their day-long frenzy.

It is difficult to draw firm or broad conclusions about the ease or difficulty of killing other human beings based on these works by Grossman (1995), Browning (1992/2017), Goldhagen (1997) and Gross (2002). The situations and circumstances are very different. Grossman's work is more general and focuses only to some degree on the Second World War period. Browning and Goldhagen focus entirely on what were essentially murders of unarmed Jews. Gross focused on the killing of Jews by their former neighbors (civilians) in a Polish community.

My general impression from these works is that killing other people does result in a sense of repugnance and some resistance in many perpetrators, but this occurs to variable degrees, and not consistently, especially when large groups or "mobs" are involved. Only about 20% of the German Order Police seem to have had sufficient difficulty performing executions that they tried to avoid these killings of unarmed Jewish civilians (Browning, 1993/2017). The remaining men adjusted, or in some cases, sought the experience of being an executioner of the Jews. It does seem that the further the German civilian population was able to remove itself physically and psychologically from the actual killing enterprise, the less these people were troubled emotionally by the killings that did occur. This also seems true, based on Grossman's (1995) work on

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combat related killing. There is no evidence based on Goldhagen's (1997) work that involvement in a killing enterprise as a civilian working in a military enterprise, for example, causes significant distress.

These studies do suggest that when distress potentially would occur for Germans who were killers of unarmed Jews (and perhaps for the Polish neighbors in Jedwabne, too), factors such as acceptance of authority, conformity and social pressure were more influential than a sense of repugnance or guilt at the taking of others' lives, at least for the large majority of killers. The suggestion from these observations is that while a taboo exists around the killing of other humans, it is not nearly as strong as might be imagined. The death drive works to a different extent in different situations and with different people. It can be reinforced or overcome by the strong influence of leadership, culture and social pressure.

Before proceeding to the next section, it is important to note a dispute among scholars about the work of Daniel Goldhagen (1997) that is introduced above. Several scholars challenge Goldhagen's tone and his assertions about the involvement of "ordinary" German citizens in the Holocaust. An important question raised in the dispute is the degree to which ordinary Germans approached the extermination of Jews eagerly, willingly, reluctantly, indifferently or perhaps with silent resistance and disfavor.

Browning (1992/2017) is critical of Goldhagen's tone and perceived attitude. He challenges Goldhagen on at least two "major areas of historical interpretation" (Browning, 1992/2017, p. 192). These are antisemitism's role in German history and the motivation of ordinary Germans who became killers in the Holocaust. He understands Goldhagen's notion of German citizens' "indifference" as actual approval of Nazi

policies and criticizes Goldhagen for having, in his mind, a single explanation (that being

antisemitism in German society) to account for the Holocaust (Browning, 1992/2017, p.

203).

The research efforts of Browning and Goldhagen around Reserve Police Battalion

101 (reviewed above) overlapped. Browning (1992/2017) writes, "in contrast to

Goldhagen, I offered a portrayal of the battalion that was multilayered" (p. 215). He also

writes that Goldhagen seems to accept a "simplistic reduction of the perpetrators'

ideology, moral values, and conception of the victim to a single factor" (Browning,

1992/2017, p. 220), that being antisemitism. Browning is arguing here that Goldhagen's

views are one-sided and extreme, and hence reflect poor scholarship.

Raul Hilberg (1992) is strongly supportive of Browning in this dispute. He

emphasizes that

> Goldhagen overstates the extent and depth of German antisemitism. At the same
> time he underplays two factors that greatly weaken his basic thesis. One is that
> not all the shooters were Germans, the other, that not all the victims were Jews.
> (p. 723)

Hilberg (1992) finds Goldhagen's *Willing executioners* to be "lacking in factual content

and logical rigor" (p. 724). He points out that the lay community is very appreciative of

Goldhagen's work, but other scholars do not share this opinion.

Yehuda Bauer (1997), an Israeli historian, is critical, but also complimentary of

some of Goldhagen's work in *Hitler's Willing Executioners,* a book that derives from

Goldhagen's dissertation. He also exposes the reactions of more senior scholars to

Goldhagen's attitude toward them which is said to lack humility and to be disrespectful.

Bauer argues that Goldhagen has not fully understood German history or antisemitism,

which was not as universally severe or as uninterruptedly present as Goldhagen seems to

him to suggest in *Hitler's Willing Executioners*.

Bauer (1997) agrees that "by the outbreak of World War II the vast majority of

Germans had identified with the regime and its antisemitic policies to such an extent that

it was easy to recruit the murderers" (p. 350). Prior to this time, according to Bauer, the

German public would not have backed policies of extermination. Bauer (1997) writes that

Goldhagen has shown "considerable capabilities in extensive sections of his book" (p.

350), but he also says that Goldhagen has published "half-baked research, albeit studded

with brilliant passages and observations." (p. 350).

Goldhagen (1996), himself, has responded strongly to his critics. He argues that

he is presenting a new perspective, one based largely on interviews and information on

perpetrators. He argues that his work has gone against the views of many of his critics

and threatens existing notions of the causes of the Holocaust. He argues that unlike

researchers such as Browning, whom he judges to over emphasize various social and peer

pressures, he places responsibilities on individual Germans. Goldhagen (1996) argues

that

> the German perpetrators of the Holocaust believed that Jews and Jewish power
> must somehow be eliminated if Germany was to be secure and to prosper. The
> German perpetrators of the Holocaust were motivated to kill Jews principally by
> their belief that the extermination was necessary and just. (p. 2)

Goldhagen emphasizes that he attempts to explain the actions of the perpetrators,

including their cruelty, in detail. This is not, from his perspective, a central part of others'

arguments. He notes that German perpetrators expressed joy and at times merriment

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around their murderous activities and torture. This is noteworthy and supportive of the concept of the death drive that is a central feature of this dissertation.

These criticisms of Goldhagen's work suggest caution in drawing conclusions from *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, but I do not consider them to be entirely disqualifying. The harshness of the arguments among scholars suggests that personal feelings may have been involved and must be taken into account. Most of the criticisms of Goldhagen are around accusations of overdrawn and hyperbolic interpretations, misinterpretations or what are believed to be omissions in important aspects of his scholarly presentation, rather than around factual errors. He defends himself by emphasizing that his analysis of the intense murderous antisemitism he writes about emphasizes individual, personal responsibility of German citizens rather than a broader social perspective.

I do find some of Goldhagen's comments about German antisemitism and malice to be overly broad, but at times, his descriptions of the behavior of many Germans seems to get at the death drive, one pillar of this dissertation, very well. He does not use the term or concept of the death drive, but he does describe this aspect of apparently innate human behavior in *Hitler's Willing Executioners* quite clearly. The death drive, with its unrelenting focus during the latter stages of the Nazi era on genocide, torture, cruelty, and the zest for killing that produced an environment of death was, to expand on Shallcross's (2020) term, a necrotopographic zone of death and dying that was present throughout much of eastern Europe. This necrotopographic zone was especially noticeable in the concentration camps, ghettos and pits of dead bodies in the east, but could also be discerned in the high rates of suicide of Jews before their deportations to the camps, in

the camps themselves, and in the high rates of suicide of Germans during the final days of the war and in the post war period (Goeschel, 2009). Goldhagen's work captures some of these phenomena quite well.

Other Considerations Related to the Death Drive

This chapter is heavily devoted to external manifestations of the death drive as reflected in the killing of Jews (and others) by Germans (and others). The focus has been on the physical death of victims, and in some cases, on the sadism, torture and cruelty associated with these murders. The psychological trauma and what might be called the psychic murder of victims has not been emphasized, although phenomena such as the Muselmann (which is discussed in the previous chapter) suggest to several authors that a form of "mental death" in life may occur after severe abuse and trauma such as occurred in the Nazi era.

This section focuses on possible social forces that facilitated mass murder in a modern society, on the relationship of history and psychoanalysis and on the concept of an individual's loss of the ability to reflect on or represent his or her past, present or future due to the trauma of the Holocaust. The latter is a topic that already has been noted by Perelberg (2020) in his discussion of whether psychoanalysis has the necessary tools to understand the Holocaust and suggested by Shallcross's (2020) discussion of necrotopograhic zones. Laub (2003), Laub and Lee (2005), and Felman and Laub (1992) have emphasized the difficulties around mental representation that may occur after severe trauma, such as occurred in the Holocaust. Summaries of Laub's (2003) and Laub and Lee's (2005) discussions of the death drive are provided above. The issue of mental representation after severe trauma is discussed below (Felman & Laub, 1992).

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Zygmunt Bauman (1989/2000) was a Polish sociologist who emigrated to Israel and then to England. Bauman considered the Holocaust to reflect the shortcomings and excesses of modernity. In his view, human beings were dehumanized and considered in concrete categories, numbers or characteristics, rather than in moral or humanistic terms.

Modernity in Germany (and elsewhere) created a bureaucracy that emphasized means rather than original goals. Speaking of the Nazi bureaucracy, Bauman (1989/2000) writes that

> Once set in motion, the machinery of murder developed its own impetus: the more it excelled in cleansing the territories it controlled of the Jews, the more actively it sought new lands where it could exercise its newly acquired skills….What kept the murdering machine going then was solely its own routine and impetus. The skills of mass murder had to be used simply because they were there. (p. 106)

This point is illustrated by the cost of diverting resources needed for the war effort in order to murder Jews who were no actual threat to invading or retreating armies. The goal was to "cleanse distant parts of Europe for the German habitat which was never to be" (Bauman, 1989/2000, p. 106). For Bauman, the task of murdering Jews was more important than the welfare of the German homeland.

Others considered this diversion of resources to reflect not a mindless bureaucracy, but rather a rabid antisemitism that was more important to German leaders than the war effort itself. Which side of this issue one favors depends on whether one believes that it was German leadership and Adolph Hitler who ran the war effort or whether (like Bauman seems to believe) it was the German bureaucracy that completed assigned tasks while lacking judgment about their ultimate value.

Another point that Bauman (1989/2000) makes is that bureaucracy in the modern age is fully capable of genocide once it has clear goals and seeming rationality behind its

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actions. Bureaucracy may become the carrier of "grand designs," in modern states. The grand design in Nazi era Germany, for example, included the "cleansing" of non Aryan elements from German (and European) territories. "Genocide arrives as an integral part of the process through which the grand design is implemented. *The design gives it the legitimation; state bureaucracy gives it the vehicle; and the paralysis of society gives it the 'road clear' sign"* (Bauman, 1989/2000, p.114). For Bauman, the ultimate enforcers and movers of social policy are bureaucrats.

In his critique of modernity, Bauman (1989/2000) also emphasizes "morality-eroding" mechanisms and conditions of the modern state. There is the "social production of distance" that lessens moral responsibility, "the substitution of technical for moral responsibility" and the "technology of segregation and separation, which promotes indifference to the plight of the Other…." (Bauman, 1989/2000, p.199). These points are all well taken in describing modern societies and the potential for indifference to the plight of individuals and groups who are considered the Other. They do not capture the uniqueness of the Holocaust or the intensity of the antisemitism and delusional nature of its leaders and followers that perpetuated the most extreme genocide in recorded history.

Bauman's sociological analysis of the relationship of modernity and the Holocaust, therefore, is useful but incomplete and must be joined to the specifics of particular situations and events that go beyond broad sociological principles that, by themselves, risk the charge of avoiding the historical and emotional impact of dehumanization, death and destruction that transpired in the Nazi era. It is doubtful that the mechanization and compartmentalization or willed avoidance of personal reactions that Bauman points to as crucial for the enactment of the Holocaust can adequately

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account for the barbarism and zealous perpetuation of mass murder and death that characterized this period.

Dominick LaCapra (1994) is a historian and theoretician who has attempted to integrate diverse fields such as psychoanalysis and history. He attempts to take a balanced approach to the question whether individual psychology can be generalized and applied to social or collective issues. The issue is not clear cut. At times it is valuable to use psychoanalytic concepts, such as the return of the repressed (that LaCapra employs) in attempting to understand larger sociocultural issues, but there is always the danger of considering the larger collective to be the sum of individual parts that Freud is accused of in works such as *Civilization and its Discontents* that made concepts such as the death drive suspicious to more clinically-focused psychoanalysts.

LaCapra (1994) also cautions against the view that psychoanalysis has found the "true essence or meaning" of a particular phenomenon that others (often previous theorists) have seen in their own ideological terms. He furthermore cautions against "a simple projection of contemporary categories onto the past" (LaCapra, 1994, p. 176) and a tendency to conflate the projections that ensue with certainty about a "true" explanation for an occurrence.

LaCapra's (1994) moderate position is welcome. As indicated earlier, Mastroianni (2019) recently attempted to revisit and comprehensively survey psychological approaches to the Holocaust. The text has over 400 pages, but only 4-6 pages are devoted to psychoanalysis. Freud, himself, and the death drive are not to be found referenced in these latter pages or in the index. Mastroianni (2019) points out that psychoanalytic approaches to the Holocaust aimed largely at understanding individual psychology in a

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manner consistent with the psychoanalytic focus of the times. This is an important

reminder that humility in the face of current theories is appropriate. It also suggests that

theories such as the death drive, that are not considered current or popular, may be

reconsidered in the face of new insights, as I hope will be true through the efforts of this

dissertation.

The Holocaust environment for many was a necrotopographic environment in

which death or impending death was constantly confronting prisoners. Prisoners became

emaciated, weakened, disease ridden and devoid of meaningful positive contact with

others. They were dehumanized, tortured and considered useless and worthy only of

death. The Muselmann is an example of this severe state between life and death.

Dori Laub (2003), a psychoanalyst and Holocaust survivor, has written about

what might be called "in between" states that result from severe trauma. His emphasis on

the importance of the death drive in understanding severe trauma victims from clinical

perspectives has been discussed above. Laub & Lee (2005) emphasize that the Holocaust

victim with severe trauma does not "know" what really has happened to him or her.

These individuals have often lost the ability to symbolize or even to effectively

communicate with themselves or others. Laub & Lee (2005) emphasize that in such

individuals: "narrative is flat, repetitive, stereotypical, impoverished, overflowing with

rationalizations, and very self-centered; somatic preoccupations and obsessive rituals take

the place of real life" (p. 320). To me, images of Holocaust survivors being liberated

from concentration camps reveal individuals with stunned, unemotional, "deadened"

looks on their faces. Life seems to have been drained from them, only to replaced by

what seems to be largely apathetic contact with life's movement around them.

In their collaborative effort, Shoshana Felman, a literary critic, and Laub (Felman & Laub, 1992), provide additional depth around these issues. These authors approach issues of memory, testimony and witnessing from their own perspectives. Laub's focus on the loss of personal history and the inability of Holocaust survivors to communicate with themselves and with others is one of his emphases here. He comments that the Nazi system had not only tried to shield its activities from the outside world but had also tried to shield its activities from its victims' own inner worlds. The Nazi system of severe trauma-infliction worked to convince these dehumanized prisoners that they (the Nazis) were correct and that prisoners were in fact guilty of the crimes of which they were accused.

Further, the Nazi system worked to convince prisoners that they could not be adequate witnesses to themselves or to others of what was happening to them in their confinement. The destruction of the individual's ability to witness, to remember and to experience was an action of the death drive that occurred in many cases before physical death occurred. It was only years later that these traumatic events sometimes might be retrievable in one form or another.

The use of the Holocaust in this dissertation as a case illustration that involves the death drive emphasizes the importance of considering the death drive in larger social contexts, such as in riots or wars. The work of clinical psychoanalysts, such as Laub, demonstrate the psychological effects of the death drive on surviving individuals.

This approach that looks at larger social contexts involving the death drive, along with its resultant individual effects is useful in understanding the full extent of the death drive. A focus only on individual clinical situations may obscure larger social patterns

that are present. Individual patients or contexts may always present circumstances that allow or tempt one to suggest there is no need to postulate a more universal death drive if there is an individual situation or clinical diagnosis (such as antisocial personality disorder or depression) that might help to explain one or more killing episodes.

A more distanced view of events involving mass killings and larger groups of perpetrators allows a different perspective that suggests less the involvement of an individual killer's psychopathology and more the phenomenon of a universally present drive that often is most clearly activated, supported or encouraged in a larger group setting, as seems to be true of the death drive. The example of a killing spree in *Neighbors* (Gross, 2002) noted earlier in this dissertation is instructive in this way.

Illustrations of Dehumanization/ Death of Jews in the Nazi Era

The treatment of Jews in ghettos and in concentration camps was particularly harsh. Jews in these settings were very likely to die, either because of the harsh conditions imposed on them, or because of "actions" taken by the Germans that would bring them to the crematoria. It was in these settings that the continuity between severe dehumanization and murder was most striking.

The following illustrates these points. They are taken from descriptions of A.W. Landau (2011), a concentration camp survivor who was liberated by British troops at Bergen-Belsen when the Third Reich collapsed. These incidents are characterized insightfully by Kovner (2001) who offers another perspective on the cruelty of the Nazis toward the Jews that is consistent with the psychological impressions of Laub presented above:

The Nazis were not content with the death of the Jews, with suffering and humiliation. They wanted the victims to believe that they were rightly despised, that their death had no meaning just as their lives were not sacred. (p. 11)

Landau (2011) was in a number of camps. He describes the following incident that occurred while he was in the Buchenwald concentration camp that is illustrative of the humiliation and torture endured by the Jews that seems to be a part of the death drive. Because of extreme hunger, Landau had found and eaten some wild nuts. A guard ultimately became aware of this. After being lashed with a whip because of his "crime," Landau was

taken outside the camp to a small pond and pushed me in. He then threw sticks in the water and told me to 'fetch' like a dog, using my teeth. I was in the water maybe twenty minutes retrieving the sticks. He was just humiliating me, for sport. (p.82)

This incident again reflects elements of the death drive that includes the shaming and humiliation of Landau by the guards. Death often came quickly to inmates of concentration camps, who had or had not infringed on the rules. In this case, seeking additional food was an infraction that easily could have resulted in the author's being shot. Humiliation served to remind him (and the perpetrator) that he was powerless to resist the will of his captors and was always at their mercy. He had no rights that are usually associated with being human or being free (such as a trial). It might have been that Landau was not killed when he broke the rules because he was "useful" to work, at least for a period of time. He nonetheless was punished by being whipped and shamed and treated like a dog. In this case, impending or potential death overlapped, as it often did, with severe dehumanization. It also was associated with the apparently gleeful conduct of his oppressor who reveled in his exercise of power at Landau's expense.

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Living or dying was not in the inmate's control; nor was it fully in control of the guard who acted impulsively and unconsciously in accord with his death drive. The prisoner's fate therefore resided with the whim of his oppressor, which was itself irrational.

In another incident (and another camp) Landau (2011) describes his personal reactions in Auschwitz as he observes the imminent death of new arrivals to the camp and senses that his own death is imminent.

> In late September, the trains began coming in right through the camps, and it seemed as if things were happening faster. Gazing through the barbed wire, we watched as people were brought from the transport and marched in a column toward the gas chambers.
> At that moment all hell broke loose, as people suddenly realized they were facing certain death. There was crying, shouting, praying…
> What I remember most was the stench and the music. There was a foul smell penetrating the camp you just couldn't avoid. The nearer you got to the crematorium, the worse the smell… And the music was always playing—loud marching music, German music. The orchestra players were inmates, Germans, Jews and others. There was one verse that the SS sang along with in German: 'The Jewish blood will flow into the rivers…' (pp. 66-67)

The rage and hatred felt by many Germans, especially Nazis, toward Jews was intense. Their desire for vengeance against the Jews whom they believed had brought their country to ruin was beyond the bounds of usual hatred or animosity. It seemed that only death could satisfy them. They felt that all Jews in Europe, men, women and children should suffer this fate.

Landau's recollection brought to my mind the 137th Psalm of the Bible, also a call for the activation of the death drive and a wish for revenge. In this psalm, the Jewish captives give vent to their own rage against their captors, the Babylonians of the 6th century B.C.E. Music is a part of the incongruity of the oppression here, too. The Jews also imagine a river and wish for the deaths of their enemies, even of their enemies'

children. Here, too, it seems that only revenge and death will satisfy. As Freud (1930; 1931/1932) argued, the cycles of destruction and war reflect an expression of the death drive that civilization is constantly at pains to control.

Summary and Conclusions

Sigmund Freud proposed the existence of a death instinct (later termed a death drive) in his work, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), in part as an aid in understanding humankind's insistence on aggression and destruction as essential components of life. The concept of a death drive, counterbalanced by Eros or the life principle, was controversial from the beginning, with analysts rejecting Freud's speculative assertions about a death drive as well as the concept itself (Freud, 1920).

I have proposed a modified form of the death drive in which, using the Holocaust as an example, I accept the existence of the death drive as a valuable aid in understanding aggressive and genocidal behavior. My definition of the death drive attempts to avoid much of the unfounded speculations that Freud proposed, especially his assertion that the organism strives toward an inert state. I have focused more on both Freud's description of the externally oriented aggression of the death drive as well as on the developmental concepts of Melanie Klein (1946; 1955) that emphasized the infant's fear of annihilation that became directed outward as an externally directed death drive.

