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NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART & DESIGN

"THE PROBLEM OF THE HEARTH FIRE"

NAZISM, ART AND THE UNCONSCIOUS

A Thesis submitted to:

The Faculty of History of Art and Design &
Complementary Studies

and

in candidacy for the Degree B.A.
Faculty of Fine Art & History of Art
Department of Sculpture & History of Art

By

DECLAN QUINN

March 1991

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INTRODUCTION

During the Third Reich, the authoritarian family represented in microcosm the relationship between the individual and the State. It was responsible for the development of the authoritarian character, who exhibited a repressed sexuality. This character had suppressed his desire to express his instinctual needs, whether they be sexual or spiritual.

Adolf Hitler represented an extreme example of a self-sufficient, autonomous, authoritarian character. His legacy is one of a severely psychologically-disturbed character, one who exhibits a malignant form of sadism known as necrophilia (love of the dead).

The authoritarian character represents a blend of sadistic and masochistic behaviour.

In National Socialist Germany a hierarchy was created in which everyone had somebody above him to submit to and somebody beneath him to feel power over. Nazism was in effect a synthesis of a patriarchal State and the sexually repressed character.

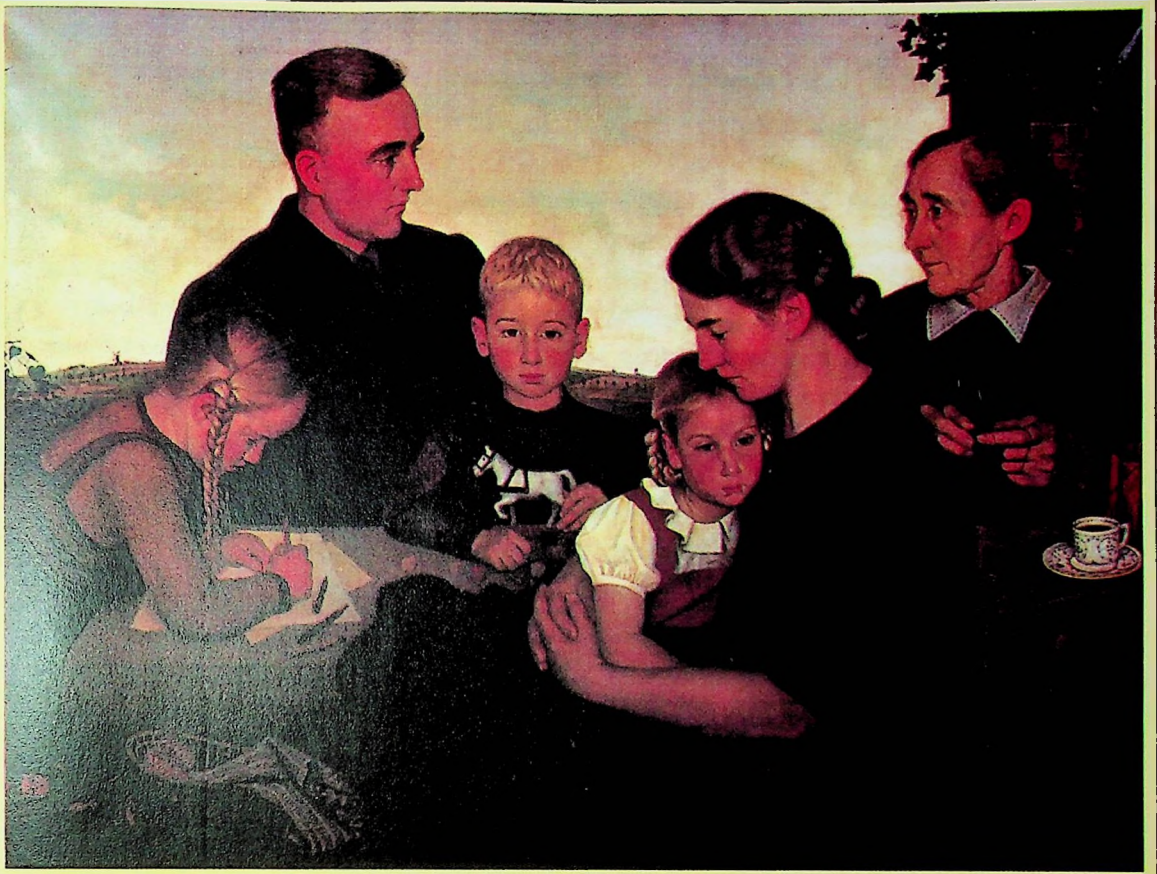
Art movements like surrealism in particular sought to counteract repressive patriarchal ideologies like Nazism by working with their unconscious minds. This project allowed for the possibility of access to the source of all positive human creative energy and resistance against repression.

The artist Max Ernst uses his work to ridicule the traditions of patriarchy and authority.

The "libertarian" Modernist project of investigating the unconscious, irrational, side of man's nature, was directly at odds with the repressive war-mongering political aims of the Nazis. To this end, Neo-Classical militarism, not instinctive Expressionism, was more useful to the National Socialist Party.

For this reason, they supported the work of artists like Arno Breker because he celebrated the rule of the strong over the weak and the dominance of a patriarchal super-State.

Left: Adolf Hitler, Right: Hermann Goebbels



Adolf Wissel, *Kalenberg Farm Family*.

THE AUTHORITARIAN FAMILY

HOW DOES IT CREATE THE CONDITIONS NECESSARY FOR FASCISM TO EXIST?

The authoritarian family was not entirely the product of a National Socialist State. It had already existed in German society since the time of the Kaiser and for centuries previous. In this case it cannot be discussed in isolation from its social structure. At this time (between the end of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in 1918 to the rise of the National Socialists to power in 1933) the mentality of the authoritarian character matched closely that of the social character of the lower middle-class. Their social character was decidedly different from that of the working-class, of the upper middle-class and also of the nobility before the war of 1914. It is worth noting that certain features were characteristic for this part of the middle-class throughout its history : their love of the strong, hatred, their pettiness, hostility, thriftiness with feelings as well as with money and essentially their asceticism. Their outlook on life was narrow, they suspected and hated the stranger and they were curious and envious of their neighbours. They were morally self righteous, their whole life was based on the principle of scarcity - economically as well as psychologically. Their relationship with the working-class had always been clearly defined.

However, as a result of the social and political upheaval that ensued after the war, the lower middle-class declined very rapidly in terms of its social prestige. Before the war one could feel oneself better than a worker. After the revolution the social prestige of the lower middle-class fell in relative terms. There was nobody to look down upon any more, a privilege that had always been one of the strongest assets in the life of the small shopkeepers and their like.

By this time feelings among the lower middle-class had intensified and it was at this stage that they were most susceptible to an ideology which would champion their interests above everyone else.

It was the National Socialists who capitalized on their feelings of alienation by appealing to their essential traits i.e. the lower middle-class craving for submission and lust for power.

In the relationship between family and State it is important to understand how the family functioned as an independent sovereign state on its own, thereby representing the State in miniature. In this situation one must examine the intimate and formative relationship between mother and child and especially father and child. I would now like to discuss the process by which the authoritarian lower middle-class family duplicate themselves in their children.

The authoritarian family structure is responsible for the development of the authoritarian character. Within this structure the biological tie between mother and child is instrumental in the character formation of the child. The nature of this relationship is highly restrictive and thus inhibits sexual development, the reason being that within the authoritarian family structure the link between mother and child becomes so binding that it prevents any further sexual development in the child. Consequently the child is unable to form other sexual relationships outside the family situation. If we consider the work of Freud in relation to this issue, we observe that the "Oedipus Complex" is not so much a cause as a result of the sexual restrictions imposed upon the child by society. Accordingly, we find that the family (as a microcosm of society) unconsciously perpetuates the intentions of authoritarian society. Thus the parents unintentionally carry out the intentions of authoritarian society.

According to the classical concept a little boy at the age of five or six chooses his mother as the first object of his sexual (phallic) desires ('phallic stage'). Given the family situation, this makes of his father a hated rival. Orthodox psychoanalysts have greatly overrated the little boy's hatred of the father. Statements like "when father dies I will marry mother" attributed to little boys and often quoted as proof of their death wishes for their fathers, are not to be taken seriously, because at this age death is not to be experienced as a reality but rather as an equivalent of 'being away'. For example, in Freud's Interpretation of Dreams he analyses dreams of the death of persons of whom the dreamer is fond. He cites the example of a child dreaming that all her brothers and sisters and cousins of both sexes were playing in a field. Suddenly they all grow wings, fly away and disappear. The dreamer has no idea what this means. Freud adds that in this circumstance the girl's family had recently died. This dream was the girl's way of trying to come to terms with the sudden death of her close relatives. The significance of the flying away incident can be explained, Freud suggests, by the fact that some adult when asked children to explain death say that they grow wings and fly away like angels.

It is in explanations like these that a general misunderstanding is created among children that when people die they are in fact 'just gone'. This unquestioning acceptance of a person's absence can sometimes lead to a situation where a parent, away for a period, returns to find that their child never made any enquiry as to where they were or said that they missed them. To a child's mind the recently deceased grandfather is just 'gone away'. However in terms of the father/son relationship a rivalry may exist, the chief source of disagreement lies in the boy's personal struggle with a patriarchal oppressive authority. This in turn has resulted in an inability to articulate his feelings of guilt that he associates with his sexual desires. (E.Fromm, 1951). The contribution of 'Oedipal hate' to destructiveness is, in my opinion, relatively small. Since he cannot do away with his

father he becomes afraid of him, fearing specifically that father will castrate him, he being his father's little rival. This 'castration fear' destroys any sexual desire the boy may feel towards his mother.

At puberty the son matures and shifts his interest to other women, particularly after he has reached full sexual genital maturity - about the time of puberty. He overcomes his rivalry with his father and grows through identifying with his commands and prohibitions.

The son accepts the father's standards of behaviour and eventually assumes a similar outlook to that of his father. In cases of abnormal development, what could be described as pathological development, the conflict is not resolved in this way. The son fails to give up his sexual attachment to the mother and in his latter life is attracted by women who fulfill the functions the mother did. As a result he is incapable of falling in love with women of his own age and remains afraid of the threatening father or father substitutes. He usually expects from the mother substitutes the same qualities mother once showed him (undivided love, protection, admiration, security). This type of mother-fixated man is well known, they are usually quite affectionate and in a qualified sense 'loving', but are also quite narcissistic. The feeling that they are more important to mother than father makes them think that they are 'wonderful' and, since they are already grown up, need not do anything to establish their greatness, they are great because - and as long as - mother or her substitute loves them exclusively and unconditionally.

The sexual aspect of the attraction to mother is itself a positive sign. It shows that the mother has in the eyes of the little boy become a person, a woman, and that the boy has become a little man. The particular intensity of the sexual attraction to be found in some instances may be considered a defence against a childish insecurity.

The warm, erotically and often sexually tinged tie to mother is what Freud had in mind when he described the Oedipus complex. While this type of incestuous fixation is most frequent, there is another, much less frequent kind of incestuous fixation that in my hypothesis is related to necrophilia - in fact it may be considered one of its earliest roots. (Necrophilia:- linked to the sadistic character, characterizes one who exhibits perverse or life threatening characteristics.) It is important to make the point that necrophilia is closely associated with a malignant form of autism. Such a character-disposition results in an autonomous, self-centred individual with a constant need to affirm his existence through sadistic acts. We are familiar with extreme forms of self-sufficiency in the case of autistic children. These children never break out of the shell of their narcissism. They never experience the mother as a love object. They never form any effective attachment to others and they often show a particular interest in mechanical things. The question arises, what happens to the incestuous fixation to the mother in such autistic infants?

It would seem that such infants never develop warm, sexual and later, erotic feelings towards the mother, nor that they never have a desire to be near her. Nor do they later fall in love with mother substitutes. For them, mother is a symbol of a phantom rather than a real person. She is a symbol of earth, of home, of blood, of race, of nation, of the deepest ground from which life emerges and to which it returns. However, she is also a symbol of chaos and death. She is not the life-giving mother but the death-giving mother, her embrace is death, her womb is a tomb. The attraction to the death-mother could not be affection or love. It is not an attraction in the common psychological sense denoting something pleasant and warm, but in the sense in which one would speak of magnetic attraction, or the attraction of gravity. The person tied to the mother by malignant incestuous bonds remains narcissistic, cold, unresponsive. He is drawn to her as iron is drawn to a magnet. She is the ocean in which he wants to drown, the ground in which he wants to be buried. The reason for this

development seems to be that the state of unmitigated narcissistic aloneness is intolerable. If there is no way of being related to mother or her substitute by warm, enjoyable bonds, the relatedness to her and to the whole world must be one of final union in death.