One important issue in studying the death drive is the question how strongly resistant humans are to taking another's life. This question cannot be answered definitively through the limited study of only the Holocaust, but information available from authors such as Grossman (1995), Browning (1992/2017), Goldhagen (1997) and

Hilberg (1992), who have focused a great deal on this question, directly or indirectly, suggests some tentative conclusions.

There often seems to be significant resistance to killing combatants in war or non-combatants, such as the Jews in the Holocaust—who were considered mortal enemies of the Germans. This resistance may be relatively weak, however, and can be overcome for the majority of potential killers by combinations of propaganda emphasizing the evils of the adversary, acceptance of the dictates of authority, social pressure and personal concerns about the security of one's job or advancement.

The literature available about the Holocaust and survivor testimonies suggests that the death drive is continuous with and overlaps with the dehumanization of the victim. The aggressive and destructive behavior of the death drive is frequently accompanied by sadism, narcissistic enjoyment of the suffering of the victim, and a sense of omnipotence, as Freud (1923/1960; 1930) recognized. The perpetrator (or killer) clearly is the master and the victim is the slave, a condition the perpetrator wishes to emphasize, at times gleefully.

Chapter Five: Dehumanization and the Death Drive: A Case Study

Introduction

This dissertation proposes a modified form of Freud's death drive and uses a case

study method to explore how increasingly severe dehumanizating tactics in Nazi

Germany activated a death drive resulting in genocide. The thesis of the dissertation is:

> Dehumanization, applied in an increasingly severe manner to demean, subjugate
> and control Jews in Nazi dominated territories during the Nazi era (1933-1945),
> activated a 'death instinct/drive' (Freud 1920; 1923/1960; 1930) that was used to
> resolve an extreme power struggle that existed in the minds of Adolph Hitler,
> other Nazi leaders and some German people between the Aryan people and Jews.
> The result was a horrific genocide. (p. 7)

I have defined dehumanization as a process by which a powerful individual or

group (the victimizers) actively denies or withdraws a second group's (the victim's) sense

of human worth or personal value. The victimizers' actions are intended to increase their

own sense of power and personal worth at the expense of the victimized individual or

group. Dehumanization results in the loss of the victims' sense of personal value, self-

worth or "personhood." In the context of the Nazi era, dehumanization can be understood

as the behavioral expression of the Nazi argument that the Aryan race was fighting

against the subhuman and inferior Jew. Dehumanization expressed for the Nazis what

they believed the Jew already was—a subhuman.

This chapter describes the specific timeline and means by which the

dehumanization of the Jews was accomplished in the Nazi era and how this

dehumanization activated the death drive that ultimately decimated the Jewish

population of Europe. **My conclusions emphasize that Nazi Germany's attempts to dehumanize and eliminate the Jewish population of Europe were a largely successful, ideologically driven effort to demonstrate Aryan supremacy over what the Nazis believed to be the Jewish menace that threatened the Aryan's very existence. This ideological fanaticism fueled the dehumanization that activated the death drive and drove the murder of Jews despite the diversion and utilization of resources that otherwise might have been used to support Germany's military efforts to defeat foes on their eastern and western fronts.**

Previous chapters have reviewed the remote and more proximate background for the antisemitism of the Nazi era that set the stage for the hatred and dehumanization of the Jews at this time. This earlier review has included some mention of both the geopolitical situation in Germany and the writings of Nazi and earlier rightist political figures, including Adolf Hitler.

This chapter focuses on the timeline and specifics of the increasingly severe dehumanization perpetrated against the Jews over the course of the Nazi era. I argue that dehumanization had numerous components, economic, social, political, religious, familial and personal (including the loss of control over one's individual dress and sovereignty over one's body). Dehumanization was intended not only to force Jews to leave Germany, but also to increase the sense of power, worth and supremacy of the perpetrators while decreasing the sense of personal and communal value or worth of the Jewish victims.

This chapter emphasizes the final stage of the Nazi era, when countless "executions" of Jews, "Jew hunts," concentration camps and ideologically-driven death

marches served to demonstrate the sadism and cruelty Freud (1923/1960; 1930) spoke about in describing the death drive. As noted above, the expression of the death drive against the Jewish people likely utilized resources that otherwise would have been used in support of the military conflicts in which Germany was engaged.

Research Methodology

This section describes the research methodology used in this study, which is that of the "case study method" (Guthrie, 2010; Mabry, 2008). Case studies are a form of qualitative research that have also been termed interpretative and hermeneutic research. Case studies intend to explore a particular area in depth. The study area is usually well-defined and limited in scope.

The specific focus of the case study approach may be on a given theory, hypothesis or process, such as dehumanization and its putative link to the death drive, as is true in this research effort, or on a particular case itself. The latter may focus on an individual, program, institution or community. Data may be obtained from interviews, documents, literature, participants and/or community member observations.

Case studies cannot draw definitive conclusions about situations or processes given the limited size of their samples, usually 1-3 subjects, and they cannot be generalized to other situations that may or may not appear to be similar. Rather, case studies serve to clarify and deepen questions about particular situations, provide insights and material for further study, and suggest additional hypotheses and exploration that might go further in attempting to understand a particular situation or issue. Case studies are often preliminary in nature given that conclusive statements about an issue that can be

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generalized broadly usually require the study of many more than one or two individuals, situations or programs.

Case studies are often useful in the early assessment or development of particular hypotheses that can then be modified in later or larger studies. Case studies are not intended to answer questions such as whether a particular phenomenon is necessary or sufficient for another phenomenon or activity to occur. Questions of sufficiency and necessity require larger numbers of examples and blinded situations to address these issues adequately; this is usually done through quantitative methods. The case study is very useful for theory building, refinement and the understanding of issues needing further exploration.

The research project that is the focus of this dissertation seems appropriately considered a case study that addresses the thesis that increasingly severe dehumanization can contribute to the activation of the death drive, as defined in the project. It focuses on particular processes (dehumanization and the death drive), and probes deeply into each of these two phenomena and their interaction. This thesis (to my knowledge and based on literature review) has never been addressed in this manner previously. A case study to learn more about the issues involved, therefore, seems appropriate.

Although it will not be possible to state from this study whether dehumanization is necessary or sufficient for the activation of the death drive, the impressions drawn will point to additional directions for study and research that involve additional populations, especially those that have experienced genocide. The dehumanization experienced by the Jews during the Nazi era, therefore, is a useful focus for the beginning of this larger effort, given the extensive literature available on the Holocaust and the recognition that

the Holocaust is perhaps the best known of the many genocides to which the world has been exposed over the centuries.

The present chapter is intended to provide an approach to this study by addressing the dehumanization and death experienced by the Jewish people during the Nazi era based on their own accounts and from the observations and accounts of their oppressors and citizen bystanders. It intends to explore further the era in question (1933-1945) from a longitudinal perspective and to provide historical contexts to help understand the dehumanization and deaths of Jews that occurred at that time. The focus throughout is on the processes studied (dehumanization and the death drive), using the Jewish people as the unfortunate example of what occurred.

Background

When the Nazis assumed power in Germany in 1933, they became the leaders of a society with members who desired the "elimination," coerced removal or emigration of Jews from their country. This was the result of a long history of what Goldhagen (1997) has described as a strain of "virulent and violent 'eliminationist' antisemitism within German society" (p. 23). The German people, however, were not yet ready to accept a policy of "exterminationist" antisemitism, a term that denotes the removal of the Jewish people through state sanctioned murder, although this was an end toward which Hitler's writings in *Mein Kampf* (1925/1999) and the vitriolic antisemitism of the time might (and did) lead in the late 1930s and 1940s (Landau 1992/2016).

It is not clear to what degree this latter goal of extermination of all Jews in Europe would have been accepted even in the early 1940s, but certainly, as the title of Goldhagen's (1997) *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the*

Holocaust, suggests, the numbers of Germans (and others in countries allied with Germany) who would accept or encourage an exterminationist approach rose greatly during this time.

The sheer volume of facilities and personnel needed to enact this exterminationist approach was staggering. Goldhagen (1997) has compiled figures on the number and types of institutions involved in the latter phases of the Nazi era when Jews were mainly confined to ghettos or various types of "camps," a designation that includes concentration camps. The numbers of camps, for example, is very large, and points to a huge operation that was needed to find, guard, transport, house and murder millions of Jews and other prisoners.

Goldhagen (1997) reports that there were over 10,000 camps of various types. Of these, over 900 were forced labor camps in what is today Poland, and an additional 230 camps for Hungarian Jews on the Austrian border. There were nearly 400 ghettos in Poland alone. There were over 50 main concentration camps and about 1200 satellite camps. Auschwitz, with its satellite camps, had 700 guards at different times. Other camps had additional personnel. Groups such as the Order Police (Browning, 1992/ 2017; Goldhagen, 1997) or Einsatzgruppen that were responsible for killing Jews outside of institutional settings, employed many more people. As Goldhagen (1997) indicates,

> Unknown thousands of other Germans contributed to the genocide in their roles as administrators of many varieties: railroad officials; army soldiers; police and other security forces who deported Jews from among other places, Germany and western Europe; and the many who contributed to the slaughter of Jewish slave laborers working under them in production facilities. (p. 167)

The deaths and extermination of Jews in much of Europe clearly was supported, directly or indirectly, by huge numbers of citizens inside and outside of Germany.

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Preparing the German people for the conceptual movement from elimination to

extermination required an intensive propaganda effort that reached far into the everyday

lives of ordinary, German citizens, from activities such as schools to forms of

entertainment to sporting venues, mass media and other cultural venues.

> As soon as they came to power, the Nazis launched a programme of subtle
> conditioning and indoctrination of their own people. This program was
> masterminded by Joseph Goebbels, the Propaganda Minister, who controlled all
> the communications media—radio, newspapers, film, theatre and books. It also
> coincided with the beginnings of the Nazification of the educational system. All
> new teaching appointments to state schools would soon be confined to Nazi Party
> members; subjects such as history, German literature and biology were revamped
> in accordance with Nazi ideology, particularly its racial components; and there
> was a growing emphasis on the glorification of militarism and the strengthening
> of a regenerated Germany. (Landau, 1992/2016, p. 128)

It seems appropriate to state that the German people, themselves, were confined or

trapped by the extensive and unyielding misinformation about Jews that was intended to

inflame public opinion against them.

Through all of this anti-Jewish activity, propaganda and social isolation, Jews

became dehumanized and socially isolated. Goldhagen (1997) speaks of Jews having

become "socially dead" to the average German. Jews were made social pariahs, a group

to be denigrated, despised, shunned and dehumanized. Social death is one product of

dehumanization; people in these situations are no longer considered to be a part of the

social fabric of the society. The socially isolated person is more likely to be denigrated

further, abused and ultimately killed.

Over time, much of German society and the German people were involved in

some way in various direct or indirect processes of dehumanization that were followed by

the organized slaughter and deaths of the Jewish people in Germany and its allied

countries. Participation in processes of dehumanization commonly occurred along with other activities and duties of the average German's everyday life.

The enforced social isolation, ghettoization, administration of various camps (e.g. work and death camps) was a huge administrative undertaking that required large scale social participation, although the degree of conscious awareness or active reflection related to these activities presumably varied greatly among the population. Administrative clerks arranging the schedule of trains to Auschwitz, along with the schedules of trains to other places in the Third Reich, for example, would have been able to deny or rationalize their activities more easily than members of police battalions assigned to an executioner role at other sites in Poland.

Participation in the dehumanization and ultimate murder of the Jews was broad and deep, but not universally the same across sectors or persons. As Hilberg (1992) concluded:

> The destruction of the Jews was not centralized. No agency had been set up to deal with Jewish affairs and no fund was set aside for the destructive process. The anti-Jewish work was carried out in the civil service, the military, business and the party. All components of German organized life were drawn into this undertaking. Every agency was a contributor; every specialization was utilized; and every stratum of society was represented in the envelopment of the victims. (p. 20)

Some participated more willingly than others, but by the time extermination was decided upon by the Nazi leaders, nearly all the German people would have realized that the Jews were considered subhuman or "less than human" by their leaders (and ultimately by many bystanders, themselves).

This process of dehumanization that stripped Jews of their rights as citizens, their abilities to function socially, professionally, and educationally, their freedom of

movement and their control over their own bodies happened over a relatively short period of time, about 8 years, from 1933-1941. By the end of this period, Jews would have lost much of their self-esteem and former identities. Seen as subhuman creatures without power, without social support and without identities of their own, their situations would allow or activate the perpetrators' sadism and enlist the perpetrators' death drive that ultimately would result in genocide against the Jews. As Freud (1923/1960; 1930) had said, life forces are in conflict with the death drive. The Jews' continuing dehumanization reduced the expression of the life forces in them and strengthened the death drive in their persecutors until killing those thought to be subhuman became less objectionable. The following section describes the stages and processes that were involved in this movement in more detail.

Periods or Stages in the Persecution and Dehumanization of the Jews During the Nazi Era.

Three distinct but overlapping stages or periods of increasingly severe dehumanization of the Jews in the Nazi era can be discerned.

First stage: The years 1933-1938. This was a stage in which the Germans increasingly controlled the external activities and involvements of the Jews in social, professional, educational, and to some degree, religious arenas.

The Nazis' perceived need to deal with the Jewish question and to force their eliminationist goals were high on the agenda of Hitler and the Nazi Party as they assumed power in Germany in 1933. A number of strategies, verbal, physical and legislative, were used in this first stage and throughout the Nazi era to further these goals.

As suggested earlier, a constant verbal, media and propaganda barrage was instituted against the Jews that was intended to emphasize their lowly status and ethical standing in the view of the new government. This was intended to reduce the acceptance of Jews by the German people, while also demoralizing, terrorizing and frightening them in order to force their exodus from Germany (Goldhagen, 1997).

> Constant, ubiquitous, antisemitic vituperation issued from Germany's public organs, ranging from Hitler's own speeches, to never-ending installments in Germany's radio, newspapers, magazines, and journals, to films, to public signage and verbal fusillades, to schoolbooks. (Goldhagen, 1997, p. 136)

German propaganda was massive and effective in achieving its objectives, one of which was to tarnish the equality and humanity of Jews.

Physical intimidation and violence were also used by the Nazis and their followers throughout this era, and well before the more recognized violence of Kristallnacht, the ghettos or the camps.

> The regime perpetrated, encouraged, or tolerated violence against Jews… at any moment even during the 1930s. It took the form sometimes of impromptu physical attacks and ritualistic degradation by local officials, and sometimes of centrally organized campaigns of violence, terror, and incarceration in concentration camps. (Goldhagen, 1997, p. 137)

This intermittent and ongoing violence against Jews that was encouraged by governmental authorities would have worsened a sense of helplessness and terror among the Jews and hastened their attempts to flee from Germany.

Legislation was a preferred method to legitimize the Nazi persecution of the Jews, at least at the beginning of the Nazi era. Indeed, there was a "legal onslaught" of legislation targeting Jews once Hitler came to power (Landau, 2016). These laws included various punishments, restrictions and requirements expected of Jews living in Nazi Germany. Some of the laws limiting Jewish activity had been instituted even before

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the Nazi era and many similar laws and regulations were imposed by other countries in

Europe that came under German control during the Nazi period (Machala, 2014;

MacQueen, 1998). Many of these early laws were intended to isolate Jews from the

Aryan population and/or to restrict or limit Jewish participation in their own religious life

and in the civic and cultural life of Germany and its protectorate and allied states.

During the first period, 1933-1938, laws and practices were aimed primarily at

clarifying the question, "Who is a Jew?" from the Aryan perspective and limiting the

Jewish people's activities in religious, cultural and professional spheres. During the

second period, 1938-1941, laws and practices were aimed at restricting and channeling

residential and living space allowed to Jews. Ghettos were prominent in this period.

During the third period, 1941-1945, various forms of imprisonment, such as

imprisonment in labor camps and concentration camps often were used to force the Jews

to work for the state, usually in its military preparations, prior to their mass murder in

concentration or extermination/death camps, but also through mass shootings or "death

marches."

Landau (1992/2016) provides a useful chronology of events during the years,

1933-1945. Some of the most important events reflecting the Nazis' dehumanization

efforts, taken mainly from Landau, are listed below.

The Nazis wasted little time in moving an authoritarian racist agenda forward as

soon as they achieved power in 1933. They approached the dehumanization of Jews (and

others) in several ways, acting legislatively in several domains. Within months, the

Dachau concentration camp was set up. The inmates included not only Jews, but also

communists, socialist and homosexuals. In April of 1933, a boycott of Jewish businesses

and professions was announced. The Restoration of the Professional Civil Service Act, also enacted in April, resulted in the dismissal of Jews from the Civil Service. A law, the Overcrowding of German Schools Act, in the same year, began the process of eliminating Jewish teachers and students from public schools in Germany. In the religious domain, kosher "ritual slaughter," an important component of Jewish religious practice, was outlawed.

Still, in the first half of 1933, a Nazi organized "book-burning" was held in Berlin. Jewish books (and those of other authors considered "degenerate") were removed from libraries and publicly burned. On symbolic levels, it is clear that through the burning of books the Nazis wished to control information and suppress suspect opinions, especially those of intellectuals and subversives whom they considered enemies.

Later in 1933, the hereditary farm law banned Jews from owning land. In the same year, Jews were banned "from all aspects of German cultural and sporting life" through a law that would affect Jewish participation in sports, the arts, literature and the press (Landau,1992/2016). Other early acts that reflected the desire of the Nazis to isolate and condemn the Jews included restrictions on the use of public facilities, such as swimming pools and public parks. Goldstein (2012) reports that forty-two anti-Jewish measures were enacted in 1933 and another nineteen were enacted in 1934.

These very early acts occurring at the outset of the Nazi era demonstrated the Nazis' intent to dehumanize Jews in several domains, and to control and restrict Jewish participation in the economic, cultural and professional life of Germany while also restricting the Jewish people's own religious practices. They reflected the intent of the German government to isolate Jews and to restrict their own and German citizens'

involvement with one another, a practice that would make it easier for average Germans to distance themselves psychologically from the fate of the Jews (Landau, 2016). All of this is consistent with Hitler's emphasis on the importance of separating members of the Aryan race from members of the subhuman Jewish race because of the fear of contamination of the Aryans by the Jews (A. Hitler, *Mein Kampf* extract, in R. L. Landau, 2016; Landau, 2016). Burning books written by Jews, for example, suggests the importance in Nazi eyes of limiting corrosive information propagated by Jews in order to avoid contamination by them. As Goldhagen (1997) says, the Jews were expected to become "socially dead" to the larger Aryan society.

Further restrictions and prohibitions consistent with the Nazi Party platform were enacted two years later in the well-known Nuremberg Laws of 1935 (Landau, 1992/2016) These laws included 1. The Reich Citizenship Law "that removed Jewish equality before the law…." and 2. The Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honour "which prohibits marriage or sexual relations between Jews and non-Jews" (p. 350). Later, in November of 1935, under a supplement to the Reich Citizenship Law, Jews were disqualified from German citizenship.

The Nuremberg Laws thereby established that Jewish people could not be citizens and that they did not have the rights of citizenship. Jews also could not intermarry with Germans, an apparent reference to the feared contamination of Aryan blood with the blood of the Jews who were considered subhuman. Through the Nuremberg laws, as Hitler had emphasized in *Mein Kampf*, Jews were defined in racial terms, a condition that was further defined on the basis of the number of Jewish grandparents a person had. A

person was considered a Jew if he or she had three or more Jewish grandparents (Landau, 2016).

The Nazis' multifarious dehumanization of Jews continued through this period and spread to other countries, often building on the groundwork laid by antisemitism of earlier times. A number of pogroms occurred in Poland in 1936, apparently instigated by a Polish cardinal who condemned usury and fraud attributed to Jews by Christian clergy (and others) that is reminiscent of the antisemitic calumnies of earlier periods that focused on religion rather than race. It may be that "scientific racism," a popular designation among Nazis and their sympathizers in the 1930s and 1940s (and before), was a superfluous label for the expression of the virulent antisemitism spawned in part by the Nazis that was present in eastern Europe at this time and before. Finally, in 1937, the Buchenwald concentration camp was created.

By the end of this stage (roughly 1938), it had become clear that Jews were to be shunned socially and excluded from all forms of civil and community life in Germany. The population of Jews in Germany before the Nazi era was only about 550,000 or 1% of the population (Landau, 2016). Half of these people had emigrated because of the early conditions imposed by the Nazi government. For those who had not left, or for those who could not leave because of economic or other reasons, it was clear that Jews were not even second-class citizens at this point; they were considered aliens and were living in a hostile country whose leadership could not be counted on to protect them from violence and which viewed them as vermin, ready to infect the Aryan race. These Jews were in fact stateless.

Second stage: The years 1938-1941. This was a stage in which the restrictions, limitations and social isolation of the first stage were increased as the Germans came to control where the Jews could live and ultimately how much space, food, electricity, medical care and other necessities they would receive (Landau, 2016). The first ghettos were established. In this period, also, the German state expanded, as Hitler had promised. Further persecution of the Jews, socially and economically, took place; and Nazis fomented the Kristallnacht (The Night of Broken Glass) (Goldhagen, 1997).