It has been clinically observed that the fear of the destructive mother is far more intense than of the punishing, castrating father. (1) It seems that one can ward off danger coming from the father by obedience, but there is no defence against mother's destructiveness, her love is unconditional, her hate cannot be averted since there are no 'reasons' for it either. Her love is grace, her hate is curse and neither is subject to the influence of their recipient.

In conclusion, it can be stated that benign incestuousness is in itself a normal, transitory stage of development, while malignant incestuousness is a pathological phenomenon that occurs when certain conditions inhibit the development of benign incestuous bonds. It is the latter that I consider, hypothetically, one of the earliest roots, if not the root, of necrophilia.

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1. Fromm, Erich. Ch.12, 'Malignant Aggression : Necrophilia'. The anatomy of Human Destructiveness Great Britain : Jonathan Cape, 1974.

UNDERSTANDING SADISM AND MASOCHISM

The authoritarian character, through his upbringing, is taught to suppress any free or open expression of his instincts and is forced to conform to the will of his superiors. This individual represents a potentially explosive case since if the instinct is forcibly suppressed, then it will find its outlet through violent and sadistic means.

I would now like to discuss the different manifestations of a repressed sexual instinct and how it is expressed in its latent and mutated forms.

Sigmund Freud described sadism as a blending of Eros (sexuality) and the death instinct directed outside oneself, while masochism is a blend of Eros and the death instinct directed towards oneself. (1)

In later years, however, Erich Fromm put forward his understanding of sadism as not solely one which is dependent on sexual power play. It is his belief that sadism is the passion to have absolute and unrestricted control over a living being, whether an animal, a child, a man or a woman. (2)

Fromm described a sadist as someone who exhibits characteristics which are wholly uncreative and go against life-affirming activities. To the sadistic character, the behaviour he engages in acts as a personal remedy for his feelings of impotence and powerlessness. However, he is never satisfied, his feelings tell him that he needs to control all the more, to terrify all the more, in order to maintain a semblance of control. In the

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1. Freud, S. Beyond the Pleasure Principle S.E., vol.18. Also The Ego and the Id S.E., vol.19. LONDON : Hogarth Press, 1920,1923.
 2. Fromm, Erich. The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness. Great Britain : 1974. p.384.

final analysis that is all sadism is, a charade, a confused mixture of power, pain and pleasure, which leads to so much terror. The sadist realizes this because deep down inside himself he knows he is powerless. He searches for some sort of justification, he may kill and torture, but he remains loveless, isolated, frightened, someone in need of a higher power to whom he can submit. During the time of the Third Reich, to those one step below Hitler, the Fuhrer was the highest power. For Hitler himself, it was Fate, the laws of Evolution.

Without forgetting Freud's contribution to the theory of sadism, I will return now to his understanding of the relationship between sadism and masochism.

According to Freud the sadist chooses to inflict pain in order to gain pleasure and maintain psychological dominance over the other partner. Whereas for the masochist the opposite is true, this character seeks to receive pain at the hands of the sexual object. In this case a masochistic character can invariably arise as a transformation of a sadistic one.

Research has shown that there is a link between cruelty and sexual instinct. (3) Indeed, it is believed by some that aggressive sexual behaviour stems from an imbedded desire for cannibalistic gratification. This is evidence of mankind's repressed need for domination over the weaker individuals in this society. This need finds its outlet in sexual contact. There is also the consideration that every pain contains within itself the possibility of feeling pleasure.

At this point we have established that both Freud and Fromm understand sadism and masochism as being separate and yet similar expressions of Freudian libido and Fromm's aggression.

3. Freud, S. On Sexuality. Vol. 7, 1977, p.72.

Because of the close connection between sadism and masochism it would be more correct to speak of a sado-masochistic character, even though the one or the other aspect will be more dominant in a particular person. A person who enjoys producing pain in someone else is also capable of enjoying as pleasure any pain which he may himself derive from sexual relations. A sadist is always at the same time a masochist, although the active or the passive aspect of the perversion may be the more strongly developed in him and may represent his predominant sexual activity.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SADO-MASOCHISM AND THE
ANAL-HOARDING CHARACTER

The sado-masochistic character cannot be fully understood without reference to Freud's concept of the 'anal-hoarding character' enlarged on by his disciples, especially by K. Abraham and Ernst Jones.

The earliest, most visible sign of the anal hoarding character is that of childhood faecal incontinence. At an early age the child derives pleasure in delaying the time it takes to part with their stool. For such a child the anus represents a highly erotogenic organ. Freud believed that in the anal erotic person there was a direct relationship between his behaviour and bodily functions. This person extends their instinct to hoard their faecal matter by exhibiting similar character traits i.e. stubbornness, orderliness and parsimony, to which punctuality and cleanliness are added later. The parallel between stubbornness and defecation has already been alluded to if we recall the example that even babies can show self-will about parting with their stool. This may explain the practice in children's upbringing of administering punishment on the child's posterior - which as already mentioned is linked with the erotogenic anal zone - in order to break their stubbornness and make them submissive.

An obsessive interest in orderliness creates an individual who cannot abide things to be out of place and has to put them in order. In this way he controls space. By irrational punctuality he controls time. By compulsive cleanliness he undoes the contact he had with the world which is considered dirty and hostile.

The connection between an interest in money and faeces is an ancient and commonly held belief. When myths, fairy tales and superstition are taken into consideration, money is frequently

brought into the most intimate relationship with dirt. We know that the gold which the devil gives his followers turns into excrement after his departure and the devil is certainly nothing else than the personification of the repressed unconscious instinctual life. (1) Here Freud cites the example of the superstition which connects the findings of treasure with defaecation. Indeed, even according to ancient Babylonian doctrine gold is 'the faeces of Hell'.

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1. Compare hysterical possession and demoniac epidemics (Freud Part III 'A Seventeenth-Century Demonological Neurosis' (1923)).