Firstly, Germany expanded into what would be a "Greater Germany" through the incorporation of Austria (the Anschluss) and the Czech Sudentenland. These acquisitions increased German territory and began to fulfill Hitler's goal of acquiring more land (living space) for people of the Aryan race. Secondly, certain amounts of personal property of Jews in Germany now required registration, an indication that property owned by Jews might ultimately be confiscated or appropriated. Third, after the assassination of a German embassy official in France by Herschel Grynszpan, a young Polish Jew who was angered by the forced deportation from Germany of his parents in November 1938, the Nazis responded with "collective punishment." Large scale rioting, destruction and violence against Jews and Jewish property across Germany was instituted by government agents (Goldhagen, 1997; Landau, 2016). Jewish property (both businesses and religious buildings and artifacts, such as synagogues) was vandalized, looted and destroyed. Scores of Jews were killed and thousands sent to concentration camps.

The German authorities blamed the Jews collectively for the actions of one Jew who had assassinated the embassy official. All Jews in Germany were considered

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responsible, and the Jewish community was required to pay for repairs to their own property. They were also required to pay a collective reparation fee to the state. World-wide outcries against the German state made no apparent difference in Nazi policies. Kristallnacht served as a warning of Nazi Germany's determination to deal harshly with Jews as a collective, rather than as individuals. This was another form of dehumanization, a loss of individuality.

Kristallnacht reflected a dramatic escalation in state-sponsored violence against Jews. It also reflected the early use of concentration camps to imprison significant numbers of Jews. After Kristallnacht, it became impossible for Jews to experience a sense of safety or to maintain their property or economic livelihoods in Germany. It was clear that they would no longer be able to express their religious beliefs freely or openly.

Another important event that emphasized the hopeless condition of the Jews and their lack of tangible support in the world occurred in 1938. President Franklin D. Roosevelt convened a conference in Evian, France in July of that year that was attended by representatives of thirty-nine governments (Landau., 2016). The stated goal of the conference was to address problems of Jewish refugees, although the United States wished to encourage other nations to accept increased numbers of Jewish emigrants from Germany.

This effort was a failure, however. A small number of countries at the conference agreed to only token increases in immigration. Furthermore, in October, 1938, the Evian Committee sent a memorandum to the German Foreign Office indicating that the Evian conferees did not challenge the right of Germany to govern its own subjects in accord with accepted standards of state sovereignty. This statement and the failure of Evian

conferee states to accept more immigrants may have emboldened Hitler. In any case, Kristallnacht, the event that unleashed previously unseen violence against the Jews, occurred the month after the Evian Conference.

In the next few years, Germany increased its emphasis on Jewish emigration, but had little success. As war seemed inevitable, Hitler delivered a chilling speech in the Reichstag in which he threatened to annihilate Europe's Jews: "if the international Jewish financiers in and outside Europe should succeed in plunging the nations once more into a world war…" (Hitler, 1939, as cited in Landau, 2016, p. 158) Hitler's statement warning about world war and the annihilation of the Jewish people suggested that conflict, violence and terror were about to increase. In Hitler's mind (or at least through his statements), the Jews continued to be responsible for much of the misery of the world that he, himself, was about to increase in horrifyingly violent dimensions.

The Molotov-Ribbentrop non-aggression pact between Germany and the Soviet Union in 1939 divided much of Poland between these two countries and provided additional land for each. Hitler was not satisfied with what he had obtained, however, and soon pushed eastward into Russia. Many more Jews came under German control with Hitler's eastward thrust into the Pale of Settlement where about 3 million, generally poor Jews lived. Emigration of significant numbers of Jews, the lynchpin of the Nazi eliminationist strategy to deal with the removal of the Jews, stalled. There was little prospect for emigration to inhospitable and/or unwelcoming environments, such as Madagascar, Palestine or South American nations that had been mentioned previously as a means of removing the Jews from the Aryan presence.

The beginning of the settlement of Jews into ghettos occurred in 1939. The ghettos were temporary sites in cities that housed large numbers of Jews who were forced into them, often being required to sell their own homes to local residents at enormous losses. The ghettos became filthy, unsanitary and disease-ridden environments, as Emmanuel Ringelblum describes in his account from the Warsaw ghetto (Sloan, 1974). Forced labor was common. Rations, as reported by Ringelblum in the Warsaw ghetto, were restricted to about 800 calories per person per day (Sloan, 1974). Malnutrition, disease and death were common. When people were defiant or unable to work, they were often summarily shot.

Ultimately, hundreds of ghettos (e.g. Lodz, Warsaw) were established, as noted earlier. The Warsaw ghetto, for example, was the largest ghetto in Nazi occupied lands. It grew to contain about 500,000 people, but through disease, overwork, murder, and deportations, the final population was about 10% of this number (Landau, 2016). Since the Nazis had openly stated their intention to eliminate all Jews in Europe and other countries were now accepting only very small numbers of refugees, the Nazis decided to solve the Jewish question through a "Final Solution" that was formulated definitively in 1941. This final solution to the Jewish problem involved mass murder on a horrific scale.

Ghettoization facilitated the murder of large numbers of Jews since it allowed them to be maintained, monitored and controlled in designated areas, making it easier to deport them to the "east" where they ultimately would be overworked and/or killed. German fears of a hostile force that would retard the German military advancement also were eased by forcing Jews into ghettos.

The cultural, social, economic, and religiously dehumanizing steps of earlier years progressed further during these ghetto years. Jews were restricted in social contacts among themselves and with non-Jews; they were deprived of adequate housing, education, medical care, and food supplies. Dehumanization came to affect the Jew's family life, personal identity and dress. Depending on location, Jews were required to wear identifying armbands or a star on their coats toward the end of this period, thus forcing them to identify themselves publicly as Jews in a derogatory manner. In 1938, it became compulsory for males to add the name 'Israel' "to their existing names and, on pain of imprisonment, to use those names in all official matters" (Kershaw, 2000, p. 131). Jews also were required to have their passports stamped with a 'J'. The same was true for females, who were required to add the name, 'Sara' to their documents and passports (Kershaw, 2000).

Jews in ghettos were doomed to a sometimes slow death if they were able to survive these harsh conditions at all or to a rapid death by shooting if they attempted to escape the ghetto or defied their oppressors in other ways. Later, beginning in 1941/1942, death came not only in the ghetto itself, but through "actions" or deportations of increasing numbers of prisoners who were loaded onto trains and transported to the camps in the east for further hard work, starvation, humiliation and murder in concentration camps. The illustrations provided later in this chapter, as well as those in previous chapters, provide grim images of life in ghettos and camps.

Third stage: The years 1941-45. This was the stage in which the Germans controlled not only what Jews were permitted to do (their activities) and where they could live (e.g., ghettos, labor camps), but also where and when each of them would die.

Concentration camps of various types were characteristic of this stage. There were several types of concentration camps (when the term is used generically) (Pingel, 1990). These include labor camps, transit camps, prisoner-of-war camps, and extermination camps (e.g. Auschwitz, Birkenau).

There were other means of extermination employed by the Nazis and their allies in addition to, or before, the widespread use of the concentration camps. These included organized death squads, the Einsatzgruppen, that accompanied the German military in its eastward expansion and executed Jews along the way; death squads of the Order Police described in an earlier chapter; "Jew hunts" for those Jews who were hidden or who had not yet been apprehended through the aforementioned approaches; and "death marches" of Jews toward the end of the war who were being moved to ostensibly more secure concentration camps as Allied forces approached formerly secure camps.

Death was the intended outcome for all Jews. Some Jews, usually younger able-bodied men, prolonged their lives in concentration camps through work the Germans needed for the war effort. When these men (and older male teenagers) were no longer able to work effectively, they were killed. These final years of the Nazi era were characterized by horrendous violence, massacres, torture, inhumane treatments and death for millions of Jews and others who suffered at the hands of what must be considered a crazed and fanatical regime.

Hitler's ideological fanaticism required the extermination of all Jews in Europe. This commitment may have taken precedence even over Nazi Germany's efforts in the conduct of war. As Kassow (2018) indicates, this was a regime that emphasized ideology and racist dogma above the needs of its own population and its own war effort.

R. S. Landau (1992/2016) argues the same point when he writes,
Ultimately, the destruction of the Jews would be so intrinsically desired by the Nazi state that even when it was clear to all but the most fanatical and self-deluded that Germany was heading, inescapably, for military defeat, her anti-Jewish policy would be carried out with even more rigour and determination. What is even more remarkable and noteworthy is that this policy continued to be enacted with ruthless efficiency even though it often worked directly against the German war interest. (p. 126)

It seems odd, but nonetheless true in the minds of Nazi leaders, that any living Jew was a threat to the Aryan race.

Gutman (1988) argues the same point. The harsh anti-Jewish policies of the Nazi regime continued even when they were of no value to the regime or to Germany itself, and even when they were at times detrimental to its war effort. "Hitler believed, or had convinced himself, that the Jews were the instigators of war, and he often repeated this senseless charge in his public speeches and within the intimate circle of his cohorts" (Gutman, 1988, p. 369). In the context of the discussion in this dissertation, violence was assured; the death drive could not be controlled. Gutman (1988) notes that: "In the 'final solution' phase of the Jewish problem, people who were working under slave conditions for the Nazi war effort were murdered and at a time when the third Reich was faced with a constantly growing labor shortage" (pp. 365-366). Murder of Jews, as a final solution, took precedence over other wartime tasks.

The extent to which the annihilation of Jews emerged as perhaps the preeminent policy of Nazi Germany in its final years can be understood further by considering where the Nazi regime placed its resources. By late 1941 when the Final Solution was formally decided upon, and by early 1942 when details of the project were made into a state

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sponsored program of genocide at the Wannsee conference in Germany, ghettoization was actively in progress.

Jews ultimately died in ghettos in significant numbers through overwork, starvation, ad hoc executions and due to inadequate medical care. By war's end, large numbers of Jews also would be killed by the Einsatzgruppen, the forces of the Order Police, the "Jew hunts" and the "death marches" as prisoners were ordered out of camps that were in danger of being overrun by allied forces and forced to march to other concentration camps or to transportation that would take them to other camps. Many of these half-dead prisoners died along the way, often they were shot if they fell behind. Was the very extensive camp system described by Goldhagen (1997) earlier in this chapter a good or necessary use of resources when it seems that murder already was ongoing in other venues?

Goldhagen (1997) argues that sparing German forces the psychologically odious task of directly shooting Jews was an important force behind the extensive camp system the Nazis came to employ. Extermination in gas chambers and crematoria resulted in greater efficiency for the genocidal endeavor, but was the harsh treatment, cruelty and murder of prisoners also self-defeating?

It is hard to conceive of an effective work force with diseased and half-starved men in concentration camps, or with a work force largely devoid of women (who generally were gassed on arrival to concentration camps). Better treatment and the greater use of women might have resulted in higher productivity, but this also would have kept more Jews alive longer. Goldhagen (1997) says that

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the priority given to the extermination of the Jews, both by Hitler and the Nazi leadership…was so great that the Germans willfully destroyed irreplaceable and desperately needed Jewish labor and production, and thereby further imperiled their prospect of military victory. (p. 158)

From this perspective, it was better to have a dead Jew than an adequately fed Jew who worked effectively for the Nazi war effort.

Framing these issues differently, it seems that these efforts, the construction and maintenance of an extensive system of camps, the emphasis on prisoners' work while starving and mistreating them, and the murder and rape of women prisoners were consistent with the thesis of this dissertation. When dehumanization was no longer satisfying to the perpetrators and their sadism was not balanced by life forces or conscience, the Nazi tormentors' fanaticism enlisted the death drive that was acted upon and accompanied by great cruelty and inefficiency that, at times, impaired the productive work of the camps and the war effort.

The same question about prioritization and perceived importance of resources can be raised about "death marches" from concentration camps toward the end of the war. The apparent purpose of the death march was to force those concentration camp victims who were able to endure harsh conditions to relocate to a more secure camp, where their forced labor and threatened existence would continue for a time. Yet, as Goldhagen (1997) points out, the marches were senseless and aimless. They often seemed to follow no specific route. They seemed to have been an end in themselves, a continuation of the starvation, cruelty and ultimate death of the camp from which they had originated. "The fidelity of the Germans to their genocidal enterprise was so great as seeming to defy comprehension" (Goldhagen, 1997, p. 367). The marches did not serve any real purpose

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short of the perpetuation of the genocide in which they were embedded. The prisoners were too weak, too frail and too sick to contribute meaningfully to labor for the war effort that was clearly coming to an end. Jews were intended to die. There was no utilitarian purpose to the death marches, save for the ongoing punishment and death of the victims. Productive work was a fantasy in which few, Jewish victims, or German perpetrators, believed.

These efforts emphasize ongoing questions of German priorities in the face of military needs, both in terms of resources and personnel. The Nazis' ideological commitment to the sadistic enslavement and death of the Jewish prisoners seems total. It eclipsed or at least competed with other apparent resource needs of the desperate war effort. The latter, at least to some degree, was sacrificed to the harsh and obsessive demands of the death drive that was enacted on its targeted enemy, the emaciated and dehumanized concentration camp Jew already near death from his experiences in the camp.

These final years of Nazi rule (and of much of the Jewish experience in Eastern Europe) were times of mass killings, forced deportations to concentration camps and suffocation in gas chambers from which Jewish corpses were cremated after their mouths were checked and gold was extracted from their teeth. Overall, 6 million European Jews were killed during the Holocaust. This was two-thirds of the Jewish population in Nazi controlled areas (Dawidowicz, 1989), over one half of the Jews in all of Europe and one-third of the Jewish population in the world (Landau, 2016). To a significant degree, Hitler's speech to the Reichstag six years earlier that threatened world war and the annihilation of the Jewish people in Europe had come true even if his attribution of blame

for these events onto the Jewish people seems delusional and without merit (Landau, 2016)

The Impact of Various Forms of Dehumanization on Jews in the Nazi Era.

In this chapter, I have elucidated contributions to the dehumanization of Jews in the Nazi era by emphasizing several domains in the social life of human beings (such as in economic, educational, cultural, and religious spheres) that were restricted for Jews during this time. My treatment of the subject has been based on three chronological stages from 1933-1945.

Common elements in most of these restrictive practices included restrictions on social interchange with non-Jews, and social isolation and ostracism from normal social life as practiced in the society as a whole. These efforts dehumanized Jews and made them, in Goldhagen's (1997) words, "socially dead" to members of the larger German society. A brief review and elaboration of some of these important dehumanizing practices imposed by the Nazis follows.

Furtherance of traditional antisemitism in Germany. The Nazi leadership sought to dehumanize Jews through ongoing efforts to stigmatize them with well-known prejudices and vile comparisons to animals such as "vermin." The Nazis emphasized and reinforced already prevalent notions of an evil Jewish conspiracy and Jewish complicity in much of the world's misfortunes over the centuries before the Nazi era. A major emphasis in this area was the notion of Jews being part of a world-wide nefarious financial network. Characterizations of Jews as Christ killers, perpetrators of the murder of Christian children whose blood was used in Jewish religious rites, and as fomenters of world-wide social and economic ills were emphasized. Hitler himself said that the Nazi

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hatred of Jews was not due to religion, but was due to their race, a difficult to describe, vague and inaccurate designation that nonetheless served to pit the Jewish Semite against members of what he (and many others) felt was a superior Aryan race.

Withdrawal and denial of German citizenship. Under the Nuremberg Laws passed in 1935, Jews were stripped of their German citizenship and its rights and protections (Dean, 2002). Ultimately, they were required to wear the yellow star of David badges to distinguish (and stigmatize) them from non-Jews. They were not allowed to intermarry with or to have sexual relations with members of the Aryan population since such behavior risked contamination of the Aryan race by the subhuman Jewish race. These laws were a clear message of exclusion and of dehumanization.

Business, commerce, economics; professions. One of the first acts organized by the Nazis on assuming power in 1933 was a boycott of Jewish owned businesses (Landau, 2016). The Jews were considered unfit to engage in trade or conduct business with Aryans. They also were considered inappropriate to treat Aryans medically as physicians or to provide legal or other services for them. Ultimately, Jews were not allowed to be trained in these professions, or to be licensed and to take entrance exams for them. Through these efforts, the Nazi leadership emphasized its commitment to keep the Jewish and non-Jewish (Aryan) populations separate, to isolate members of the Jewish population, and to emphasize the lower status of Jews compared to Aryans (Landau, 2016). Ultimately, Jewish businesses suffered greatly and were sold at below market-value or were appropriated by the State. The Jews' telephone usage, use of public transport and times in which they were allowed to be in public facilities were restricted.

Religion. Although Hitler emphasized that his antipathy toward Jews was based on race and not on religion, Nazi suppression of Jewish religious practices and destruction of Jewish religious objects and synagogues made it clear that the Nazis considered Judaism to be an inferior religion, one that might be chosen by a subhuman race. Kristallnacht emphasized the Nazi vilification of Judaism, exemplified through the destruction of synagogues and religious objects (as well as other property) (Landau, 2016; Machala, 2014; Yahil, 1990).

The practice of religion became nearly impossible over time. This was true in both ghetto and camp environments. The following is an illustration of the sadistic dehumanization of an elderly man in a ghetto who was forced to desecrate his holy Torah in a ghetto by Nazi guards. The Nazi guard's contempt for Judaism, his malicious exercise of power, and the use of Jews as "playthings" for their victimizers' satisfaction characterized the Jewish condition in ghetto and camp environments (Goldhagen, 1997). Kovner (2001) reports that some German soldiers were "tormenting elderly Jews in the streets" of the ghetto (p. 45). The soldiers made one of the old men "spread out a Torah scroll in the roadway and forced the Jews to urinate on its pages. Anyone who hesitated was hit across the head with a rifle butt" (Kovner, 2001, p. 45).

Religious beliefs and the practice of religion are important aspects of how people define who they are and how they relate to their worlds. The debasement of a central religious artifact and the ridicule of the elderly Jew indicate an attempt to sadistically dehumanize the Jew and his religion. The powerful German soldier essentially says to the Jew that his value and worth, and the value and worth of his belief system are non-existent. The German, towering over the Jew and beating the Jew with a rifle butt, is who

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is most important. The soldier is telling the Jew that the Jew must have a new value system, one in which there is a master, the German, one in which there is a slave, the elderly Jew, and one in which there is essentially a new religion, the belief in Aryan supremacy that defiles or "pisses on" the Jews' and their traditional belief system.

Property ownership, property rights and living situation. Over time, Jews were required to register and then surrender or sell their property, either to government authorities or to German citizens. The compensation they received in these cases was invariably below actual value, but there was no choice when they were forced to evacuate their own homes, emigrate or move into ghettos (Sloan, 1974). Later deportations to concentration camps involved a total loss of property that was expropriated by the State. The humiliation, cruelty and violence in the ghetto and concentration camps are almost unimaginable. Several Jewish writers (e.g. Kovner, 2001; Kassow, 2018; Landau, 2011; Levi, 1996; Sloan, 1974; des Pres, 1976; Wiesel, 1958/2006) describe the conditions in the ghettos and concentration camps.

Education. The Nazi government was intent on promulgating its ideology at all levels of education and its rise to power "coincided with the beginnings of the Nazification of the educational system." (Landau, 2010, p. 128). Public schools promulgated Nazi views throughout. Hitler Youth groups indoctrinated youngsters with Nazi propaganda (Landau, 2016). The restrictions of Jews from higher education, professional licensure and professional practice is alluded to above.

Arts, culture, literature, sports. On coming to power, the Nazis launched a program intended to indoctrinate their own people. They came to control all of the communications media, including radio, newspapers and film (Landau, 2016). The

burning of books written by Jews and other "degenerates" that was organized by the

Nazis in 1933 was a stark example of the Nazi desire to control whatever information and

emotional reactions elicited by the arts or culture that were available to their citizens. The

Nazi government strove to allow, approve or disapprove of all forms of art and

communication German citizens experienced.

One famous example of this desire to control information occurred in 1933,

shortly after the Nazis came to power. The writers of banned or burned books, many of

whom were Jews and/or intellectuals, were considered potential enemies of the Aryan

people, as they supposedly reflected what were considered to be degenerate ideas by the

German authorities. The burning of books literally denies people the ability to learn of

opposing perspectives while it also carries much symbolism around knowledge, advocacy

of ideas and freedom of expression, all forms of intellectual endeavor that were suspect to

the Nazi regime that tolerated no dissent.

The burning of books as a form of thought control and disapproval of

unacceptable messages was not introduced historically by the Nazis, and its ominous

portent of reducing the availability of books and their contents for the future of the

culture was appreciated well before the Nazi era. The German Jewish Romantic poet,

Heinrich Heine (1797-1856), for example, wrote in an early play, *Almansor*, that "where

they burn books, they will ultimately burn people" (United States Holocaust Memorial

Museum Encyclopedia, n.d.).