(1) Freud, *Works*, vol. 12, 'Malicious Apparitions - Demonology', *The Anatomy of Freud's Demonology*, trans. Sigmund Freud, London 1974.

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN AN ANAL-HOARDING CHARACTER
AND NECROPHILIA

The word 'necrophilia' is an English derivative of two Greek words 'nekros' and 'philos', together meaning 'love of the dead'.

The phenomenon of necrophilia has many different manifestations, varying from the most violent to the most private eccentricities. However, it can be classified under two main categories. Firstly, as sexual necrophilia which represents a man's desire to have sexual contact with a female corpse; secondly as non-sexual necrophilia, which represents a desire to handle, to be near to and to gaze at corpses.

Erich Fromm cites examples of dreams and clinical data of necrophiles which illustrate a marked presence of anal hoarding character traits. (1) A fixation with faeces and its elimination from the body is itself a symbolic expression of an interest in all that is not alive.

However, while the 'normal' anal hoarding character is lacking in aliveness, he is not necrophilious.

Freud and his co-workers went a step further. They discovered that sadism was often a by-product of the anal hoarding character. This is not always the case, but it occurs in those people who are most hostile and more narcissistic than the average hoarding character. But even the sadists are still with others. They want to control but not to destroy them. Those in whom even this perverse kind of relatedness is lacking, who are still more narcissistic and more hostile, are the necrophiles.

(1) Fromm, Erich. Ch. 12, 'Malignant Aggression : Necrophilia'. The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness Great Britain : Jonathan Cape, 1974.

Their aim is to transform all that is alive into dead matter. They want to destroy everything and everybody, often even themselves. Their enemy is life itself.

This hypothesis suggests that the development of the anal character is determined by the increase of narcissism, unrelatedness and destructiveness (in this continuum there are innumerable shadings between the two poles) and that necrophilia can be described as the malignant form of the anal character.

History has revealed that Adolf Hitler was, indeed, a very destructive person. His memory exists as a powerful symbol of all that is most horrific in man's nature. In the following chapter I intend to show the extent to which he was possessed by a demonic urge to destroy.

However, I would also like to point out that although Adolf Hitler presents us with an example of a fascist character, he is not the archetypal Nazi. Hitler's unique trait was that he acted to catalyze feelings about race and world supremacy that were dormant in a large number of Germans. His malignant sadism exists as an extreme example of the average psychological structure.



ADOLF HITLER, THE REPRESSED NECROPHILE

In the following chapter I wish to discuss the psychological force that contributed to Hitler's necrophilia and his destructive character. This destructive force was instrumental in that it provided the driving force behind his dictatorial behaviour.

It is important to observe the development of Hitler's personality after the age of six. It is generally accepted that the state of relations between Hitler and his parents conforms with Freudian Theory concerning the Oedipus Complex. Accordingly, he therefore adored his mother and feared his father. But he failed to solve his Oedipus Complex by identifying with his father's super-ego and breaking off erotic feelings towards his mother. It was the birth of his brother which left him with a sense of betrayal, so that instead of giving greater attention at this stage to his father, he was distracted by a rival for his affections.

However, this argument seems to falter when one remembers that the relationship between Hitler's parents (Karla and Alois Hitler) was itself somewhat strained. Yet despite this environment Hitler's childhood years are reported to have been his happiest.

This contradiction finds its answer in the theory of malignant incestuousness discussed above. In line with this concept one can envisage the relationship between Hitler and his mother as not being a warm affectionate one. Indeed, it is now understood that any love possessed by the young Adolf stretched no further than the boundaries of his own ego. As a result he did not grow to recognise his mother as a real person but instead she became a symbol for the impersonal power of earth, blood, fate and death. Despite the cold relationship towards his mother Hitler

was attached symbolically to her and all she stood for. When all these factors are taken into consideration one could understand why the birth of a brother would have been the cause for withdrawal from the mother, and in fact the nature of his symbolical attraction towards a mother figure would lead one to the opinion that perhaps Hitler was never genuinely attached to his mother at all.

His obsession with Mother Germany formed the basis for the odium he felt for the supposed "contamination of the Aryan race" (by syphilis and Judaism). This odium fuelled his passionate Messianic need to protect his "beloved Motherland". This obsession with his ideal of a Wagnerian "Mother Germany", so wholly at odds with the Weimer Germany in which he found himself, was on a deeper level the basis of his long repressed desire to destroy that "Mother Germany".

Infantile attraction is quite common in young boys. As a result of such feelings young children often experience feelings of being in "love" with their mother. When the boy matures into an adult his attractions will switch towards other women who offer him motherly affection. In the case of Hitler he may never have been attracted to his mother in this way and he definitely was not after the age of five and as a child he took more pleasure in playing soldiers or Indians with other boys. His mother was of no concern to him and he made no attempt to show any genuine love towards her.

It is clear that Hitler was an autistic character and this resulting total isolation of emotion freed his capacity for destructive behaviour all the more. Hitler's primary subject of destruction, indeed annihilation, was the Jewish people. However at first he would not single out the Jewish race in his speeches and writings but instead referred to them using non-racial language such as "defective peoples".

"Defective people must be prevented from propagating equally defective offspring..."
(A. Hitler, 1943.)

Such a crude experiment in social and biological engineering was to lead to genocide on a terrifying scale. Joseph Stalin also exterminated similar numbers of people by simply starving them to death on the farms by taking ALL the food they produced. Hitler preferred to classify extermination as a personal application of Darwinism. He then created a link between preserving the species and the national struggle for world domination and the subjection of people:

"..the first culture of mankind certainly depended less on the tamed animal but rather on the use of inferior people". (2)

In ritualistic fashion he summons up the symbolic power of Nature, to him representing a primeval force of retribution which he terms "the cruel Queen of all wisdom" (3) and her law of preservation is "bound to the brazen law of necessity and of the right of the victory of the best and the strongest in this world". (4)

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1. Mein Kampf, p405
 2. op.cit., p170
 3. op.cit., p396

It would be wrong to rationalize Darwin's theory in terms of a sado-masochistic mind. On the contrary, many of its strongest exponents believe that in such a theory lies the hope of a further evolution of mankind to an even higher level of civilization. For Hitler, however, it stood as a justification and an expression of his own sadism.

The main victims of physical destruction were the Jews, Poles and Russians. It becomes clear that the systematic slaughter of the Jews only began with the outbreak of the Second World War. Until then the extermination of the Jews was limited to a policy to promote Jewish emigration from Germany and the Nazi government even made efforts to facilitate this emigration. However, world events soon precipitated Hitler's ultimate intention. On the 30th January 1939 he told Czechoslovakian Foreign Minister Chvalkovsky categorically: "We are going to destroy the Jews. They are not going to get away with what they did on 9th November 1918. (4) The day of reckoning has come". (H. Krausnick et al., 1968). (5)

This sort of statement is very interesting from a psychological point of view. By citing an event that occurred twenty years previously he manages to justify his actions towards the entire Jewish people as just recompense for the 'crime' of a handful of revolutionaries. To Hitler revenge only meant a thinly veiled disguise for his otherwise horrible fantasy. The sadistic quality of his hate for the Jews was revealed by certain remarks that he made to his closest colleagues after a Party rally: "Out with them from all the professions and into the ghetto with them; fence them in somewhere where they can perish as they deserve while the German people look on, the way people stare at wild animals". (H. Krausnick et. al., 1968). (6)

4. Their betrayal of the German people by organising the surrender of their armed forces and the subsequent Communist Revolution.

5. Fromm Erich, The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness p 530.

6. op.cit. p 530.

As I have pointed out already, Hitler felt that the Jews were poisoning the Aryan blood and the Aryan soul. In order to relate this to Hitler's necrophilious complex it is important to understand it from the perspective of Hitler's character emanating from that of an anal hoarding necrophilious one. His sensual desire was to be near death and dirt (excrement, corpses etc.) but he repressed this and like anyone who is repressed emotionally or sexually his fixations emerged in a mutated form. Hitler's mutated and repressed desire expressed itself in his personal crusade against the spread of syphilis:

"Running parallel to the political, ethical and moral contamination of the people, there had been for many years a not less terrible poisoning of the health of the national body. Especially in the big cities, syphilis was beginning to spread more and more, while tuberculosis steadily reaped its harvest of death throughout nearly the whole country". (A. Hitler 1943.)

In reality such a claim was unfounded since neither tuberculosis nor syphilis constituted a major threat of the proportions attributed to them by Hitler. However, given Hitler's repressed necrophilic character and his absolute aversion to dirt or poison and the danger of being contaminated by them, it is indicative of an attitude which views the world with suspicion and subsequently categorizes people as pure and impure. It is most probable that Hitler's hatred of the Jews was rooted in this necrophiliac complex. Jews were foreign (other) and consequently Hitler and the Nazis tried at all costs to suppress this otherness or singular defining feature which distinguished them from the Aryan race. Their intolerance of difference posed Jews as foreigners, the logic being that foreigners are poisonous (like syphilis), therefore foreigners had to be eradicated.

As the war moved on and the realization dawned on Hitler that the outcome would end in the defeat of the Nazi regime, he proposed the 'scorched earth' device. Having destroyed the Jewish people Hitler set about ordering the destruction of Germany itself. On 27th January 1942, over a year before Stalingrad, Hitler said "If the German people are not ready to fight for their survival, well, then they have to disappear". (H. Picker, 1965.) As the inevitable happened, he ordered his threatened destruction of Germany to begin. Speer, writing in 1970, states that everything essential to the maintenance of life was to be destroyed:

"The ration card records, the files of marriage and resident registeries, the records of bank accounts. In addition food supplies were to be destroyed, farms burned down and cattle killed. Not even those works of art that the bombs had spared were to be preserved. Monuments, palaces, castles and churches, theatres and opera houses were also to be levelled."

As the enemy drew closer and the certainty of capture grew more imminent, Hitler was resigned to die rather than surrender to the allied forces. In the closing moments of the war he was surrounded by his dog, his mistress Eva Braun and Goebbels who foolishly held out hope of a possible Nazi victory. Eva Braun had persisted in coming to the shelter against Hitler's orders in order to be at his side even until death. Hitler was impressed by Fraulein Braun's display of loyalty, which was rewarded by contracting a legal marriage, her readiness to die for him was apparently the only act by which a woman could prove that she loved him. Goebbels ordered his wife and their six children to die with him but she was decisively against any such suggestion. However, Goebbels was emphatic and his wishes were obeyed.

So the final scenario was one of death and destruction. Hitler's defeat was accompanied by the death of those near to him and one imagines that if he could have had his way he would have tried to destroy the world as well lest it be allowed to continue without him.

A hierarchy was created in which everyone has somebody above him to whom he must unconditionally devote his life and power. Consequently in Nazi ideology and practice those who aspire to dominate are able to satisfy their desire to exert their control, while those who wish to remain anonymous are content to allow other people to make their decisions for them.

However, the underlying reason for the need for a series of devoted authoritarian structures is that they were more willing to accept absolute allegiance to authority than the individual. Consequently, the concept of the totalitarian revolution and the revolution of the masses is a concept of authoritarianism and absolute loyalty to authority.

I would not like to discuss the role the authoritarian family played in helping to perpetuate Nazi Germany's propaganda campaign.

In the Third Reich the family was considered to be a vital component in the ideology of the state machinery. The family as a unit was held up as the ideal to which everyone should aspire. It was through this unit that the state benefited in relating social authority to the concepts of " duty " and " honor ".

THE NAZI PROPAGANDA MACHINE
(Repression equals Control)

In a regime run by a sadist like Hitler the bureaucratic nature of his command reflects his skilful manipulation of the individual's desire to dominate and be dominated at the same time. Hitler, too, found a masochistic longing in himself. For him the superior power to which he submits is God, Fate, Necessity, History, Nature.

A hierarchy was created in which everyone has somebody above him to submit to and somebody beneath him to feel power over. Consequently in Nazi ideology and practice those who aspire to dominate are able to satisfy their desires to exert their control, while those who wish to remain anonymous were content to allow other people to make their decisions for them.

However, the underlying reason for the need for a nation of devoted authoritarian characters is that they were more willing to swear absolute allegiance to Germany, the Fatherland. Consequently, the concept of the Fatherland crystalizes all the emotionally and erotically tinged notions of nationalism.