The Nazis were especially distrustful of psychoanalysis. During the book burning

of 1933, they burned books of Sigmund Freud, who by then had become well known in

German intellectual circles. Freud, a Jew, reportedly commented, "What progress we are

making. In the Middle Ages they would have burned me. Now they are content with burning my books" (Burton, 2015).

In fact, five years later, in 1938, Freud had to flee Austria for England after the German Anschluss. He barely escaped concentration camps and being burned in a crematorium. It seems that Heinrich Heine, writing a century before, had been correct and Freud, writing before the Holocaust, itself, had been too optimistic.

Family life and relationships. Witness/survivor accounts of the Holocaust inevitably describe the loss of family members and disrupted family relationships that accompanied the persecution of Jews in the Nazi era. Confused, strained, and severed relationships were common. There was enormous grief over lost family members. Familial place and identifications are important aspects of one's sense of oneself, his or her place in the world and the meaning people attach to their lives. Ghetto and camp environments challenged these core areas of identification.

Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel (1958/2006) describes his family's brief residence in a ghetto prior to transport from their home in Transylvania to the Birkenau concentration camp in 1944. He describes the anxiety of the frightened passengers on the packed train during their transport, and the apparently hysterical or psychotic reaction of one of the women.

On arriving at the camp, he and his father were told by an inmate to lie about their ages so that they would not automatically be killed as being too young or too old to be considered useful to the Nazi work effort. The now dehumanized father and son, deprived of their true ages, became forty years of age (instead of fifty years of age for Wiesel's father) and eighteen years of age (instead of fifteen years of age for Wiesel, himself).

This saved them although they were separated from Elie Wiesel's mother and three sisters, who were promptly taken toward the crematoria. Somehow the older two sisters survived but Wiesel's mother and youngest sister did not survive. In general, women, children and the elderly were killed on arrival at Auschwitz since they were felt to be useless for the hard work to follow.

Wiesel (1958/2006) speaks elsewhere of the family separations that were a part of the horrors of the Nazi era. He asks:

> Was there a way to describe the last journey in sealed cattle cars, the last voyage toward the unknown?... Or the countless separations on a single fiery night, the tearing apart of entire families, entire communities? Or, incredibly, the vanishing of a beautiful, well-behaved little Jewish girl with golden hair and a sad smile, murdered with her mother the very night of their arrival? How was one to speak of them without trembling and a heart broken for all eternity? (p. ix)

He is speaking here years later of Tzipora, his younger sister, a child who was clearly a special light to him. *Night* is dedicated to his parents and to Tzipora.

Wiesel (1958/2006) later describes his first night at Auschwitz:

> Never shall I forget that smoke.
> Never shall I forget the faces of the children whose bodies I saw transformed into smoke under a silent sky.
> Never shall I forget those flames that consumed my faith forever.
> Never shall I forget the nocturnal silence that deprived me for all eternity of the desire to live.
> Never shall I forget those moments that murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to ashes… (p. 34)

Wiesel describes what is indescribable trauma and the loss forever of a certain joy and faith in life, as well as a desire to live.

S.K. Cohen (2006) also describes family life, but in a ghetto in Kovno, Lithuania. She talks about the heart-wrenching experiences of family break-up and "selection" in which some individuals in the ghetto were designated for deportation to an unknown

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location that probably would mean death in a concentration camp. Individual family members, as noted above—usually males who are neither too young nor too old to work—might remain alive for a period of time because they are 'useful' for work that must be done for the war effort. There was no consideration of family ties in the "selection." Cohen (2006) goes on to state,

> Therefore, it was here at the 'selection' that the family was divided into those who were considered 'useful' and 'useless'….The family as a unit was physically destroyed here, and each member was given a new identity and fate, not according to their family name, talents, or personalities, but according to their perceived temporary 'usefulness.' (p. 274)

The family breakup here is reminiscent of slave families torn apart by their owners to further the economic needs of the slave holder in pre-Civil War America. The break-up of families in the Nazi era also was based on the usefulness of the slave or victim to the owner or Nazi regime.

Personal appearance, dress, control of one's own body, identification of self.

There were numerous requirements imposed by Nazi Germany or its affiliated states that reflected the desire of the oppressor to identify and control the Jew's body. This was a way to monitor and single out the Jew from other citizens, to essentially dehumanize Jews who no longer had the freedom to express themselves through their dress or their bodies as they wished.

Power, therefore, was in the hands of those who could oversee and determine the identification of others. Yellow star of David badges were required to be worn by Jews in Germany soon after Kristallnacht. Variations on the theme were instituted in conquered and allied territories. Jews taken into concentration camps had designating numbers tattooed on their arms, thus depriving them of individual name identities and substituting

numbers as identifiers, much as would be the case for domestic animals (i.e. non-humans or subhumans).

In some camps and ghettos, pregnancy was outlawed. Women found to be pregnant in ghettos might be shot, apparently because caring for an infant would consume time needed for work on government military preparations. As noted earlier, women, children and the elderly were commonly killed in gas chambers immediately on arrival to concentration camps, under the assumption that they would contribute little to the work activities of the camps. As we have seen in Wiesel's account, older teenage boys and men through middle age were spared initial execution in such situations. They would be kept alive to provide needed labor for the war effort until fatigue, illness, demoralization or starvation from inadequate rations made them "useless." They, too, would then be murdered.

Conclusions

Dehumanization involves a denial of an individual's or victim group's humanity (Haslam, 2006; Haslam et. al., 2013; Haslam & Loughlin, 2014). The concept of dehumanization, as used in this dissertation, argues directly or indirectly that the individual or victim group, in this case the Jews of Europe, is a subhuman group or, in Hitler's assertion, a subhuman race (if they are a race at all). Dehumanized groups may be treated with impunity because the usual rules of social and human interaction no longer apply to these individuals and groups. At this point (or earlier) the dehumanization overlaps with and leads to the death drive. It seems obvious, but nonetheless important to emphasize, that murder is an extreme and final form of dehumanization.

As Landau (2016) points out, the series of antisemitic laws and practices instituted by the Nazis when they assumed power in 1933 were viewed by most Germans either with indifference or with rejection. The Kristallnacht rioting and destruction in 1938 also were condemned by the German population as a whole (Landau, 2016). Over time, however, the Nazi efforts to dehumanize the Jews in the eyes of the Germans became more successful. The isolation of Jews, their segregation, and the restrictions on normal communications and interactions between Jews and non-Jews are likely to have been strongly influential in their dehumanization. Forced placement in ghettos and concentration camps were extreme forms of social isolation and ostracism in which usual social controls were limited or not present at all. Severe dehumanization, murder and death were in some sense horrific replacements for civilized interactions.

As Landau (2016) also notes:

In the end the Nazis successfully quarantined their victims by cutting the normal channels of social interaction and by constructing a wall of isolation behind which the Jewish community could be slaughtered with most of the non-Jewish population reduced either to unawareness or indifference. (p. 226)

Many Jews, especially those who had been starved, overworked, disease-ridden, tortured, beaten and/or reduced to near skeleton status in ghettos or concentration camps did indeed appear ghastly, dehumanized, and subhuman (Goldhagen, 1997). The average German citizen, having been isolated and segregated from Jews for years, seemed ready to have either accepted, tolerated, or endorsed the dehumanization of Jews that culminated in mass murder by being shot or gassed in concentration camps over the last several years of the Nazi era.

The extermination of the Jew—of all Jews in Europe at least—was a prime

objective of the Nazi leadership. It was perhaps more important than success in the war

effort itself. As Goldhagen (1997) argues: "Annihilating European Jewry became, with

the war and at times even of higher priority than the war, the central mission of the

German juggernaut" (p. 158). As the war became more desperate, one would think that

all resources, including Jewish labor, would be devoted to it, but as Goldhagen (1997)

goes on to write:

> The Germans willfully destroyed irreplaceable and desperately needed Jewish
> labor and production, and thereby further imperiled their prospects of military
> victory. The destruction of the Jews, once it had become achievable, took priority
> even over safeguarding Nazism's very existence. (p. 158)

Nazi fanaticism in dehumanizing and sadistically torturing Jews who could not possibly

have posed a realistic threat to them becomes even more striking in light of these

comments. Essentially, Goldhagen (1997) maintains that the Nazis would kill themselves

and destroy everything else that they or their allies had gained in order to destroy every

Jew who was within their reach. This zealotry, single mindedness, and obsessive pursuit

of killing and of death must certainly reflect a severe manifestation of the death drive that

is being discussed in this dissertation.

This was a delusional system that acted in concert with the death drive and that

drove Hitler and the Nazi party throughout the Nazi era and before. It was the delusional

system expressed in *Mein Kampf* (1925/1999) and the delusional system that helped bring

ruin to much of the world in the 1940s. The Jews were, for Hitler, a subhuman race

worthy only of dehumanization and death. They were the universal devils who created all

that was evil in the world, according to his world view. Hitler had overseen the slaughter of six million Jews, but at his death, he felt the work was unfinished.

In Hitler's final political testament, written (or dictated) on April, 29, 1945, one day before he killed himself in his bunker in Berlin, he continued to uphold the concept of race, as he continued to blame the Jews for the world war. Hitler (1945) exhorts his followers: "Above all I charge the leaders of the nation and those under them to scrupulous observance of the laws of race and to merciless opposition to the universal poisoner of all peoples, international Jewry." These themes—race and antisemitism—had been crucial to Hitler's delusional belief system at the beginning of the Nazi era in 1933 and were still crucial for him when it ended in 1945.

Chapter Six: Experimentation, Dehumanization and Death in the Nazi Era:

Medical Implementation of Aryan Ideology

Introduction

A variety of dehumanizing and frequently deadly medical procedures and experiments were forced on Jews and others during the Nazi era. These procedures ranged from forced sterilization of those whom Nazi authorities considered defective, to secretive and coerced "euthanasia" of mentally and physically ill children, adults and criminals, to forced medical experimentation on children and adults in concentration camps, to the medically induced extermination of Jews, whom the Nazis considered the ultimate enemy of the Aryan people.

Many (if not most) of these procedures involved physicians who were attracted to the Nazi ideology because of its emphasis on what was thought to be a biological, genetic and anthropological basis for racial differences among groups, and the importance of "healing" the society rather than just the individual (Lifton, 2000). These doctors and other medical personnel used their medical knowledge in what they considered an attempt to strengthen and perfect the Aryan race by eliminating Jews and others who were considered defective, harmful or "useless" to the State. Secretive medical procedures and experimentation that often involved, what for the victims was torture, dehumanization and death, were ostensibly intended to purify the Aryan race,

preserve and expand resources for those individuals who could contribute to German society in ways approved by Nazi leaders, and increase medical knowledge that would benefit the Third Reich and its Aryan population.

This chapter emphasizes that: **Medical procedures involving sterilization, euthanasia, and bizarre and torturous medical experiments were frequently forced on particular individuals and groups in Germany during the Third Reich; those people with severe medical and mental disabilities undergoing these procedures implicitly challenged the notion of the ideal Aryan, with the result that both dehumanization of victims and activation of the death drive in Nazi and medical victimizers occurred.**

This chapter will review aspects of Nazi ideology that encouraged dehumanization and/or killing of those who were perceived as enemies of the State, or who were perceived to be burdens on it. The following section will describe, in chronological order, the introduction of medical procedures or experiments that were inflicted on individuals in medical and non-medical victim groups during the Nazi era. Some of the procedures or experiments performed on these individuals, and the dehumanization and death that accompanied, them are described. The role of physicians and medical personnel in the coercive, cruel and unethical procedures and experiments performed during the Nazi era will be discussed in the next section. Psychological approaches to prevent their own potential guilt and the motivations of doctors who willingly provided the medical expertise that supported the torturous and lethal products of a dehumanizing Nazi ideology will be included in this discussion. Comments on how these medical personnel went from "healers" to "killers" during this time period will be

offered (Lifton, 2000). The final section will discuss the dehumanization of victims, families and society that occurred as the Nazis pursued their vision of a perfected Aryan society. The relationship between severe dehumanization of victims and the activation of the death drive in victimizers of individuals with disabilities (as well as in Jews) will be highlighted throughout.

Nazi Ideology and its Contributions to Dehumanization and Death of Jews and Others, Including German Citizens who were Disabled

Adolf Hitler's preoccupation with the issue of race can be traced from his early writings in *Mein Kampf* (1925/1999) to his final political statement in 1945 (Hitler, 1945). Hitler's and the Nazis' notions of race provided the genesis for a great deal of the carnage that occurred in the Nazi era. Threats to the purity, quality or overall population of the Aryan race, through perceived financial injustices, mental or physical weaknesses of members of the Aryan race itself, war casualties, and/or through intermarriage were all addressed during his reign, at times through brutal, medically assisted means.

Hitler's (1925/1999) hatred for the Jews and his view that Jews posed an existential threat to the Aryan people are well known and have been discussed in previous chapters. In *Mein Kampf,* Hitler (1925/1999) makes explicit his fear of Jewish dominance when he writes: "The mightiest counterpart to the Aryan is represented by the Jew" (p. 300). Hitler condemns the Jews along racial, financial, social and political lines, but he also condemns Jews for what he believes to be their negative relationships with Aryan women, which would pose a direct threat to the integrity of the Aryan race.

Hitler argued that it was not only the obligation of the Aryan people to maintain

racial purity but also to propagate and increase their numbers. He cautioned against

sexual liaisons and marriages with non-Aryans since these would defile the race and limit

its potential. He seemed to especially fear relationships between Jewish men and gentile

German women, although intermarriage between Jews and Germans, while present in

German society at the time, was not a large percentage of marriages overall (Lowenstein,

2005). Hitler (1925/1999) writes, "With satanic joy in his face, the black-haired Jewish

youth lurks in wait for the unsuspecting girl whom he defiles with his blood, thus stealing

her from her people" (p. 325). For Hitler, the conniving Jew is the culprit. Hitler seems to

deny any possibility that the gentile woman might have been complicit.

Aryan blood, for Hitler, was threatened not only by contacts with Jews, but was

also threatened if particular disabilities, medical, psychological, or physical that occurred

in Aryans, themselves (and others), were propagated. Individuals with severe disabilities

used resources that might otherwise be used to further a healthy Aryan race. Aryan blood,

for Hitler, must remain "pure." In the following passage from *Mein Kampf*, Hitler

(1925/1999) emphasizes the need for "purity" of Aryan blood:

> *No, there is only one holiest human right, and this right is at the same time the*
> *holiest obligation, to wit: to see to it that the blood is preserved pure and, by*
> *preserving the best humanity, to create the possibility of a nobler development of*
> *these beings.* (p. 402)

Hitler suggests here that all efforts must be expended to stop racial mixing and

intermarriage.

Hitler emphasized that it was the Aryans' duty to raise healthy children in order to

support and propagate the race. The child or adult who was severely disabled, on the

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other hand, even if of Aryan blood, posed a threat to the future of the Aryan people and diminished the potential for what he believed to be the superior Aryan race. The individual with a severe disability, in Hitler's way of thinking, was less than the "ideal" Aryan and in this sense was less worthy than the healthy Aryan. Hitler thus lessens the value of disabled individuals, dehumumanizes them and presents them as suitable for elimination.

In *Mein Kampf,* Hitler (1925/1999) sets the stage for later programs of forced sterilization and euthanasia when he writes sarcastically that society considers it a "crime" if individuals having various illnesses or problems are not be allowed to procreate but does not support other (presumably healthy) Aryan women who might be available to procreate healthy Aryan children. He writes,

> The prevention of the procreative faculty in sufferers from syphilis, tuberculosis, hereditary diseases, cripples, and cretins is a crime, while the actual suppression of the procreative faculty in millions of the very best people is not regarded as anything bad and does not offend against the morals of this hypocritical society…. (Hitler, 1925/1999, p. 402)

As described later, the Nazi state would not only take steps to limit the number of severely ill and disabled youth, it would also subsidize the creation of large Aryan families.

Hitler (1925/1999) is clear: The folkish state

> *must set race in the center of all life. It must take care to keep it pure. It must declare the child to be the most precious treasure of the people. It must see to it that only the healthy beget children….And conversely it must be considered reprehensible: to withhold healthy children from the nation….It must declare unfit for propagation all who are in any way visibly sick or who have inherited a disease and can therefore pass it on, and put this into actual practice.* (pp. 403-404)

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This is the same theme. Procreation of healthy Aryan children is to be desired; procreation of children who are not likely to be mentally and physically healthy (by standards of the State's representatives) is to be condemned, even if the parents are of indisputable Aryan stock.

Hitler's message of the paramount importance of maintaining racial purity and of restricting procreation to those who were considered healthy Aryans is clear in these few passages. The lengths to which he would go to enforce this dogma and to sterilize or euthanize the "defective" are not stated and were perhaps not yet formulated in detail at the time *Mein Kampf* was written. The Nazis' use of barbaric and cruel tactics, in their attempts to eliminate or exterminate the perceived Jewish threat to the Aryan race, suggest that other undesirable groups that do not conform to the Aryan ideal also will not fare well.

As with other dehumanizing procedures during the Nazi era, Hitler's pronouncements and those of other Nazi leaders required for their enactment large numbers of German people who either supported the Nazi ideology, at least accepted it, or did not actively defy it. Physicians were among the most important groups that would put the Nazi ideology of the superiority of the Aryan race and its supposed biological basis into concrete action. Many physicians agreed with Hitler and the Nazi leadership that race was a distinct and valuable categorization of people, that race was biologically-based, and that it was the Aryan race that was superior to other races. In addition, large numbers of physicians in Germany, after the First World War, were Jews, and there seems to have been resentment and competition with Jewish doctors for patients among some German physicians (Lifton, 2000).

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Hitler noted that it was physicians and medical leaders who were well positioned to enact the vision of Aryan supremacy as a result of the biological and medical knowledge that physicians possessed. As Lifton (2000) says, "While a few doctors resisted and large numbers had little sympathy for the Nazis, *as a profession* German physicians offered themselves to the regime" (pp. 43-44). Doctors used "their intellectual authority to justify and carry out medicalized killing. Doctors promoted the idea that collective German existence was a medical matter…" (Lifton, 2000, pp. 43-44). Sterilization, and then what Lifton (2000) terms "direct medical killing," was conducted or supervised by doctors who participated willingly and actively in attempting to secure the Nazi vision of racial purity as they forsook their ethical responsibilities, a subject discussed further below.

Perper and Cina (2010) report that "forty-five percent of German physicians became members of the Nazi party and, as officers in the SS, were active participants in the killing of the 'unfit' and 'undesirable racial pollutants'" (p. 57). Pross (1991) emphasizes that physician participation in the Nazi party was the highest of all the professions. While this high percentage of physicians in the Nazi party may be due in part to a desire for career stability or advancement, the active involvement of physicians in the various killing protocols of the Nazis over time suggest the personal commitment of many physicians as well.

Grodin et al. (2018) summarize important themes that Nazi physicians endorsed to varying degrees as they came to work with Nazi leaders in "cleansing the State" which, rather than the individual, became the "primary patient" (p. 53). Ghettoization, isolation

and extermination of other peoples, such as Jews, became the "treatment" necessary to ensure the health of the State.

Programs of increasingly severe medical interventions in the lives of those considered undesirable elements in German society were not targeted initially toward Jews, nor were they targeted initially toward medicalized killing. As with the process of dehumanization of Jews described in earlier chapters, increasingly severe or lethal actions taken against the physically and mentally disabled or deviant members of the society occurred over time and culminated in the activation of the death drive and the medically-supervised, mass murders of the extermination camps. In this latter phase, Jews became the predominant victims, although, as a group, they had no characteristic psychological or physical disability. They were considered undesirable elements of the society solely because they were Jews.

Medical efforts to rid the society of what were considered undesirable or potentially undesirable persons was part of a program of "negative eugenics" that was intended to eliminate hereditary dispositions of individuals who might produce children and adults who would become a burden to the society. Negative eugenics involved physicians in activities intended to protect and revitalize "the genetic health of the *Volk*" (Lifton, 2000, p. 42). Programs of "positive eugenics" also existed. These included efforts to encourage large families and beneficial health practices among Aryan couples (Lifton, 2000). In one such program, welfare assistance was provided to families of SS members to promote racially desirable children; this program supported both married and unmarried mothers who had Aryan children. The German notion of positive eugenics also

allowed the kidnapping of children from occupied areas who met "Nordic criteria" (and

were sometimes fathered by German troops) in order to expand the Aryan population.

Negative Eugenics: Sterilization and Euthanasia; Transition to Genocide; Medical

Experimentation

The first Nazi attempt to prevent the birth of people who did not conform to the

Aryan ideal resulted from a program of forced sterilization. Although sterilization of

patients considered "unfit" was approved but not required during the latter days of the

Weimar Republic, "compulsory sterilization" of patients who were "unfit" became the

policy of the government after Hitler assumed power in 1933 (Grodin et al., 2018, p. 54).