I would now like to discuss the role the authoritarian family played in helping to perpetuate Nazi Germany's propaganda campaign.

In the Third Reich the family was considered to be a vital component in the ideology of the State machinery. The family as social unit was held up as the ideal to which everyone should aspire. It was through this unit that the state succeeded in relating sexual austerity to the concepts of 'duty' and 'honour'.

Firstly, the political and economic position of the father is reflected in his patriarchal relationship to the remainder of his family. Moreover, it is in the persona of the father that the authoritarian state has its representative in every family, so that the family becomes the most important instrument of power. Consequently the authoritarian position of the father reflects his political role and discloses the relationship of the family to the state. Within the family the father holds the same position as his employer holds towards him (the father himself) in the production process. We observe that resulting from this prevalent hierarchical culture the father figure is a key exponent of the syndrome of dominance and submission. Through his example he succeeds in handing on an acceptance of dominance and submission in his children, particularly in his sons.

The suppliant and servile attitude of the population towards the Fuhrer-figure stems from these conditions.

Without realizing it Hitler anticipated this attitude when he wrote:

"The people in their overwhelming majority are so feminine by nature and attitude that sober reasoning determines their thoughts and actions far less than emotion and feeling.

And this sentiment is not complicated, but very simple and all of one piece. It does not have multiple shadings; it has a positive and a negative; love or hate, right or wrong, truth or lie, never half this way and half that way, never partially, or that kind of thing." (1)

Hitler probably recognized one of the fundamental reasons for Fascism's appeal to the masses, that it was at best an emotional not an intellectual ideology. Fascism never got to the root of things. It was not radical in the true sense of the word. Its revolutionary zeal was merely the false rhetoric of a demented leader.

1. Mein Kampf, p.183

In reality, the father's position in the family was used to place severe sexual restrictions on the mother in society. This pressure exerted on women created an atmosphere of submissiveness and general female subordination in German society. Consequently it created a strong identification by women and children with the father, which in turn formed the basis of an emotional identification with every kind of authority.

We now come to the most potent ingredient in authoritarian society, religion. This was particularly useful in compounding an already restrictive culture by infusing religious fears with sexual guilt feelings, thus touching a strong emotional nerve in all German society. Religion as authoritarian doctrine became inextricably linked to the negation of sexual desire. Indeed one could say that the Nazi propaganda machine was perhaps more fanatical when it came to matters concerning sexuality than the church ever was. Unorthodox sexual behaviour was actively frowned upon while gender was highly conventionalized and stereotyped.

For example, Goebbels in an address to the Hitler Youth Rally in 1936 posed the question: Do you want to live your life as an animal or as a man of God?

"The process of attaining manhood - which is what we are concerned with here - is the problem of the hearth-fire. Tempered and controlled, the fire illuminates and warms the room, but mercy on us, if the fire leaps forth from the hearth! Mercy upon us if the sexual instinct so dominates the whole man that it becomes the master of his thoughts and endeavours!"

Such 'home truths' were etched deeply in the minds and hearts of the idealistically 'pure' young boys and girls. The real truth, however, lay in the fact that sexual repression results in a lowering of self-confidence. In one case it is presented as metaphor for a detached view of sexual identity. The individual

who is seen to have control of his or her sexual desires, is also considered to have developed emotionally-tinged notions of honour and duty, bravery and self-control. (2)

However, the development of a sexually malignant character can be traced back to an earlier stage of the individual's development. As I have mentioned above, the child's sexual inhibitions are developed within the authoritarian family. And here the Oedipus complex can be used to illustrate my point, since it is the original biological tie of the child to the mother and conversely the mother to the child that forms the barricade to sexual reality and leads to the incapacity to enter into other relations. (3)

Inherent in Nazi ideology is the idea that one's tie with one's mother formed the basis of all family ties. It is the mother who represents security. Her strength is evoked in the very earth of their nationhood. It is she who instils the values of homeland not the father, and her affection acts as a foil to a patriarchal empirical ideology. It is the mother who is the soft edge of this harsh regime. Her memory acts as a panacea to the ugliness of war and destruction while indirectly serving as a justification for it. Her strategic importance is twofold. She represents and acts out at the same time. Her very condition of motherhood represents an enobled state of femininity, consequently the icon of mother and child had become a cherished theme in German Art of the Third Reich. It is through her acceptance of this elevated role that she acts her

(2) Mann, Ernst. Die Moral der Kraft.

(3) Hence the 'Oedipus Complex' is not so much a cause as it is the result of the sexual restrictions imposed upon the child by society. Parents, for their part, wholly unconscious of what they are doing, actually carry out the intentions of authoritarian society.

part as a healthy life-giving symbol of the nation, thereby taking her part in 'the sacred mysteries of the natural order'.
 (4) Among middle class society the mother was the homeland of the child, just as the family is the 'nation in microcosm'.

To the German people the concept of mother meant many things, all of them good and all comforting. However, despite this the real thrust of Nazi ideology was authoritarian and patriarchal. The people were left in no doubt that Fuhrer and Fatherland were to be viewed as one and the same thing. It was in creating support from them that Hitler had succeeded in harnessing the strong emotional tie associated with the authoritarian father figure. The population transferred their allegiance from their authoritarian father to their new authoritarian leader, 'Fuhrer'.

The population is made up of individuals who share similar feelings towards parental figures and authority figures as well. In being forced from an early age to submit to authoritarian discipline the population is emotionally 'weak' and consequently searches for a sense of belonging and leadership.

These needs are fulfilled through identification with the 'Fuhrer'. The desire to identify is the psychological basis of national narcissism. This desire to identify is similarly the reason why individuals derive self-confidence from the 'greatness of the nation'. The population can identify both with the Fuhrer and the state. On the basis of this identification the individual feels himself or herself to be defender of the 'national heritage', of the 'nation'.

(4) Hinz, Berthold. Art in the Third Reich. UK : Random House, 1979, p. 78.

Even though the citizen is materially and sexually impoverished in this process, he is nevertheless so entirely brainwashed that he chooses to ignore his shortcomings and indulges wholeheartedly in the fantasy of belonging to the master race led by their Fuhrer rather than ruled by a tyrant.. With the passage of time he ceases to realize how completely he has sunk to a position of insignificance, and blind allegiance.