The Law for the Prevention of Genetically Diseased Offspring required the compulsory

sterilization of people with any of the following categories of disease: hereditary or

congenital feeble-mindedness, schizophrenia, bipolar disease, hereditary epilepsy,

Huntington's disease, chorea, hereditary blindness, hereditary deafness, malformation,

and severe alcoholism. Three-member courts (2 of whom were physicians) made

decisions regarding sterilization. Grodin et al. (2018) report that, between 1933 and 1939,

coercive sterilization was performed on 360,000 to 375,000 individuals, although

Hilgard's (1992) figures are somewhat higher at 400,000.

The next group of "patients" to undergo compulsory medical procedures intended

to reduce the number of unfit Germans was forced into a program of euthanasia, or what

Lifton (2000) terms, "direct medical killing" (p. 45). Euthanasia, as practiced in Nazi

Germany, was vastly different than medical procedures employed in some countries that

involve individuals with terminal or irreversible illnesses whose lives are ended through

medical means in order to relieve great pain and suffering. Some of these latter patients fear loss of autonomy as their conditions worsen.

Grodin et al. (2018) indicate that "in the Third Reich, 'euthanasia' was a program of State-sponsored medicalized mass murder" intended to promote "racial hygiene" and purify the *Volk* "by eliminating the 'unfit'" (p. 54). A program of negative euthanasia involving children and adults became official policy in 1939, although medically induced "euthanasia" of those considered medically unfit had been ongoing well before this time (Grodin et al., 2018). The medically or mentally ill person whose life was likely to be taken seems to have had little or nothing to say about the matter — whether or not they even knew their fate was being considered or whether or not they would have been able to communicate effectively.

These individuals had been dehumanized as a result of their condition by medical representatives of the Nazi leadership who, in most cases, seem to have found them unfit, i.e. unworthy of life in an Aryan world. Almost all reviews of these cases appear to have resulted in judgments to kill the medically or developmentally disabled person who, along with his or her family, does not seem to have been consulted about the judgment or offered the opportunity to challenge it. The perceived uselessness of these people with severe disabilities would have been an important part of their dehumanization that activated the death drive.

Nazi leaders were conscious of the potential for negative parental and family reactions when children or relatives in institutions were killed secretly, and duplicity was commonly involved in describing what had happened to a murdered family member. Secretive killing of disabled children was recognized to be controversial, but ultimately,

the importance of maintaining and improving the racial hygiene of the Aryan people was more important to Nazi leaders and representatives than the wishes of family members, who were, as earlier quotes of Hitler indicate, expected to sacrifice their attachments and personal needs for those of the larger Aryan group (Hitler, 1925/1999).

The term often used by Nazi leaders and others to justify these killings of the "unfit" was *lebensunwertes leben* ('life unworthy of living'). In the Nazi era, this program of State-sanctioned (and sponsored) killing assumed that the government had the authority to make judgments about the value of the individual lives of its citizens, a striking example of both dehumanization of the individual and activation of the death drive in which the value of another's life is taken away and the person is killed to support the aspirations and ideology of the State. In situations such as these, social and racial Darwinism was often invoked (incorrectly) as another (or allied) justification for these killings; these children and adults who were considered unfit for life allegedly consumed resources needed for others who were more productive socially.

Decisions to "euthanize" these individuals were made by a committee. Families apparently did not know decisions of this sort were being discussed, another example of dehumanization—in this case of family members and of the involved patient, whose judgments were neither sought nor desired.

The euthanasia program officially began in 1939, at about the time of the beginning of the Second World War when it was thought there would be less scrutiny of the State's actions. Hitler also believed that the effort would be more acceptable to the public during war when attention and resources devoted to the needs of soldiers was

required and public attention would be directed elsewhere. The program began initially

with infants and young children, and later included adults (Perper & Cina, 2010).

Infants and young children were referred to a *Reich Committee for the Scientific*

Registration of Serious Hereditary and Congenital Diseases that was expected to

maintain a registry of those under three years of age who had deformations, brain damage

and hereditary diseases. Physicians made the decision whether a child should live or die

based on a questionnaire filled out on referral. No further examination was done. Infants

and children were cruelly killed by gradual starvation or the administration of increasing

sedative dosages of medication. "In the end, 70,000 German children thought to be

abnormal were forcefully taken from their homes, institutionalized and eventually

killed… The bodies were burned en masse, and comingled ashes were sent to the

families" (Perper & Cina, 2010, p. 59).

The program subsequently expanded and adults were included (Grodin et al.,

2018). Killing adults was explained, in part, as the need for space for wounded soldiers

returning from war. The killing program for adults was given the name "Aktion T4" after

Tiergartenstrasse 4, the address of the offices housing the program in Berlin (Grodin et

al., 2018, p.55). This designation was consistent with Hitler's desire to keep programs

such as Aktion T4 that might be controversial relatively secret and removed from public

scrutiny. An address that does not indicate the nature of the program housed at that

location is consistent with this goal.

A medicalized structure was created for the T4 program. Adult patients with

particular diseases, those considered mentally ill, or patients who had been in an

institution for five years or more were to be reported to the Reich Health Ministry. The list of patients to be reported included patients with

> schizophrenia, manic-depressive disorder, epilepsy, senility, paralysis, syphilis, retardation, encephalitis, Huntington's chorea and other neurological conditions… the criminally insane… patients who did not have German citizenship, or were not of German descent, including Jews, blacks, and Gypsies were to be reported as well. (Perper & Cina, 2010, p, 57)

On the basis of the questionnaires that were completed, "a panel of three 'medical experts' was asked to judge whether the patient needed 'treatment'—killing—or whether 'postponement' or 'observation' was appropriate" (Grodin et al., 2018, p. 55). Again, patients, families and the larger society were not consulted. They too were dehumanized by being considered unable to grasp the greater needs of the State. Once the panel of medical "experts" had agreed that the individual should be killed, satisfaction of the death drive occurred by prescribing strong dosages of sedatives or morphine to the person over time. Falsified death certificates followed.

Sometimes, those individuals to be killed were transferred to one of several killing centers that were "in isolated areas and had high walls—some had originally been old castles—so that what happened within could not be readily observed from without" (Lifton, 2000, p. 71). In what appears to be intentional misrepresentation of this surreptitious medical activity that was a journey of death, "SS personnel manned the buses, frequently wearing white uniforms or white coats in order to appear to be doctors, nurses, or medical attendants" (Lifton, 2000, p.70). Some reports indicated that while those transporting the patients wore white coats, they had SS boots on.

Carbon monoxide gas was used to kill the patients who were led naked to a "fake shower room with benches, the gas being inserted from the outside into water pipes with

small holes through which the carbon monoxide could escape" (Lifton, 2000, p. 71). The patients died quickly, and the room was ventilated: "SS men then used special stretchers which mechanically shoved the corpses into crematory ovens without contact" (Lifton, 2000, p. 71). As before, falsification of the cause of death followed.

As part of the process, a series of deceptive letters was sent to the families that notified them initially of the patient's transfer; that the patent had arrived "safely" at the destination, but that visitation would not be possible because of a shortage of personnel as a result of the war; and that the family would be notified of changes in the patient's condition. A subsequent letter was sent to the family notifying the family of the patient's death (Lifton, 2000). Most corpses were cremated as stated above, but some were dissected. The ashes of the cremated patients were mixed together and sent to the individual families in an urn (Lifton, 2000).

The T4 program was cancelled officially in 1941 after its existence had become more widely known among the general public and more accurate information about the program and its deceptive nature became available. General resistance to the program, articulated by a few Protestant and Catholic religious leaders, was important in the program's official termination (Lifton, 2000).

Medicalized killing, and the deception associated with it, was not discontinued, however. "Widespread killing continued in a second phase, sometimes referred to… as 'wild euthanasia' because doctors—encouraged, if not directed, by the regime, could now act on their own initiative concerning who would live or die" (Lifton, 2000, p. 96). Killings of the unfit and undesirable became a matter of personal physician judgment: "Doctors acted on their personal and ideological inclinations, along with their sense of

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the regime's pulse" (Lifton, 2000, p. 96). Patients were no longer killed by gas, but now were killed through starvation or drugs.

While the T4 project was stopped officially in 1941, the Nazi inspired killing program was moved to concentration camps under the code name 14f13. Lifton (2000) considers the 14f13 program a link between direct medical killing that was previously present in institutions "with the medicalized killing in the concentration camps… linking the Nazi version of 'euthanasia' with genocide" (p. 134). The term "special treatment" was a euphemism used to describe the fate of those who were considered unworthy of life in these different programs. It came to be applied beyond the physically or mentally "unfit" to a variety of groups, such as Jews, homosexuals, criminals and Catholic critics.

The 14f13 program itself underwent a number of changes over time (Lifton (2000). It shifted from an ostensible focus on the mentally ill to others, such as political prisoners, Jews, Poles and habitual criminals. Lifton (2000) argues that through the 14f13 program, the places where killing these groups occurred became equivalent to, and overlapped with, extermination camps. "Euthanasia" could be applied to almost anyone, often the victims were Jews and people of non-German nationalities. Selections were made by doctors in the camps. Grodin et al. (2018) cites figures to indicate that under programs such as T4, 14f13 and others, between 200,000-300,000 people were killed. Hilberg (1992) cites a higher figure: 600,000.

The incorporation of the 14f13 program into concentration camps provided a ready move into a directly genocidal program. Over the course of the years 1941-1945, millions of people (mainly, but not exclusively Jews) were killed in extermination camps, such as Auschwitz-Birkenau. The methods employed in the extermination camps were

similar to those used in earlier killing efforts. Injections (including those with phenol) and beatings occurred, but the most common form of murder was through gassing victims who were led to specially designed chambers under the guise that they would receive showers and de-lousing sprays. In fact, they were then gassed with Zyklon-B, a "technological achievement" that permitted 'humane killing' according to its advocates (Lifton, 2000, p. 453). After gassing and certification by doctors or those supervised by doctors that the victims were dead, the bodies were inspected for any valuables that could be used in civilian or war efforts, such as gold teeth. The dead were then burned either in crematoria or open pits.

All victims transported to killing centers such as Auschwitz were doomed to death. Some, such as prisoner doctors, prolonged the time to their deaths if the inmates possessed special skills that could be used by the Nazis in the war effort. Some deaths also were delayed if the prisoner was considered valuable for particular research projects, as in experiments on twins conducted by the infamous Dr. Josef Mengele, who was known in Auschwitz for his extreme cruelty as well as his "larger vision" and "ideology." Dr. Mengele committed himself to "remaking his people and ultimately the people of the world" through his experiments on the imprisoned and condemned victims (Lifton, 2000, p. 377). Mengele's approach, consistent with the ideology of the Nazi movement generally, emphasized biology and the importance of biology in revitalizing the Aryan race and in remaking the world. As Lifton (2000) points out, "For a man like Mengele, the ideological mission justified everything" (p. 377). "Everything," in this context, found dehumanization, torture and the murder of victims who were often children, entirely acceptable.

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The procedures for gassing at Auschwitz were developed by physicians. There was an initial screening by a doctor of those arriving by train. Those individuals who were considered inappropriate to continue living because they were too old, too young, women who were pregnant or those who appeared ill or frail were immediately separated and taken directly to the gas chambers. Those who appeared able to work and contribute to the war effort, usually males who were in late teen years through middle age, were selected for admission to the camp. Individuals who were possible research subjects, such as children who were twins, were admitted to the death camp and sometimes treated relatively better than others who were not of interest for a particular doctor's research.

There was some tension between the desire to have prisoners work in the war effort to the maximum extent possible and the desire to eliminate these prisoners as quickly and efficiently as possible. Causes of death of prisoners that occurred before their anticipated gassing (or that precipitated gassing) included fatigue, physical injury from beatings or torture, starvation through chronically reduced rations, and diseases, especially typhus, which was frequently present in the camps and difficult to eradicate. Many prisoners also died as a result of the medical experiments to which they were subjected; often this was intentional given the desire to dissect "specimens" to learn the results of the experiments that frequently reflected a callous and sadistic expression of the death drive.

The bodies and body parts of victims were plundered before and after death (Strezelecki, 1998). Clothes, money, jewelry and medicines were taken. Heads were shaved and hair of the victims were used in industry. Corpses were checked for gold

fillings and gold teeth that were recycled for use by the Germans. Human skin was also used for ladies' handbags and other articles (Berger, 1990).

In all cases, physicians were directly involved with the extermination procedures. As noted earlier, the Nazis emphasized that their efforts were intended to effect a "racial cure," using terms that were consistent with a medical model and that emphasized the importance of medical personnel involvement. Nazi leaders felt that in order to heal a disturbed and sick society, it was necessary to eliminate or kill the cause of the disease, which they argued was the Jew. The society was the patient; the Jew was the infestation; and the Nazi doctors (who were Aryans) were the true doctors who were tasked with expunging and killing the infestation.

Other duties of Nazi physicians at extermination camps included providing or supervising medical care for prisoners who sustained minor injuries or medical problems that were considered amenable to brief treatment prior to their return to work and selecting prisoners for removal to the gas chambers if they did not heal quickly enough to merit ongoing care. As noted earlier, some of the doctors had particular "research" interests, and fulfilled these interests using the prisoners, as was true with Doctor Mengele. Several of these experiments reflected the horrific brutality that may be associated with the death drive and its associated sadism that paid little or no attention to the prisoners' pain and suffering.

The Nazis felt that Jews were a subhuman race that deserved dehumanization and death. This did not stop them from considering Jews suitable experimental subjects whose bodies and biological reactions would provide valuable information for the development of the Aryan race or that would be helpful in the military effort.

Experiments conducted at Auschwitz and elsewhere expressed the sadism associated with the death drive. The experimenters often disregarded the victims' experience of torture, while the experiments, themselves, yielded little or nothing of scientific value given the conditions under which they were conducted and the lack of scientific rigor applied to them. They generally are not considered acceptable for scientific journals (Berger, 1990). The experiments, nonetheless, often were conducted with the cooperation of academicians at recognized medical schools and universities (Perper & Cina, 2010).

Perper and Cina (2010) report that between 1939-1945, there were over seventy types of research projects conducted on over 7,000 camp prisoners, Jews and others. Lifton (2000) reports on a variety of experiments that included injection of the cervix in women with a caustic substance to obstruct the fallopian tubes, followed by x-rays to see if sterilization had occurred and the tubes were blocked; brutal and inhumane x-ray and surgical castrations of young men and women followed by laboratory evaluations to determine the effects of the procedures; "anthropological research" to surgically retrieve the skulls of membes of the "subhuman" species (the Jews) to determine and differentiate racial classifications; providing heads of victims (and later whole skeletons) to designated institutes to have various anthropological studies performed; using human flesh as a bacteriologic culture medium; using therapeutic agents, such as medications, on various diseases, with the result that some victims died; rubbing toxic substances on prisoners to assess the infected areas and abscesses that developed; performing unneeded surgical procedures; research on dwarfs, noma (a gangrenous process affecting the mouth and other facial areas), and eye color that were performed by Dr. Mengele who injected methylene blue into the eye in an attempt to change its color.

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Perper and Cina (2010) highlight additional "heinous acts committed by Nazi doctors in the name of science" (p. 71). These include: freezing/immersion of prisoners in hypothermia experiments (to simulate conditions of high altitude flight in war); bone, muscle and joint transplantation experiments (in which body parts from one prisoner were transplanted onto another after the latter's body part had been amputated); artificial insemination experiments (in which women prisoners were told they had been inseminated with animal sperm); and polygal experiments (in which this blood coagulant was tested on freshly amputated body stumps).

The extreme cruelty and sadism of these so-called "experiments" that have no scientific value should be apparent to even the most casual observer outside of the Nazi-influenced environment of these secretive camps. The lack of apparent horror of the experimenters, the doctors and some of the other medical personnel, are a testament to the strength and wide-spread nature of the death drive in these camps that, in its extreme form (as would be true here), blinds the participants to positive life forces and the humanity of those victimized.

Physicians as Collaborators and Perpetrators; Debasement of Ethical Norms; Psychological Issues

Nazi ideology and practice from their early stages were oriented toward the role of the physician, medicine and "healing". Hitler (1925/1999) had written, for example, "*anyone who wants to cure this era, which is inwardly sick and rotten, must first of all summon up the courage to make clear the causes of this disease*" (p. 435), by which he seems to have meant that the "sickness" existing in German society was caused by Jews

and that cure for this sickness required the elimination of the noxious agent who was the Jew. Therefore, in Hitler's mind, physicians were crucial to this distorted notion of "healing" that involved the elimination or killing of Jews. Hitler had, in fact, called for physicians to join the party even prior to the 1930s, and as noted earlier, about 45% of physicians did join the Nazi Party over the course of the Nazi era (Lifton 2000; Perper & Cina, 2000).

The common devotion of most physicians to the health and welfare of individual patients became, in the Nazi era, the devotion of a sizable number of physicians to the State and its ideology. This shift required that these physicians participate in the active killing of those individuals declared to be Nazi and State enemies. The Nazi perspective was that the various forms in which physicians participated in killing undesirables and Jews actually was a form of what Lifton (2000) calls "healing by killing." It was also a repudiation of the Hippocratic Oath that speaks of the physician's duty to "abstain from whatever is deleterious or mischievous," i.e. to do no harm. The Hippocratic Oath does not speak of the physician's role in attempting to heal the society.

Why did this complete reversal of role and ethical expectations occur? Why did sizeable numbers of German physicians stray so far from the Hippocratic Oath and the dictate to do no harm to one's patients? Was there something about the nature of medicine practiced in Germany at the time, or the nature of physicians who practiced it, or the activation of the death drive that produced these aberrations?

Lifton (2000) argues that the attraction of physicians to the Nazi movement was related to the emphasis in Germany and in German institutions on unity and also in part to the strongly "authoritarian and nationalistic tendencies within the medical profession…

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and to their special attraction as a group to the Nazi stress on biology and on a biomedical vision of national cure" (p. 34). Hitler's dehumanizing emphasis on the comparison of Jews to animals that infested the body and his use of analogies to sickness and curing the society would have kept these images in the forefront and possibly had special significance for physicians.

Other factors, such as adverse socio-economic conditions that affected doctors during the Weimar Republic period, may have contributed to the willingness of German doctors to join the Nazi cause. Competition from emancipated Jewish doctors might also have contributed to the willingness of German physicians to follow the Nazi rhetoric that would have benefitted them financially.

Another factor not mentioned by Lifton (2000) and Grodin et al. (2018) that may have been influential includes the frustrating and emotionally difficult exposure to patients with severe mental and physical disabilities that is experienced by some doctors who care for such patients in institutions. These are often patients without the hope of recovery whose conditions are very stressful emotionally and who place financial burdens on society and raise ethical questions about caring for such patients when resources for other people in need are deemed to be in short supply.

There are many patients of this type, such as those with severe mental retardation, who are hospitalized for years when their families cannot or will not care for them at home, thus leaving the responsibility to the State. Physicians exposed to this type of patient and the helplessness and frustration they stimulate, may have been more amenable to "euthanasia" than other physicians who treated less severely disturbed patients. Over time, the task of some of these physicians may have come to include the egregious killing

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of others who Nazi leaders considered "incurable," such as criminals or Jews. These physicians may have been more vulnerable to the "Nazi image of 'life unworthy of life,' of creatures who, because less than human, can be studied, altered, manipulated, mutilated, or killed—in the service of the Nordic race, and ultimately of remaking humankind" (Lifton, 2000, p. 302). In situations such as these, the weakness and vulnerability of these patients with severe disabilities may have activated the death drive rather than the dedication to the relief of suffering that is expected of physicians, and considered a manifestation of Eros, or the life force.

Through their belief in Nazi ideology and misplaced Darwinian notions of survival of the fittest, physicians in the Nazi era (and other killers) must have had the psychological capacity to actually kill or torture others, especially when these others had been dehumanized and were considered "subhuman." These physicians must have had the mental capacity (or need) to activate the death drive and to turn from healers to killers in order to exterminate prisoners in the extermination camps and to perform experiments on them.

Lifton (2000) and Grodin (2010) address psychological mechanisms involved in these actions at some length. These authors emphasize the ability (or need) of physicians to varying degrees to split off, dissociate or separate their minds or senses of self into different parts. Lifton (2000) calls this phenomenon "doubling," a characteristic familiar to many physicians as a usual part of their healing work that is related to what has been called "compartmentalization."

Doctors are constantly confronted with patients who exhibit and evoke sadness, distress and pain in the physician. In order to achieve their healing function, and to

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diagnose and treat their patients' suffering, it is necessary for physicians (and other medical providers) to not become overly identified with the sadness or unhappiness of their patients. Physicians cannot cure all of the pain and suffering they encounter, and they must retain a degree of distance from the emotional pain of their patients in order to objectively assess the patient's situation and formulate a plan to provide the relief that they can provide. They also must be able to endure the pain and suffering that they cause when, for example, they perform physical procedures or discuss terminal or hopeless conditions with their patients and families. These experiences require a degree of detachment and emotional "numbing" that protects the physician, to some degree, from the pain they were producing.

Physicians must consider that the pain and suffering that they are producing is intended to help their patients. The physician in Nazi Germany who believed that healing the society required elimination of its enemies— who were the severely disabled and the Jew— might have brought this same understanding and psychological strategies to their killing tasks as they had brought to their healing tasks. Doubling or splitting of the personality, emotional numbness, suppression or isolation of affect (Lifton, 2000), as well as a distorted sense of "ultimate purposes" that would have allowed or indeed encouraged the physician to decide another's fate might have been employed.

Physicians in Nazi Germany may also have been particularly vulnerable to activation of their own death drives, that in some cases, may have been stronger than was present in the usual bystander. Medical personnel are expected (and socialized) to show concern and empathy for those people who have disabilities and are incapacitated, no matter the degree of this incapacity. The emphasis in Nazi Germany, however, was to do

away with those who were helpless, weak or considered a burden to Aryan society. The murder or destruction of those who were a burden is consistent with the death drive that seeks to destroy or kill what (or who) is considered "useless."

The overwhelming political and social environment in Nazi Germany that emphasized removal of people considered subhuman (those with severe disabilities, Jews and others) could have activated the death drive in physicians and challenged their usual values of caring for the weak and the vulnerable. The expression of the death drive through murder or torture may have "resolved" this dilemma for some physicians, an uncertain number of whom unconsciously would have recognized their own human vulnerability and reacted against this fear by killing or torturing the helpless and disabled among them. This is consistent with Freud's (1930) notions of the death drive being a drive toward one's own death that is frightening and therefore denied and externalized onto the killing of others.

Killing, maiming and brutalization of "subhumans," regardless of motivation, almost never would have been entirely without emotional consequences for many perpetrators, however. All of these strategies of doubling or splitting usually would not have been entirely effective but would have allowed physicians, if successful, to proceed with their immediate or short-term killing tasks and experimentation. The significant use of alcohol, as Lifton (2000) indicates, also might have been helpful in relieving stress or guilt, at least in the short term. Alcohol use in this sense can be considered an attempt to deny the experience of the death drive in perpetrators that had compelled these individuals to murder their helpless and dehumanized victims, an act that might be associated with significant psychological reactions, as described earlier.

The long-term consequences of barbaric medical killing and experimentation for some perpetrator physicians may have been deleterious, although information about this is limited. Lifton (2000) indicates that the suicide rate of Nazi doctors was high, although precise figures are not cited, and it may be that other factors, such as fear of the encroaching Allied and Russian armies, might have contributed to increased suicide rates at the end of the war, especially among doctors who were associated with the Nazi party.

Lifton and Hackett (1998) remark, in speaking about the doctor's role in the Nazi era, "There probably has never been an episode in history in which doctors have been as guilty of abrogating their healing function" (p. 315). For many physicians in the Nazi era, as was true for many other military and civilian persons (Goldhagen, 1997), shifting roles toward the killing enterprise required changes in professional and personal identities that in some sense, as discussed in the next section, resulted in dehumanization, not only for victims, but were psychologically disturbing and at times dehumanizing for perpetrators, themselves.

Lifton (2000), for example, reports on an interview he conducted with a military neuropsychiatrist who had treated many members of the Einsatzgruppen, the killing force that had followed the advancing German army through Poland and into Russia as it was tasked with killing all Jews along the way (as described in Chapter 4, the Death Drive). These men described problems such as severe anxiety, nightmares and bodily complaints that seem likely to have been trauma related. These problems occurred in about 20% of those Einsatzgruppen personnel who had actually done the killing. About half of these patients described what appeared to have been moral questions. Shooting women and especially killing children seemed to have caused the greatest difficulties.

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Dehumanization and Death in the Medical Implementation of Aryan Ideology

In an earlier chapter of this dissertation, I defined dehumanization as

> the process by which a powerful individual or group (the victimizers) actively deny or withdraw a second group's (the victim's) sense of human worth or personal value. The victimizers' actions are intended to increase their own sense of power and personal worth at the expense of the victimized individual or group. Dehumanization results in the loss of the victims' sense of personal value, self-worth or 'personhood.'

This definition emphasizes the actions of a victimizer or perpetrator against another person or persons, the victim or victims. Many cases involving perpetrators and victims do not include only these two entities in a direct sense, however. If we make the assumption that parents of individuals with mental or physical disabilities, relatives, and other concerned societal members consider it their right to have information about their loved ones or fellow citizens shared with them, the active failure to do so might be considered an act of devaluation or dehumanization of the patient who has a disability, of the parent or relative, and perhaps of the concerned citizen (or bystander). The parents of a child with a severe disability, for example, are deprived of their own sense of value and agency as parents and as citizens, through not being considered or consulted about decisions related to their child.

The various acts of sterilization, "euthanasia," extermination (genocide) and human experimentation discussed in this chapter, therefore, reveal far broader tentacles of dehumanization than those limited to victim and victimizer in a narrow sense. Dehumanization can be understood to occur when parents, relatives, or other members of society are deprived of their abilities (which they consider their rights) to provide input, share concerns or object to State mandated decisions about medical procedures or killings

that affect their relatives or loved ones directly. The following paragraphs emphasize these considerations in what can be considered a broadened understanding of dehumanization in the Nazi era.

As indicated in earlier sections of this chapter, decisions about sterilization and euthanasia often were made in situations of secrecy or by manipulation. Judgments about who should be selected for these procedures were made by panels (or by physicians alone) without input or consultation from parents, relatives or others. Depending on the situation, euthanasia patients were transported among facilities, drugged or starved without the knowledge of family members. Their bodies were cremated without their own or their families' authorizations.

These processes reflect extreme dehumanization leading to death of these individuals. The individual who may or may not have had the mental capacity to consent to procedures such as sterilization or euthanasia seemingly was not considered of sufficient importance, value or worth to challenge State decisions about them. Relatives also were not allowed a sense of agency or value in decisions about loved ones. The State decided the fate of its citizens. Individuals with severe disabilities and families were of less interest and value than were the dictates and presumed needs of the State, the ultimate decision maker about individual lives. Hitler (1925/1999) is clear about these issues in quotes provided in the first section of this chapter.

The situation was similar, although worse, in later forms of dehumanization that almost always led to death, as exemplified through medical experimentation, torture and extermination in concentration camps when all freedoms of the individual were taken away and prisoners were essentially slaves whose sadistic mistreatment was not

contested. In these conditions, the victims were entirely dehumanized. They were treated as if they had no personal value or worth, which is how their Nazi overseers saw them. These were expectable circumstances for the death drive to manifest itself.

Deceptive, manipulative and cruel procedures were continued from the beginning of a prisoner's time in the camp through their extermination that occurred by killing them as a result of forced participation in ultimately useless experimentation and/or cremation in gas chambers or pits. Their ashes were mixed with the ashes of others, thus dehumanizing and disrespecting them (even after their deaths) and depriving them and their families of their own individualities. In these cases, there was no attempt to notify relatives of the individual's fate, which might in fact have been shared by dehumanized relatives in the same extermination camp.

Other examples of dehumanization and its activation of the death drive in the Nazi era included starving severely mentally or physically disabled patients in institutions until they died or surreptitiously giving them progressively higher dosages of sedatives that ultimately led to their deaths, and restricting food to concentration camp prisoners while forcing them to perform hard labor under the penalty of death (which would inevitably come).

In the various forms of medical exploitation, experimentation, dehumanization and death discussed earlier in this chapter, parents, relatives and concerned citizens were denied accurate information and involvement in decision making. In the context of notions of worth and value that form a part of the definition of dehumanization offered here, the State was the organ of ultimate value. It was in charge of all people's lives, and people were allowed only the freedom and knowledge the State wished them to have or

could not keep from them. In this sense, Nazi Germany revealed the extremes of dehumanization that led to the murder of patients and victims as an expression of the death drive, while also requiring that others, parents, relatives and bystanders, accept their own dehumanization that precluded greater access to information pertinent to their lives and the lives of loved ones.

Perpetrators also were dehumanized, in at least some cases, by acquiescing against their will in performing what may have seemed like horrific acts (such as assisting in gruesome experiments) or believing they had no alternative to performing acts that violated their own values. Alcohol use/abuse was common in perpetrators in concentration camps, as it was among executioners in mass shootings of Jews in eastern Europe, as described by Browning (1992/ 2017).

This group of individuals, often executioners and perpetrators, were frequently physicians, although this was not invariably so. If one accepts the psychological understanding of some perpetrator/victimizer behavior described earlier in the discussion of "doubling" or splitting (Lifton, 2000), it becomes clear that perpetrators surrender, often unknowingly, their usual senses of self and drastically restrict the emotional and feeling aspects of themselves in order to take on their killer roles. They become as if they have two senses of themselves, a "doubling" or splitting of the personality that includes their usual sense of self and a detached, task-oriented, apparently emotionally numb sense of self. It is this latter "person," or sense of self, that has become dehumanized and is thereby able to act mercilessly in performing their killing tasks.

Sometimes, as indicated earlier, symptoms such as anxiety, guilt and sleep difficulties come to the fore as the perpetrators recognize themselves as murderers who

have acted in inhumane ways that they presumably would not have thought possible before being swayed by Nazi ideology. These perpetrators have been dehumanized in the process of dehumanizing and killing others. They have withdrawn their usual senses of self in favor of a dehumanized, unemotional sense of self. Lifton (2000) provides some evidence that a process of this kind may have been costly, psychologically, both in an immediate sense that involved the regular use of alcohol after selection procedures, and the later experience of what appear to have been post-traumatic symptoms of anxiety, sleep disorders and guilt. These reactions suggest that perpetrators themselves may experience delayed psychological sequelae of the loss of their humanized selves in favor of the dehumanized selves they created in order to fulfill their roles in the death driven environments of the concentration camps.

Chapter Seven: Dehumanization in School-Aged Youth in Nazi Germany

Introduction

An important insight conveyed through the conclusions of this dissertation is that dehumanization and the death drive existed on a continuum in the Nazi era. Increasingly, severe dehumanization seems to have laid the ground work for the genocide known as the "final solution" in which 6 million Jews were killed.

Dehumanization of Jews, in a literal sense, can be said to have begun before birth and to have lasted beyond their physical deaths. Almost all of the Jews killed in the final solution of 1942-1945 were killed in such a manner that their remains were disregarded or disrespected and not treated according to ritual law. They were shot and killed and buried or left in open pits where their bodies would not be recognizable. Alternatively, they were gassed and burned in crematoria, where their ashes were mixed with those of others who had been killed in a similar manner. These ashes were then disposed of unceremoniously.

If death was the endpoint on a continuum from dehumanization to death for Jews in the Nazi era, what was the beginning of this continuum? When, in the individual life cycle, did dehumanization of Jews in Nazi Germany begin?

In some sense, the dehumanization and murder of Jews began at or before an infant's birth. Preceding chapters that focused on dehumanization, the death drive and a case study illustrated the various personal, social, occupational, civic and religious

restrictions were placed on Jews over time. All of these restrictions would have affected Jewish children and youth to varying degrees. Restrictions on the use of public transportation would be an example of a restriction that affected parents and their children. Loss of professional licensure, restrictions on the use of public facilities, such as parks, or closures or restrictions on businesses under pressure from Nazi authorities would have affected both Jewish parents and their children financially and/or socially.

Pictures in texts of pre-school aged Jewish children wearing Jewish stars sewn into their outer garments are common and reflect the emphasis Nazi Germany placed on dehumanization of Jews across the life cycle (see Pitch, 2015). Accounts of threats to automatically kill mothers found to be pregnant in ghettos or concentration camps is another example of sadism that affected mothers and their unborn children (Des Pres, 1976). In this case, Nazi arguments around the automatic murder of pregnant mothers centered on the loss of the mother's ability to work for the Nazi cause when pregnant or when caring for her child and the infant's own "uselessness" to the Nazi war effort. Mothers (and fathers) faced with this threat often chose to abort their unborn children out of necessity to save the mother's (and the child's) life (Cohen, 2006).

These situations reveal the dehumanization and death inflicted on the infant and child from (or before) birth who existed as a part of a family or maternal-child grouping. In these cases, the child's dehumanization and death generally were associated with that of the parent or family. Most children in Nazi Germany attended public schools, and it is in these settings that we can see the early dehumanization of Jewish children in their own child-centered social environments. Emigration or deportation and death for these children in concentration camps was the ultimate outcome, as was true for their parents.

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This chapter shows that: **Dehumanization, ridicule and shaming of Jewish children was widespread in public schools in Germany during the Nazi era; humiliation of Jewish children was intended not only to demoralize them (and their families) in order to force their emigration, but to enhance the notion of Aryan superiority in non-Jewish children and to suppress any questioning of Nazi ideology that potentially might have occurred.**

This chapter will provide background information for the dehumanization and humiliation inflicted on Jewish children in Nazi era German schools. Illustrations of practices used to dehumanize and bully Jewish children, and the likely outcome of these efforts on the later attitudes and beliefs of German children, will be emphasized. Psychological aspects of dehumanization and the potentially harmful effects on the child being dehumanized and considered "different" from others in the school setting will be discussed.

Bullying is considered, here, to be an example of dehumanization that conveys some of the difficulties encountered by Jewish youth in the Nazi era. The outcome of bullied youth will be considered in this chapter, given the limited empirical literature on the outcome of dehumanization in youth generally and the far more extensive literature on bullying that is available. It must be recognized, however, that while bullying is a form of dehumanization, the situation of Jewish children in German schools reflected a broader form of dehumanization than bullying alone, one that was racially-based and that affected their families as well as these youths, themselves.

Background

Hitler and the Nazi government believed strongly in the value of education for German children. This "value" was very strictly delimited, however. Indoctrination in notions of Aryan superiority were primary.

> *The crown of the folkish state's entire work of education and training must be to burn the racial sense and racial feeling into the instinct and the intellect, the heart and brain of the youth entrusted to it. No boy and no girl must leave school without having been led to an ultimate realization of the necessity and essence of blood purity.* (Hitler, 1925/1999, p. 427)

Physical fitness and health were emphasized. An individual's character that was crucial to produce determined soldiers for war also was important. Intellect, science and scholarship were less important. In *Mein Kampf* (1925/1999), Hitler says,

> *The folkish state must not adjust its entire educational work primarily to the inoculation of mere knowledge, but to the breeding of absolutely healthy bodies. The training of mental abilities is only secondary. And here again, first place must be taken by the development of character, especially the promotion of will-power and determination, combined with the training of joy in responsibility, and only in last place comes scientific schooling.* (p. 408)

Educational goals for boys and girls were different. Hitler (1925/1999) says,

> Analogous to the education of the boy, the folkish state can conduct the education of the girl from the same viewpoint. There, too, the chief emphasis must be laid on physical training, and only subsequently on the promotion of spiritual and finally intellectual values. The goal of female education must invariably be the future mother. (p. 414)

There was no place in Hitler's views of education for Jewish children, who, along with their parents, were to be eliminated from German soil. Jews were coerced and encouraged to emigrate as soon as possible. As Pine (2010) indicates, "The Third Reich did not have a clear and coherent concept of education beyond indoctrination. Political attitudes played a central role in the shaping of Nazi education policy. Education was

linked with racial values" (p. 140). Large scale Jewish emigration from Germany did in fact occur during the first years of the Nazi era (prior to Kristallnacht in 1938) when almost one-third of the roughly 550,000 Jews in Germany, at the start of the Nazi era, emigrated (Landau, 1992/ 2016).

Jewish children remaining in Germany or those living in Germany prior to their emigration were subjected to dehumanization and humiliation, consistent with general Nazi practice as envisioned in the *Law Against the Overcrowding of German Schools*, an early law enacted April 25, 1933 that began the removal of Jewish teachers and Jewish pupils from German public schools (Landau, 1992/2016). Given that a central tenet of the Nazi party's governance and ideology held that there was no acceptable place for Jews in Germany, the public schools became an important vehicle through which to express these beliefs. Jewish youth paid the price for their non-Aryan status while Aryan children, in contrast, were encouraged to recognize and take pride in their alleged superiority. Frequently, this comparison involved dehumanization and humiliation of the emotionally defenseless Jewish child and adolescent in the classroom setting.

Jewish Children in German Schools

Life changed dramatically for Jewish children attending German public schools after the *Law Against the Overcrowding of German Schools* was enacted (Landau, 1992/2016; Evans, 2005). Dehumanizing practices were instituted that essentially forced the drastic reduction of Jewish students, many of whom emigrated from Germany with their families. Other children and youth whose families decided to stay or attempt to stay in Germany transferred to Jewish schools, which provided education for about 14% of Jewish youth in 1932, and for about 60% of Jewish youth in 1937 (Kaplan, 1997).

In 1933, there were about 60,000 Jewish children aged 7 (when formal schooling began) to aged 14 years (when schooling was no longer compulsory) who were enrolled in German schools. Other youth were enrolled in secondary schools. Emigration and policies of dehumanization and harassment lowered the number of Jews between six and twenty-five years of age from 117,000 in 1933 to 60,000 in 1938. It would, of course, go down further from there. As Evans (2005) indicates, "the hostility of fanatical Nazi teachers, and increasingly, Hitler Youth activists in the schools had a powerful effect in driving Jewish children out" (p. 561). The Hitler Youth was the Nazi Party's officially sanctioned youth organization for boys aged 14-18 years of age. A related program for younger boys aged 10-14 was a part of the Hitler Youth.

While experiences differed based on locale, personnel, and commitment to Nazi ideology, harassment and concerns about safety were of constant concern for many. Evans (2005) indicates that in some schools, Jewish children were forced to sit on special benches; were banned from German lessons; were given poor marks on school work that was done well; heard teachers describing Jews as criminals or traitors; and were not allowed to participate in ceremonies, festivals, concerts or plays.

Nazi ideology and the personality cult of Adolph Hitler came to dominate the schools. At least one picture of Adolph Hitler was apparently present in every school. "Heil Hitler" was a salute expected of the children on coming to school each day, and patriotic Nazi songs and essays extolling the virtues of the Nazi regime were expected.

Jewish children were continually ostracized, directly or indirectly. They did not (could not) wear Aryan uniforms and were not allowed to swim in pools with other German children. Kaplan (1997) reports that all students were expected to repeat Nazi

dogma in essays whose themes would have been denigrating and humiliating to the Jewish child.

Issues around identity were prominent. Family disputes between parents about whether children should remain or be taken out of the schools occurred. Through their humiliating ordeals, some children apparently came to be prouder of their Jewish identities; others wanted to become Nazis; others learned for the first time that their Judaism was denigrated by classmates and teachers (Kaplan, 1997). Friendships were quickly terminated since associating with Jews or coming to their homes was discouraged. Physical fights broke out. Kaplan (1997) reports on an incident in which a Jewish girl was accosted on the street and a "ticket to Jerusalem" was forced on her by a group of German boys who reflected the goals of their parents and the larger society.

As Kaplan (1997) says, the public school experience for Jewish children in the Nazi period "ranged from hostility to humiliation to ostracism. Going to school could be like running the gauntlet, physically and psychologically" (p. 49). The dehumanized Jewish child was isolated and denigrated. By the time when even the Jewish private schools were closed in 1942 (or before), the pattern was clear. Deportation and ultimate death were ensured for those who had not gotten out of Germany in time.

Important dates and processes in the increasingly severe dehumanization of Jewish youth in German schools are summarized in the following timeline:

- Hitler (1925/1999) states in *Mein Kampf* that the defining principle of education for German youth is racial indoctrination according to Nazi principles. This view is acted upon several years later when the Nazis assume control of the German government.

- Hitler is appointed Chancellor of Germany in January, 1933. In subsequent months, a series of laws is enacted that is intended to implement Nazi ideology. The *Law Against the Overcrowding of German Schools*, passed April 25, 1933, and began the reduction and elimination of Jewish youth and educators from public schools (Landau, 1996/2016).

- Dehumanizing practices inflicted on Jewish students, such as social isolation, humiliation and ridicule, became increasingly severe over the course of the next several years; these practices were perpetrated by German teachers and other students, who came increasingly to accept and express Nazi ideology. Many Jewish students left German public schools in the years, 1933-1938. There were about 117,000 Jewish students aged 6-25 years in German schools in 1933. This number fell to about 60,000 in 1938 (Evans 2005). Emigration and increased attendance in Jewish schools as a result of their dehumanizing experiences accounted for this vast decrease in Jewish enrollment in German public schools.

- Jewish children were barred from attending public schools entirely in 1938 (Kaplan, 1997).

- Jewish private schools were officially closed in 1942 (Kaplan, 1997). Any remaining children and families faced deportation and death in camps.

Grunberger (1995) reports that the attitude of the German public (the bystanders) to what was happening to the Jewish population around them in the Nazi period was one of indifference. He provides an anecdote that describes on a number of levels the dehumanized condition of young Jewish children in this period. Grunberger (1995) speaks of the teachers' practice at Jewish kindergartens in Berlin "of letting their charges

spend their playtime among tombstones: the communal cemetery was the only patch of green from which wearers of the Yellow Star were not debarred" (pp. 460-461).