Nazism was, in effect, a synthesis of a patriarchal State and the sexually repressed authoritarian character. This authoritarian character consisted of someone who craved for power over men and longed for submission to an overwhelmingly-strong outside power. However, the dynamism of man's nature asserts itself and the same individual will always strive to realize his full potential in as positive and life-affirming way as possible. Where the artist struggles against the cannons of authoritarianism he/she represents a quest for freedom and happiness.

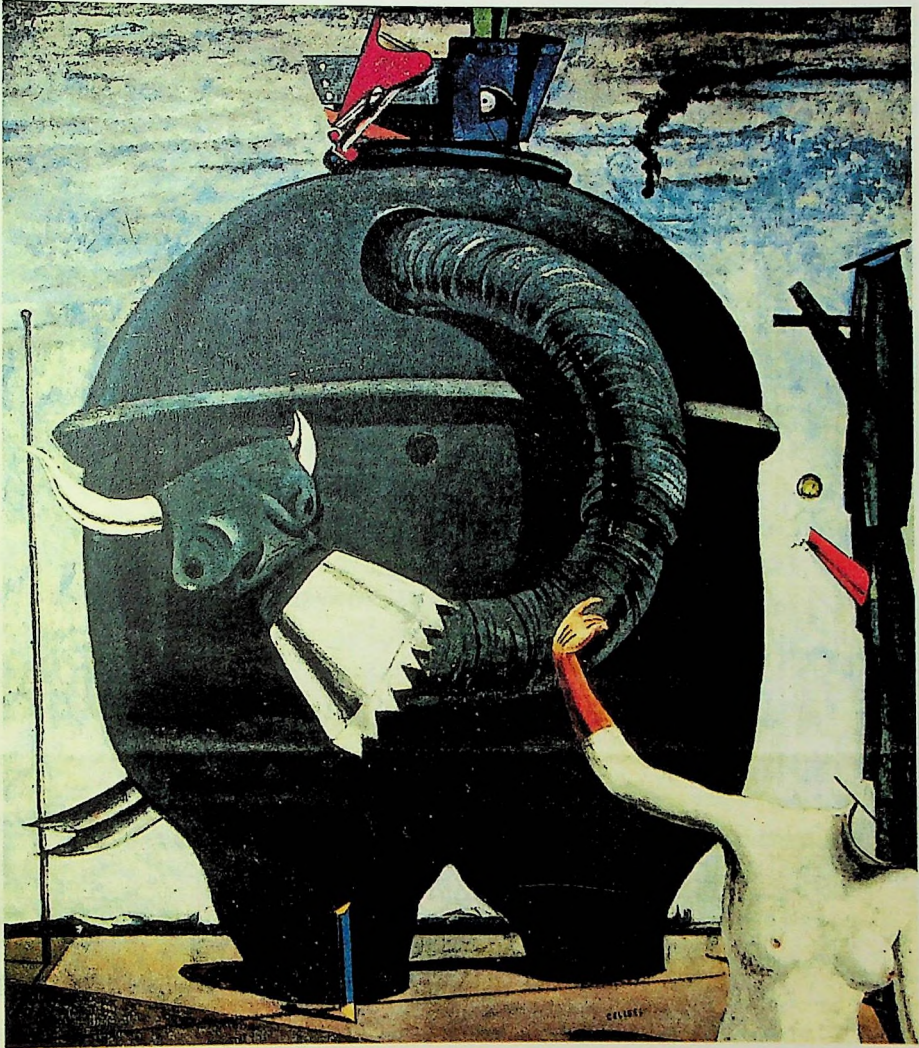
In the early 1920s in Germany the artist Max Ernst took his search for freedom on a journey through the unconscious mind.

MAX ERNST : AN INVESTIGATION OF THE MYTH OF HIS TIME

Max Ernst : From the Soldier of the Fatherland to
Artist in Search of Oedipal Mythology

Immediately after the First World War, in which Max Ernst had served in the artillery, Ernst's father's pride in his son's military service turned to astonished anger when he learned that Max was involved with the then notorious Cologne Dada. Things came to a head between father and son after the first Dada exhibition in 1919. Philip Ernst, in a fit of rage, accused Max of bringing dishonour upon the family name.

Ernst had only been slightly injured in the war and at that in a humorous way, since his injuries were the result of being kicked by a Belgian horse and the recoil of an uncleaned gun. Nevertheless, the feeling of having been betrayed by a father and a fatherland, who willingly would expose their son to injury and death, is worked out in Ernst's rejection of the concepts of honour and shame and his rebellious stand in identifying himself with Dada as opposed to his father's skillful amateurism as an academic artist. This experience is set to fuel his attacks on the symbols of authority, i.e. "God, King and Fatherland", in his work. The psychoanalytic symbolism of the Oedipal son as hero, whose revolt against these figures of authority is the source of progress and creativity, is Ernst's constant subtext.



'Celebes' (1921), was probably inspired by Ernst's war experiences. The tank/elephant appears to be on an airfield, fish swim in the sky above it.

The Elephant of Celebes

Like his previous work, e.g. Oedipus Rex, The Elephant of Celebes painted in late 1921, investigates the mythic, psychoanalytic significance of the father, central to Ernst's exploration of the new mythology of the unconscious. On a formal level the paintings done around this time mark the commencement of Ernst's greatest experiments with painted collage. The images in the painting are very clearly defined : a large "elephant" confronts a beckoning, headless, nude woman; the elephant holds a rod between his tusks as if it were a sceptre; beside him stands a strange robotic attendant figure, whose phallic protrusions resemble flower-pot spouts. This tubular figure is taken from the 1920 overpainted collage, The Hat Makes the Man. In that original context, the figures made by connecting the hats on a catalogue page with coloured strips were meant as a pastiche of bourgeois values. The hat, as an article of correct dress, stands for the man's social status and the entire man is jokingly reduced to an amalgamated hat-phallus. The ornamental tubular figure in Celebes still resonates with Ernst's spoofing symbolism of maleness, both social and sexual and as bourgeois hat-wearer, he is perhaps a fitting attendant to Celebes as monarch.