Grunberger (1995) points out that this image of young kindergarten children who are able to play only in a cemetery is "almost poetically symptomatic of the Jews' terminal condition" in Nazi Germany at that time (pp. 460-461). It is an image filled with sadness and an ominous portent of the future, when these youngsters, now allowed to play only among the dead, will be required to emigrate or die, themselves, in a concentration camp without grassy areas where their bodies will be cremated and disposed of unceremoniously.

The dehumanization of Jewish youth was clearly difficult and at times dangerous for them. As indicated in the conceptualization of dehumanization offered earlier, however, there were apparent personal or social benefits to the perpetrators (victimizers) of the Jews, at least in the short term. Victimizers who dehumanized Jewish students intended their actions not only to withdraw their victim's sense of personal value or self-worth, but also to enhance their own power and their own sense of self- worth and value.

Teachers who were Nazis or Nazi-supporters, or the students who victimized Jewish youth, probably felt an increase in their own personal or social standing with other Aryan teachers or students in the schools when they successfully diminished the sense of value or self-worth of the Jewish students. Victimizing Jewish students in the ways noted earlier (e.g. not allowing them to use the swimming pool with Aryan students) would have confirmed for them (and for the Jewish students) the importance of Aryan power and that Semites were inferior to Aryans who controlled, in a practical way, the universe they were inhabiting at that time. Power and commitment to the Nazi cause would then

have almost assuredly increased in the minds of the Aryan students while a sense of power and self-worth would have diminished in the Jewish students' assessment of themselves. It is likely that this type of power would have increased the commitment of these non-Jewish students and teachers to the Nazi party that emphasized so strongly Aryan superiority and the inferiority and "crimes" of the Jews. Dehumanization of the Jews was, therefore, a propaganda tool for the Nazi regime and a means of gaining support from the German population.

Nazi Germany's policies of dehumanization and isolation were clearly effective in forcing Jewish youth to enroll in Jewish schools or to emigrate with their families when they could. As indicated above, the efficacy of these policies on the opinions of German youth also seems to have been noteworthy, at least in fostering their antisemitism. Voigtlander and Voth (2015), using survey data, provide additional supportive evidence for this assertion. These researchers studied anti-Semitic attitudes of Germans who were youths born during the Nazi era (1933-1945) and compared their attitudes about Jews with the attitudes of those who had been born either before or after the Nazi era. Many of the youths born during the Nazi era would have gone to school during these years. The respondents were surveyed in 1996 and 2006. There was a total of 5,300 individuals in the two waves of the survey.

The research indicated that those individuals who were born during the Nazi era, and most likely to have been educated during this time, were more likely to have anti-Semitic views than people born either before or after the Nazi era. In considering these responses to the survey questions, Voigtlander and Voth (2015) also considered data from different regions in Germany and on other sources of propaganda to which people at

that time might have been exposed, such as access to or involvement with radios, print sources of information and cinemas. These latter variables did not increase the predictive power for the rise in antisemitism in the Nazi era. The most important factors contributing to the rise in antisemitism they studied were the indoctrination in schools or through youth organizations that were present during the Nazi era. This indoctrination was especially effective when it was built on preexisting anti-Semitic attitudes that were present in different regions.

Additional Psychological Impact of Dehumanization on Jews in German Schools

The emphasis of this chapter has been on the dehumanization of Jewish youth in public schools in the Nazi era. While the various forms of dehumanization in this setting were not associated with imminent death, concentration camps or ghettos, even these relatively "milder" forms of dehumanization seem likely to have had a negative impact on these youth. Much of the available literature on outcome or consequences of dehumanization involves individuals older than the grade school and high school aged students mentioned here. As noted above, some of the dehumanizing behaviors Jewish youth experienced can be understood in the context of "bullying" behaviors; outcomes in this context are worthy of mention here, especially given the limited literature on dehumanization in youth generally.

Van Norden et al. (2014, p. 323) defined bullying in a fairly comprehensive manner using earlier studies that had been done. They contend that bullying is

> a subtype of aggressive behavior, in which an individual or group of individuals attacks, humiliates, and/or excludes a relatively powerless person repeatedly and over time, with forms of bullying being physical, verbal, relational (gossip and social exclusion), and cyber bullying. (Van Norden et al., 2014, p. 323)

Of course, cyber bullying would not have been an issue during the Nazi era, but physical attacks, humiliation and exclusion were all perpetrated against Jews (who were powerless) in public schools in the Nazi era.

The definition of dehumanization I have offered in earlier chapters emphasizes potential psychological consequences and motivations for dehumanization in victims and victimizers. Van Norden et. al.'s (2014) definition does include relational forms of bullying, such as social exclusion, that are important aspects of dehumanization as considered in this dissertation. It does not explicitly include the effects of bullying on the child's sense of self-worth and personal value that is included in my approach to dehumanization.

Bullying and other relatively milder forms of dehumanization found in German schools in the Nazi era have additional characteristics in common that are consistent with the definition of dehumanization I offered earlier. Bullying can be considered a form of dehumanization that involves the victimizer's refusal to recognize the victim's worth, value or sense of personhood. Bullying, as in other forms of dehumanization, involves an attempt by the victimizer to gain power or social recognition at the expense of the victim's sense of self-worth, and personal or social status. Bullying occurs throughout the life cycle, but has perhaps received most attention in youth and in school settings (deLara, 2019).

Bullying, in many school settings, differs from the bullying (or dehumanization) Jewish youth experienced in German schools in important ways, however. Bullying often is thought to occur mainly between fellow students, sometimes between those of different ages or different grade levels, although it can be instituted by others, such as teachers.

The bullying experienced by Jewish youth in German schools was strongly influenced by teachers, who would criticize, mock or diminish the value of Jewish students. Hence these teachers and German students were co-conspirators in the bullying and dehumanization of Jewish youth. In addition, while most societies give at least lip service (or more stringent disapproval) to bullying, the structure of the Nazi regime strongly supported dehumanization of Jewish people regardless of age. Jewish youth would have felt the burden of dehumanization from other students, teachers, administrators and the Nazi leaders of the society. They would have had no sense of security or protection from authority figures inside or outside the school setting, given the antipathy expressed toward them throughout the society.

Bullying in many situations in diverse school settings does have racial or religious components, but these too are generally disapproved of, at least overtly, by school authorities or the society. Jewish youth in German schools were openly denigrated and dehumanized because of their race, which was probably the greatest stimulus to the dehumanization they experienced. Additionally, while students in many school settings might try to address the suspected reasons for their own dehumanization by, for example, improving their athletic performance to gain the bully's friendship, there was nothing Jewish youth could do to erase or diminish the ridicule they experienced since their racial characteristics were considered innate.

Insights into the psychological experiences and outcome of Jewish youth in German schools during the Nazi era of necessity come almost exclusively from anecdotal or observational information, such as that described above. There are numerous empirical studies, however, that speak to the outcome of bullied youth. Information from these

studies, in addition to the smaller number of studies that focus on the outcome of dehumanized individuals more generally, provide additional clues about what the outcome of dehumanization on Jewish youth in German schools might have been. The following discusses a number of studies from these groups.

DeLara (2019) studied the long-term effects of childhood and adolescent bullying on 72 individuals who were young adults (aged 18-29 years) in the United States at the time of the study, and who were in kindergarten through 12th grade at the time of the alleged bullying. About one quarter of these young adults were from minority groups; 79% were female and most were Caucasian. A variety of bullying experiences occurred; perpetrators included other students, educators and coaches. Using a qualitative approach, the subjects reported long term physical, psychological and social effects that they attributed to the bullying. Mental health problems included anxiety, depression and shame. Eating disorders, issues around weight and body image were found.

Although the study was retrospective and details around the alleged bullying were not confirmed, the study does provide evidence that at least in the perception of these young adults, the effects of bullying may be long lasting and interfere with adaptive functioning years later. It is important to note that relationships and issues of trust were of concern to young adults in this study (DeLara, 2019). This is an important theme in studies of bullying, for studies of dehumanization, and for their implications for assessing outcome in Jewish youth who attended German schools during the Nazi era. As DeLara (2019) says, "A number of seminal research studies substantiate that inclusion is a basic human need for survival and that exclusion results in mental health issues" (p. 2382).

Haslam and Loughnan (2014) reviewed the literature on dehumanization specifically. They divided their discussion into four categories: the reduction of prosocial behavior toward the dehumanized individual; increased antisocial behavior toward the dehumanized individual; the implications of moral evaluation for the dehumanized individual; and the functional consequences of dehumanization for the perpetrator and the target. Haslam and Loughnan's (2014) review is consistent with this chapter's discussion of Jewish youth in German schools in which aggressive behavior toward Jewish youth seems to have been a part of the dehumanization experienced by these youth who were isolated and denigrated in their classrooms by teachers and other students alike.

Haslam and Loughnan's (2014) review also indicates that dehumanization is associated with the perception of lower moral standards in dehumanized groups compared with those who are in the ingroup and have not been dehumanized. This impression also is consistent with the discussion of Jewish youth in German schools who, in accord with the prevailing Nazi ideology, were felt to be morally inferior to German youth. Students who are dehumanized would be vulnerable to violent and aggressive behavior toward them that, in some cases, might be justified by the victimizer group because of the "moral inferiority" of the victim. This is an example not only of dehumanization but of the expression of a subtler and less severe form of the death drive that is postulated in this research to exist on a continuum that overlaps with dehumanization.

In another study, Bastian and Haslam (2011) studied the effects of "milder" forms of dehumanization resulting from what have been called "microaggressions" or "micromaltreatments" (p. 301). These researchers developed a series of vignettes to

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reflect subtle forms of maltreatment that might occur in everyday life. Examples of reactions to what are perceived as mild interpersonal maltreatments include feeling betrayed, or denied autonomy, or feeling that one's identity has been disrespected, or that one has been invalidated as a person (Bastian & Haslam, 2011, p. 303). The authors provide a few vignettes as examples. In one vignette, a person who has good computer knowledge is instructed in basic computer fundamentals when he or she asks a friend for help in getting started on an advanced computer program. This assumption of a lack of computer knowledge attributed to the person who has asked for help may be considered condescending or a sign of disrespect or invalidation by the person seeking help.

Bastian and Haslam (2011) asked their research subjects (older adolescents and adults) to consider whether they would have felt dehumanized, that is whether they would have experienced challenges or threats to their "personhood" (their identities or status, for examples), when considering themselves as characters in these vignettes. Based on their previous work (cited Chapter 3), two forms of dehumanization that derive from what they have termed "human uniqueness" and "human nature" occurred.

The perception that one's uniqueness as a person has been denied may be associated with a personal sense of incompetence, lack of intelligence or lack of sophistication. Negative evaluations of oneself, guilt and shame may accompany dehumanization of this type. Denial of what the authors term "human nature" involves more severe forms of dehumanization (Bastian & Haslam, 2011). Examples in this case include feelings of being treated as an object, as a means to an end, or lacking in the capacity for feeling. A person who experiences dehumanization in this way may react as if his or her identity has been challenged.

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Students were asked to rate their emotional and cognitive reactions to these vignettes. When they felt that their status was not recognized as being equal to others, as in the human uniqueness dimension, shame and guilt were potential reactions. When they felt that their basic existence as a person was not recognized, as in the human nature dimension, "cognitive deconstructive states" such as feelings of numbness, cognitive inflexibility and what seems to be confusion or lack of meaningful thoughts and anger were reported (Bastian & Haslam, 2011, p. 297).

The experiences of Jewish children and youth in German schools during the first years of the Nazi era may possibly correspond to some of these lesser forms of microaggression or more subtle forms of dehumanization Bastian and Haslam (2011) have studied. Examples might be experiences of being disregarded by a teacher who calls on another student in preference to the Jewish student or sensing that another non-Jewish student is avoiding contact with this Jewish student because he or she is Jewish.

Other dehumanizing experiences of Jewish students would fall somewhere between these milder experiences and harsher forms of dehumanization described in earlier chapters that ranged from having to wear a yellow star in public, not being allowed on public streets after a certain hour and being forced to vacate one's home or live in a ghetto. The perceived severity of these or many other dehumanizing experiences would depend very much on the victim's own reactions and assessment.

As Bastian and Haslam (2011) indicate, there is "evidence that targets of a range of everyday interpersonal maltreatments experience some degree of dehumanization when these behaviors undermine fundamental aspects of their personhood" or their "humanity" (p. 301). The evidence does not prove that these milder forms of

maltreatment resulting in dehumanization necessarily lead to more severe forms of dehumanization in a causal manner, but it would not be surprising if they did. Furthermore, it seems clear that these milder forms of microaggression that are associated with dehumanization experiences may cause varying degrees of psychological distress in their own right. Finally, reactions to the bullying that DeLara (2019) studied and to the microaggressions that Bastian and Haslam (2011) discuss may bear considerable resemblance to the distress experienced by bullied and dehumanized Jewish youth in Nazi schools although empirical studies are not available to confirm this.

Summary

Jewish youth suffered greatly during the Nazi era. They were dehumanized, ridiculed and demeaned in German public schools by teachers and students. Many left the public schools and spent time in Jewish religious schools; others who were able to do so emigrated. For those unable to avail themselves of these options, further dehumanization through ongoing restrictions on Jews and then deportation and death in concentration camps awaited them.

Chapter Eight: Conclusions

This dissertation proposed a modified form of Freud's death drive and used a case study method to explore how increasingly severe dehumanizing tactics in Nazi Germany activated a death drive resulting in genocide (p. 7). The thesis of this dissertation is:

> **Dehumanization, applied in an increasingly severe manner to demean, subjugate and control Jews in Nazi dominated territories during the Nazi era (1933-1945), activated a "death instinct/drive" (Freud 1920; 1923/1960; 1930) that was used to resolve an extreme power struggle that existed in the minds of Adolph Hitler, other Nazi leaders and some German people between the Aryan people and Jews. The result was a horrific genocide.** (p. 7)

This chapter concludes the dissertation. I will review the perspectives offered in the dissertation to determine whether the claim emphasizing the relationship between dehumanization and the death drive is supported. I then will offer supplementary or additional interpretations of the information that has been presented in relation to the thesis and other issues raised in the dissertation about dehumanization and the death drive. Finally, I will offer thoughts on future directions for study.

**Support for the Thesis Involving the Relationship Between Dehumanization and the
Death Drive; the Variability of this Relationship's Expression; the Importance of
Social Influences and Social Isolation**

In Chapter 1 of this dissertation, I emphasized that dehumanizing tactics used in Nazi

Germany were extreme manifestations of psychological defense mechanisms that

protected the holder of the calumny from guilt and allowed the victimizers to project their

guilt (as well as other reactions, such as anger, fear, remorse) onto Jews, who were then

criticized as being less than human. Dehumanization then became

> a potential catalyst or justification for violence and murder and an activator of a
> death drive resulting in genocide, given that those who are considered less than
> human or as 'animals' may be thought of as unworthy of usual human protections
> against violence and aggression, or perhaps as opportune targets of an inherent
> potential for violence. (p.11)

In this section of the concluding chapter, I emphasize that while increasingly

severe dehumanization, itself, appears to have activated the death drive and been a

catalyst for murder and genocide, this process of dehumanization that activates the death

drive (and its resultant genocide) appears to have been facilitated (or inhibited) by social

pressures and social influences.

Adolf Hitler (1925/1999) hated, despised and feared the Jews, all Jews. In *Mein

Kampf*, almost a decade before assuming power in Germany, he called for the total

elimination from Europe of the Jews, a people he considered an ancient enemy of the

Aryan people and its most formidable foe. How to eliminate the Jews from Europe was

not clear, however. Elimination could have been accomplished in at least two ways that had been discussed for years in right wing political circles in Germany: murder or forced emigration (Goldhagen, 1997).

Hitler and the Nazi Party were not strangers to violence and destruction. He, and the Nazi Party that he led, maintained a paramilitary force in the 1920s and 1930s that served to create havoc and mayhem for other political parties (as other political parties also did through their own paramilitary forces) (Pulzer, 1964/1988); he was instrumental in the murder of a colleague (Ernst Rohm) who led the famed SA, another paramilitary force of which Hitler grew suspicious; and the Nazi Party was suspected in the intentional arson of the Reichstag or Parliamentary building shortly after he assumed the Chancellorship of Germany in 1933. Hitler and other Nazi members also were involved in a failed rebellion against the government of the Weimar Republic in 1923 (The Beer Hall Putsch in Munich), and he spent less than one year in jail (during which time he wrote or dictated *Mein Kampf*). The Nazi Party was known among the various political parties of the Weimar years for being especially violent (Pulzer, 1964/1988).

All of this might lead one to believe that Hitler would have no compunction about killing Jews, many Jews, if the opportunity was present in 1933 when he assumed the Chancellorship after receiving a minority of votes in the previous election. The German public (the bystanders) did have a long history of severe antisemitism, but probably would not have tolerated the murder of as many Jews as necessary to eliminate them entirely from Germany that soon into the Nazi rule, however (Landau, 1992/2016).

In any case, the decision about extermination of the Jews (the "final solution") would have to wait until the Nazi dictatorship was more firmly established, opposition

parties and individuals were crushed, a war was being waged and the German public had become more inured to the dehumanization and social isolation of the Jews that began to happen quickly once Hitler assumed power.

Prior to the decision to exterminate the Jews, the Nazi government tried to force Jewish emigration and to make life unbearable for Jews through terror, violence, harsh propaganda, restrictive legislation and social ostracism. Many of these policies can be understood to have involved increasingly severe dehumanization, a process of withdrawing or depriving an individual or group in both the victimizer's and victim's eyes of a sense of the victim's humanity (Haslam et al., 2013), worth or what has been called "personhood." Dehumanization is intended to demean, belittle, ostracize and reduce the victim to less than human status. A dehumanized individual is considered by the victimizer to act in an unacceptable moral or ethical manner and/or to subsist in behavior or attitudes closer to how a non-human animal (rather than a human being) would act.

Through a legislative onslaught, intense propaganda campaign, violence, social rejection and isolation, Jews were dehumanized, marginalized and rejected from German society. The Nazi leadership apparently hoped this process that fell short of murder would be successful and that Jews would be forced to leave (or flee) from Germany "voluntarily" over the course of time.

The program of dehumanization of the Jews that is described more fully in Chapters 3, 4, and 5 was in fact was quite successful. At the onset of the Nazi era, there were about 600,000 Jews in Germany; by about 1941, half of the population had emigrated (Landau, 1992/2016). This dramatic reduction in the number of Jews from

Germany does not seem to have been sufficient to have satisfied Hitler's tenacious

animosity that required total elimination of all Jews, however. Furthermore, it became

clear in the late 1930s, as war to the east was on the horizon, that a whole new group of

Jews would soon come under Hitler's dictatorial powers. Germany's war of expansion

would bring it into direct contact with a large number of Jews who lived in Poland and

what was called the Pale of Settlement in eastern Europe.

These Jews were poorer, less urban and less educated than Jews as a group in

Germany had been, but they were nonetheless still Jews. They would have even fewer

opportunities for emigration than German Jews had. How could Hitler eliminate these

eastern European Jews, as he had done to a large extent the Jews who were German

citizens, given the short period of time that existed during the invasion of the east? Would

dehumanization work as well as it had in Germany?

The solution to Nazi Germany's dilemma of the relatively small number of

remaining Jews in Germany and the much larger number of Jews in occupied lands was

largely to abandon dehumanization as it had been used and to institute a policy of

extermination. At this point, as described earlier, dehumanization would have prepared

many German citizens to consider Jews to be almost non-existent, or to be irretrievably

different and lesser than Aryans who were now engaged in a world war. The social

isolation of Jews (see below), the distraction of the war, and the anxiety that would have

accompanied the war all would have made the German public less involved with the fate

of the Jews.

These factors, increasingly severe dehumanization, social isolation of the Jews,

loss of social pressure from part of the German citizenry that would have argued against

killing others, and the helplessness of the victims, all increased the likelihood that the death drive would emerge and overcome the balancing effects of Eros or the life force.

Jews continued to be dehumanized, ostracized and restricted in their activities and movements as they had been before, but by the late 1930s and into the 1940s, annihilation and extermination became the clear goal. A final solution involving the extermination of all Jews was formally agreed upon at the Wannsee Conference in 1942, but the wanton murder of Jews had begun much earlier, as the German army stormed across eastern Europe (Landau, 1992/2016).

By this time, Hitler and the Nazi leadership had reason to be emboldened. German citizens had shown themselves able (or willing) to tolerate dehumanization and social ostracism of the Jews for several years as long as they did not perceive conditions to be too harsh or too brutally excessive by their own standards (Bankier, 1992). They could avoid internal conflicts around murder and could practice what Bankier (1992) has termed "defensive dissociation" (p. 129) or what Lifton (2000), referring to physicians' perpetration of medical atrocities, termed "doubling", or what can also be termed "denial" or "avoidance" of troubling emotional reactions in a psychological sense.

Dehumanization during the period from the late 1930s through the end of the Nazi era in 1945 became a horrendous, but far shorter interlude for individual Jews as they were herded up and murdered by the Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing units) or Order Police in fields and forests, deported in packed cattle cars to various types of camps or forced into crowded and disease-infested ghettos prior to their deportation and ultimate deaths in concentration camps. Death, therefore, arrived swiftly and without pretense toward more gradual dehumanization for many Jews living in eastern Europe.

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Illustrations of these processes are numerous; some are provided in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 of this dissertation that deal with dehumanization and the death drive, especially in concentration camps. Emmanuel Ringelblum (Sloan, 1974) describes some of these incidents in ghetto life.

The discussion in preceding paragraphs suggests there were at least two approaches to the activation of the death drive and killing of Jews employed by the Nazi leadership in the 1930s and 1940s. One approach was taken in Germany itself over the first several years of the Nazi era, and the other approach in eastern Europe during the Second World War years. Both of these approaches involved dehumanization to a degree, but the relationship between dehumanization and the death drive was moderated differently in the two instances by social concerns and social pressures. There was also a third approach that was taken to the activation of the death drive and murder of the disabled and those considered "unfit" that has been discussed in Chapter 6 of this dissertation. In these cases, dehumanization prior to murder seems to have been of variable duration and to have also affected family members and community bystanders who were kept in the dark about the fate of the individual with a severe disability whenever possible.

In the approach taken in which dehumanization had preceded activation of the death drive and the murder of Jews from Germany through the late 1930s, the apparent purposes of dehumanization from the point of view of Hitler and the Nazi leadership were to restrict, isolate and punish the Jewish community so that the general population of Germany (the bystanders) would accept the mistreatment of Jews that many people witnessed directly or indirectly. The Nazis hoped that through this approach of

increasingly severe mistreatment and social isolation, Jews would emigrate to whatever country they could (Bankier, 1992; Goldhagen, 1997).

Dehumanization during this several-year period served not only to force emigration of Jews, but as a way to help Nazi leadership gauge the reactions and tolerance of bystanders to the dehumanization that they were learning about or witnessing. Kristallnacht, for example, made it clear that the German public was appalled by the harsh treatment of the Jews in Germany, and bystander reactions signaled to the regime that the Nazi leadership should cease or at least slow down its violent antisemitic efforts, at least for a time (Bankier, 1996).

In these cases that occurred in the 1930s in Germany itself, it appears that prolonged dehumanization did activate the death drive over time (Bankier, 1996) as an apparently frustrated Nazi leadership could not force the last Jews (who generally were elderly or poor or had no place to go) out of Germany. Increasing dehumanization during these years also served as a marker of the reactions of German citizens, the bystanders, to the harsh treatment of the increasingly isolated Jews who were in their midst. As Bankier (1996) writes,

> The acceptance of antisemitism as a social norm undermined resistance to the coming persecution in the Third Reich…the public gradually grew accustomed to the reality of antisemitism and ceased to notice it…. acceptance of 'mild' persecution paved the way for harsher measures. (p. 129)

The Nazi leadership seems to have anticipated that bystanders' tolerance for cruelty may have increased over time and the "fog of war" would obscure, allow or "justify" the genocide of the Jews remaining in Germany. Ultimately, as dehumanization continued,

the death drive's expression through murder of the Jews no longer appeared as abhorrent as it presumably would have if instituted at the beginning of the Nazi regime.

In the second instance in which Jews were summarily murdered by forces allied with the German army or the Order Police (Browning, 2017), during the early stages of the German invasion of the east, the Nazis had little inclination or time to more gradually institute a formal program of dehumanization before murdering all the Jews who could be found. The conquered people of eastern Europe were not German citizens and their possible concerns about murder of helpless people may not have been important to the German leadership in any case. The invading army was under orders to kill all Jews whom they could locate. Forestalling this action, sometimes through removal of Jews to ghettos, was only a delaying tactic. In other cases, as the massacre at Jedwabne, Poland suggests (Gross, 1992), the long history of antisemitism in eastern European countries made the local populace, at times overt or at least passive accomplices to the slaughter that the Germans wanted to occur quickly. Dehumanization of Jews that amounts to torture was extremely severe and malign in concentration camps but again there were no bystanders to object to the processes that were kept secret to the extent possible.

These two approaches that both ended with the genocidal killing of Jews suggest that a program of dehumanization may be a helpful tactic for victimizers to activate the death drive in situations when a stable population of bystanders might disapprove of a regime's actions. An extensive program of dehumanization may be a needless tactic to gain support for a murderous regime when other circumstances are conducive to this end, such as a compliant population of bystanders faced with other concerns, such as wartime shortages, casualties or the ability and desire to settle its own scores. In this latter

instance, as was true in the Nazi era, a prolonged program of dehumanization that might

be used to ready the people for possible genocide may not be needed to gain bystanders'

support.

The situation with dehumanization and the death drive in individuals with medical

and developmental disabilities reveals another variation in the relationship between

dehumanization and the death drive. In these cases of individuals who would have had

conditions such as severe mental retardation or cerebral palsy, for example, decisions

about life and death were made without the knowledge or consent of those patients (who

may or may not have had the intellectual ability to understand these discussions), their

families and the larger society. In these cases, Nazi medical personnel would have

realized that those patients who had the ability to understand their status, as well as their

relatives, might very well resist decisions to terminate the life of the individual with a

disability. These victims and their families were therefore dehumanized by denying them

crucial information about themselves and their relatives, thus making their killings easier

for Nazi authorities and medical personnel.

Individuals with disabilities, their families and the larger society in these

situations were dealt with as if living or dying for any given individual was a decision the

State had ultimate authority to make. Hitler (1925/1999) emphasized that the folkish state

> *must set race in the center of all life. It must take care to keep it pure. It must
> declare unfit for propagation all who are in any way visibly sick or who have
> inherited a disease and can therefore pass it on, and put this into actual practice.*
> (pp. 403-404)

Dehumanization in these cases of so-called "euthanasia" denied certain individuals the

right to live and denied their families the right to participate in choices around the

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termination of their relatives' lives. The strength of the death drive for authorities and medical personnel in these cases was so great that concerned individuals and relatives were bypassed.

These and other situations involving Jews and non-Jews in the Nazi era that included Jews in Nazi Germany, itself, in the 1930s, Jews in eastern Europe during the invasion in the late 1930s and 1940s, Jews in ghettos and Jews in concentration camps, as well as individuals with disabilities (mainly non-Jews) in institutions, indicate that the relationship between dehumanization and murder that ultimately was meted out to all of these groups is a nuanced and complicated one. These observations lead to another line of inquiry around what moderates the relationship between the death drive and dehumanization.

In this study, it appears that anticipated or actual attitudes and reactions of bystanders (family, society members), or the lack of concern about these reactions may have moderated the expression of the death drive significantly. Social pressures and concerns of bystanders altered (and perhaps lengthened) the course of dehumanization and its activation of the death drive in Germany, itself, in pre-war years, but made little or no difference in the dehumanization and murder of Jews in Poland and the Pale of Settlement where antisemitism seems to have been widespread even before the German invasion (Gross, 1992). Concerns about bystander reactions forced great secrecy in attempts to hide the murderous treatment of individuals with disabilities in Germany, itself, and also contributed to the isolation and secrecy surrounding concentration camp environments that had indescribably harsh and sadistic dehumanizing tactics before their prisoners were murdered.

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It, therefore, seems clear that when German authorities felt the actual or potential disapproval of their own citizens to the murder of Jews, dehumanization was a tactic used to try to eliminate the Jewish "problem" or perhaps to delay a final reckoning with it. When there was little or no concern about bystander reactions, as would be true in isolated ghettos or concentration camps, for example, dehumanization was an often shorter and more brutal approach that was instituted before activating the ultimate solution: the murder of captives and prisoners.

Additional Psychological Aspects in the Relationship Between Dehumanization and the Death Drive

In this dissertation emphasizing the relationship between dehumanization and the death drive, I have supported the thesis through a chronology and description of events occurring in the Nazi era. This section focuses in a more fine-grained way on the psychology of this relationship. At the beginning of the discussion, I would like to move to what may seem a digression but has relevance to the discussion at hand.

One of the many confusing aspects of violence and social interactions in our society involves the cases of homicide and violence against the homeless. The following is taken from a brief account of one such incident in a *Report for the Coalition of the Homeless* (Leomporra & Hustings, 2018) and its referenced news article.

A 47-year-old man was found dead in a park area in Maryland one morning in 2017. He had been stabbed several times. The police investigated and came to learn that he had apparently been stabbed by two adolescent boys, aged 13 and 14 years. The man may have known one of the boys. The police were told that he was stabbed when he

refused to give the boys money. Few other details are provided. He, like many homeless people, is described through a very limited narrative of his life and activities.

This homeless victim apparently was encountered while alone. He may or may not have had any money that is said to have served as an inducement to his murder. Most importantly, he seems to have been a typically homeless person: alone, isolated, without apparent psychological or physical means or resources to support himself. As a middle-aged man, presumably weakened because of malnutrition, alcohol or drugs, he may not have been able to fend off two adolescent boys intent on harming or killing him for reasons they, themselves, would not have fully grasped.

Personal or life circumstances seem to have resulted in this man's severe dehumanization. As a homeless person, he appears likely to have been bereft of the usual pillars that describe one's "humanness" in an existential sense. These pillars include various aspects of one's identity, such as one's place in society, one's human relationships that include family and friends, a person's education or occupational position, or one's socio-economic status, religious affiliation and other "identifiers" (such as place of residence). As described below, the presence of these various identity markers provide context for a person's life; their lack tends to "dehumanize" an individual and may be inducements to the emergence of the death drive and, in this case, the homeless man's murder.

As described by Basstian and Haslam (2011) and emphasized in chapters 1 (p. 14), 3 (p. 97) and 4 (p. 113), dehumanization, in part, involves the denial or withdrawal of an individual's or group's sense of personal worth and a loss of the victim's sense of personal value or "personhood." Many of these aspects of dehumanization result from the

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reduction or loss of the victimized individual's sense of identity, a loose term that has been considered here to reflect various characteristics of individuals or groups that inform, in a psychological sense, who that person is and who that person believes him or herself to be in the family, the society and in the world. These assumptions about who one is in an existential sense may or may not be correct; they may be articulated or not; and they may or may not be shared by others in the society about who that individual is.

Jews in Germany (and in other parts of Europe) during the Nazi era experienced an increasingly severe alteration in various aspects of their identities as they were personally humiliated and restricted in their activities. They were, in essence, dehumanized. They lost social and family relationships, occupations, educational standing, socio-economic status and the ability to practice their religion. They were forced to demarcate themselves from dominant members of the society through behaviors, badges or Jewish stars. They were isolated, marginalized and ridiculed. They became what the Nazis called the severely developmentally disabled— "useless" or worse to achieve the Nazi regime's goals and aspirations that emphasized a distorted view of race.

As described in the conceptualization of the death drive offered in Chapter 4, without social identity, support or value in the eyes of the Nazi rulers and their Nazi sympathizers, the Jews easily became subject to processes of murder, aggression and destruction that led to their deaths and that established symbolically the dominance, control and subjugation forced on them by their victimizers. As with the homeless man described above, the loss of pillars of their identities that accompanied their dehumanization ultimately made them helpless in a physical and psychological sense.

As I wrote in Chapters 1, 3 and 4 about the relationship between dehumanization and the activation of the death drive that leads to genocide,

> Dehumanization then becomes a potential catalyst or justification for violence and murder and an activator of a death drive resulting in genocide, given that those who are considered less than human or as 'animals' may be thought of as unworthy of usual human protections against violence and aggression, or perhaps as opportune targets of an inherent potential for violence. (p. 14)

In these conditions, the activated death drive may be unencumbered by usual moderating forces such as taboos against killing fellow humans, or social restrictions on cruel or criminal activities. The Jews in Nazi Germany became socially isolated and powerless, thus creating the conditions for activation of the death drive and its expression in murder of the weak and helpless.

While the early years of the Nazi era, with its restrictions and humiliations from the dominant society's perspective, appeared to be focused on the coerced emigration of the Jews, a suspicion that the real goal of the regime was to ultimately dehumanize and isolate the Jewish population so that their genocidal murder would not cause social unrest is appropriate to entertain. In short, increasingly severe dehumanization activated the death drive that was consciously or subconsciously present throughout the Nazi era but could not be activated until appropriate conditions of social isolation, helplessness and wartime confusion made conditions propitious to genocide.

Killing of Jews that was a reflection of the death drive becomes clearer when realizing that much of the killing that occurred is not easily explained through an examination of necessary or rational goals of the German society or its military. In fact, the killing of Jews seemed to be counterproductive to other social or military goals. Killing Jews in ghettos or fields or transporting them to concentration camps, for

example, appears to have taken precedence over rational planning of resources toward the end of the war. It is hard to understand these efforts except for the desire to kill that was camouflaged by wanton and irrational prejudice. This desire to kill may not be verbalized directly by perpetrators. The zest for killing, the "sport" of killing, the sadistic desire to torture and to experience the suffering of others all suggest the activation of the death drive, however.

An Alternative Approach to the Relationship Between Dehumanization and the Death Drive

This research suggests that while the thesis is supported within the context of the relationship between dehumanization and the death drive described in preceding paragraphs, another way of approaching the conclusions also might be considered.

Dehumanization and the death drive are generally discussed as separate entities (to the degree they are discussed at all). Are they truly separate, or might they be considered as one entity that is manifested along a continuum from the usually more behavioral expressions of dehumanization to the nebulous urges and desires that the concept of the death drive captures?

The two entities have similar features as indicated in Chapters 3 and 4. Speaking of the death drive specifically, I wrote in part that conflicts between the death drive on one hand, and Eros, the life force, on the other hand, may reflect less extreme manifestations of the death drive than the direct killing of others: "These less extreme manifestations of the death drive demean victims, reduce their sense of personhood, self-

worth and personal value and are continuous with and overlap with processes of dehumanization."

The overlap between the understandings of the death drive and of dehumanization as offered here can be exemplified by returning to the question posed at the beginning of this chapter. How could the elimination of the Jews be accomplished at the beginning of the Nazi era in a society that had deeply antisemitic roots, but probably could not or would not tolerate the mass murders that occurred (still with some secrecy) nearly a decade later? In this sense, Hitler, other Nazis and supportive German bystanders harbored a desire to eliminate Jews regardless of the means from the very outset of the Nazi era, but genocide, at that time, would have been unacceptable to most Germans.

Dehumanization, which was associated with increasingly harsh restrictions on Jews, intensely negative propaganda and social isolation may have been needed to prepare German bystanders for the as yet unplanned (and perhaps unrecognized) extermination and genocide years later. Dehumanizing activities in this sense were an early or less severe expression of the death drive that was to come. These "milder" dehumanizing restrictions, prohibitions and socially isolating activities were "compromises" in a psychological sense. They expressed the balance of considerations available to the Nazi leadership that existed between a desire to totally and quickly eliminate and perhaps exterminate the Jews and the realization that the total annihilation of Jews at the outset of the Nazi era would have resulted in national and international condemnation as discussed earlier.

From this perspective, the death drive and the desire to exterminate all Jews may or may not have been present from the outset of the Nazi era but could only be expressed

in the muted form of dehumanizing actions until the right social conditions and "fog of war" occurred that would distract and confuse German bystanders. Approached from this viewpoint, dehumanization in the Nazi era was an early, muted aspect of the death drive and not a separate process.

This understanding of the treatment of the Jews that involves a less severe form of the death drive is consistent with Freud's notion that there are opposing life and death forces that contribute to and result in given human actions. The interacting strengths and weaknesses of these two groups of forces then determine the actual behavioral outcome. If we accept this perspective, the genocide of the "final solution" may be understood as the result of a failure in the balance of life and death forces that, in the context of war, resulted in genocide of the Jews.

This consideration whether dehumanization and the death drive should be considered separate entities conceptually or whether they overlap, with dehumanization representing a less severe form of the death drive, and the death drive representing a more severe form of dehumanization, needs further study. It is clear they both represent degrees of negative, destructive tendencies human beings exhibit toward one another that reduce or eliminate what might be called another individual's sense of "personhood."

Future Study: Meaning in Life, The Superhuman and the Need for the Subhuman

Another area of study toward which this dissertation points involves the question of what Hitler meant by Aryan superiority, how Aryan superiority was (or would be) manifested in the future, and how Aryan superiority (in greater detail) compared with the inferiority he ascribed to Jews whom he claimed were Semites and subhuman. What

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qualities, in his view, reflected Aryan superiority, or would reflect superiority if Aryans were rid of the Semitic Jewish presence?

In a passage in *Mein Kampf* quoted previously in Chapter 3, "Dehumanization," Hitler (1925/1999) wrote:

> *What we must fight for is to safeguard the existence and reproduction of our race and our people, the sustenance of our children and the purity of our blood, the freedom and independence of the fatherland, so that our people may mature for the fulfillment of the mission allotted it by the creator of the universe.* (p. 214)

What does Hitler believe is the mission allotted to the Aryan people by the creator of the universe?

Elsewhere, Hitler seems to tease at this question without answering it. He says, *"The state is a means to an end. Its end lies in the preservation and advancement of a community of physically and psychically homogeneous creatures… this preservation… permits the free development of all the forces dormant in this race"* (Hitler, 1925/1999, p. 393). A part of this preservation involves *"the promotion of a further spiritual development"* (Hitler, 1925/1999, p. 393). Again, higher spiritual development is a goal, but the meaning of this is unclear; although, for Hitler, the elimination (or extermination) of the Jew seems central to it.

Hitler (1925/1999) also wrote, "The mightiest counterpart to the Aryan is represented by the Jew" (p. 300). Hitler felt it was crucial for the Aryan to eliminate the malign presence of the Jew in order to combat the influence of what he believed to be a Semitic menace. As Vasey (2006) explains this thinking, "Aryans were, in essence, god-men on earth, but through blood poisoning lost their ruling position" (p. 62). The greater mission of the Aryan race (and the German people), from this perspective, was to regain

leadership in the world and to produce a higher civilization and higher Aryan culture. "If this were done, racially and thus spiritually pure human beings could be produced, ensuring Aryan world domination" (Vasey, 2006, p. 62). Vasey (2006) goes on to write: "Once the Jew was purged from Europe, Germany would be able to produce pure Aryans, who would be physically and spiritually perfect human beings… demigod rulers…" (p. 63). Hitler (1925/1999) emphasizes the importance of blood purity when he writes, "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"* (p. 65). For Hitler, conflict with the Jews amounted to a holy crusade, a spiritual quest.

This desire, or one might say, "obsession" to raise the Aryan race to what Hitler felt was its rightful place as the master race of the world required the dehumanization of the Jew, a lowering or reduction of the Jew's status and the elimination of Jews from Europe. The Nazi leader believed that as the Jew was humiliated, broken down and eliminated through various means (e.g. emigration, death), the Aryan's superiority over the eternal enemy would be confirmed. This was essentially a cosmic war between good and evil, the spiritual Aryan and the materialistic Jew that would be decided once and for all. "Only the total destruction of the Jews could thus save the Germans and enable them to enter the promised land" (Goodrick-Clarke, 1985/2004, p. 203). For Hitler (1925/ 1999), the increasingly severe dehumanization (and ultimate killing) of the Jews was entirely moral and reflected his attempts to rid society of immoral, impure and unclean Jewish elements that resided within it — while also raising the Aryans' worth in order to become the master race they were destined to be.

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Many religions, such as medieval Christianity, or the Judaism of the Dead Sea Scrolls, have similar conceptions that involve battles between what are imagined to be cosmic forces of good and evil or right and wrong. From these perspectives, there are essential or eternal conflicts between light and dark, between the righteous and the unrighteous, or between the holy and the despoiled. In these cases, it is the task of the enlightened, of the righteous, to somehow defeat the evil representatives of another religion or belief or practice. In so doing, these faiths and their adherents who are willing (or required) to fight for their notions of the divine expect to achieve some type of reward or enlightenment in this or another world.

Hitler had no formal religious beliefs, having rejected his Catholic upbringing at an early age. Yet, following the line of reasoning described here, the strivings of the Nazi Party, the cultural belief system that is associated with the greatest genocide in history, had some similarities with religious beliefs that emphasize the superiority of one group versus another, the superiority of one belief system over another, and the importance of violence for many adherents to prove their faith and loyalty to a given dogma in order to gain some higher moral or religious standing. Nazism appears to have had a perverted form of religious or quasi-spiritual belief system that required the subjugation and elimination of non-Aryans in order for the Aryan to achieve fulfillment and reward.

What are the psychological characteristics that require the elimination or deaths of members one group in order to prove the superiority of another group? How does religious or spiritual striving, which Hitler seems to have shown in distorted form, lead to designation of one's own group as superhuman and to another group as subhuman and dangerous?

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It is important to learn more about these issues and the psychological imperatives that demand violent and destructive actions against those who hold different beliefs or who appear different from the victimizer group. Knowledge of this type may help us understand better the aspirational forces that are so important in belief systems, especially when they become distorted and lead to or require violence and potential genocide for self-affirmation as was true in the Nazi era.

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