"Celebes" dominates the picture like a greedy emperor with attendant symbols (rod and golden orb) of sexual and political power. The beckoning nude is at once commanding and vulnerable in her erotic role. This refers also to a popular theme of nineteenth-century salon painting, the female captive who is paraded nude for the delectation of the conqueror. That it is a white woman and alien (African or Oriental) king is a commonplace of such pictures.

In fact, Celebes has an African history. It has long been known that the elephant's gigantic hollow shape comes from an illustration of a Sudanese corn bin. Celebes is also related to the exotic "elephants" of Celebes, Sumatra and India remembered by Ernst from obscene schoolboy's doggerel. (1) The rhyme draws attention to the elephant's sexual blundering and disagreeable secretions - a buffoonish figure. Ernst's armoured bull elephant, however, is terrible and monumental. The broad, obscene silliness of the doggerel does not account for the tension implied in Celebes meeting with the headless nude in the painting. The unlikely combination of sexual female and absurdly robotic male recalls a collage by George Grosz, Daum Marries Her Pedantic Automaton George, which Ernst had seen in the 1920 Berlin Dada Messe exhibition. Nevertheless, Ernst's painting, as a variation on the theme of inappropriate pairing, is quite different in tone from Grosz's comic pathos.

Freud's analysis of the dark side of the comic in Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious provides one key to Ernst's sombre characterization of Celebes. The comic proceeds by setting up subtle comparisons between the self and others, between the usual and what has been changed, between what is expected and what actually happens. From such parallels and contradictions the comic emerges. In Celebes the comic is generated by comparison of the expenditure of energy required by the vast robotic elephant (particularly for any special activity) with that required of a more normal animal (such as the viewer).

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- (1) Roland Penrose, The Elephant of Celebes, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne : University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1972), p.19. "The elephant from Celebes/has sticky, yellow bottom grease/.....The elephant from India/can never find the hole, ha-ha."

Another feature of the Freudian comic is the setting up of a sublime or exalted figure who "lays claim to authority and respect" and the subsequent caricature and unmasking of that figure. This mechanism only operates when applied to someone who has seized dignity and authority by a deception, a tyrant.
(2)

One method of effecting the "unmasking" is that of degrading the dignity of individuals by directing attention to the faults that they share with all humanity, but in particular the dependence of their mental functions on bodily needs. The smutty rhyme that gave the "elephant of Celebes" its name contains this element of degradation, citing the nasty secretions and fumbling impotence of the elephant.

The fact that Ernst made the "Elephant of Celebes" massive and powerful is critical. As a pot-bellied, two-legged elephant, "Celebes" may be assuming his place in the tradition of representations of Behemoth, the most powerful and massive of mythic beasts in Old Testament mythology. If Celebes is Behemoth set up in the role of prototypical king-father-tyrant, Ernst must have had special reasons for the choice of role model.

Apollinaire's L'Enchanteur Pourrisant, which was published in 1921, includes a fable in which Behemoth, rather than the creator God, presides over creation. Under his "sterile dictatorship", death replaces procreation. The biblical Behemoth was the first created being, whereas Apollinaire's Behemoth is self-created, an inversion of God. He represented the diety of death and he masqueraded as Messiah even employing prophetic language:

(2) Freud, *Wit and its Relation to the Unconscious*, vol. VIII, p.204: "What is sublime is something large in a figurative, physical sense."

I am the dictator. Hear the voice of Behemoth, without origin. I am without origin, unique, immobile, and even, I believe, immortal. (3)

Also in Jungian analysis, the biblical character Behemoth is described in tandem with his twin Leviathan, from the Book of Job. Behemoth on land and Leviathan in the ocean, are dual representatives of the erotic attributes of God: the "crudest force conceivable in nature...the phallic attribute of God in creation". Celebes's elongated, ambiguous trunk, that also can be read as a neck and a tail, lends itself to interpretation as just such a phallic attribute. In the case of Apollinaire's Behemoth, the sexual power of the creator, or the failure of it, is an essential issue. If Ernst's Celebes is also Leviathan, the fish in the sky behind him are logical companions to his amphibious domain. Behemoth - Leviathan is also, in Jungian terms, the creator or terrors and monstrosities in the unconscious. This characterization is relevant to Ernst's own later description of his father as a perverse creator of terrifying images out of the imitation mahogany panel, especially since this creative activity of the father is related by Ernst to his procreative sexual role.

(3) Guillaume Apollinaire, L'Enchanteur pourissant, ed. Jean Burgos (Paris : Lettres Modernes 1972), p.100.

Ernst and Entartete Kunst

In 1937 one of Max Ernst's paintings was apprehended by the Nazis for the purpose of an exhibition designed to ridicule modern art. The exhibition was entitled "Entartete Kunst" or "Degenerate Art" and it was arranged primarily as part of a propaganda effort on the part of the Nazis who declared that modern artists were incapable of satisfying the Nazi demand which was "a reflection of the German growth in racial unification and, thus, the portrayal of a well-rounded, total character". (4) To the Nazis, modern artists such as Max Ernst were nothing but "cliques of babblers, dilettantes and art crooks" (5) which deserved to be eliminated. At this exhibition hung his works The creation of Eve, also known as The Fair Gardener, with the explanation "insult to German womanhood". (6)

The Fair Gardener was by no means an attack on "womanhood" be it German or otherwise. Ernst's painting was intended as a representation of the myth of creation. The imagery refers to a whole iconography of madonna and child with saints. His particular source is the belief preserved in the traditions and legends of the Catholic Church that Jesus was conceived in the ear of the Virgin Mary by the breath of the Holy Ghost. In this tradition the dove symbolizing the Holy Ghost is shown as the fertilizing agent. The dove, in keeping with symbolism as fertilizing agent, nestles beside the open womb of the "fair gardener". The appearance of a pair of tubes terminating just above the head of the dove might indicate that Ernst was aware of the symbolism of the divine fertilizing breath blown through a tube.

The Nazis hated Ernst's work because he ridiculed the traditions of patriarchy and criticized authority. For instance, in his "dream" published in La Revolution Surrealiste in 1927 he belittles his father, describing him as "this funny little

fellow". He caricatures his father's pretentious, "omnipotent" stature. He is described as " - large, enraged, huffing and puffing like a steam engine and whipping a top - ". The image of a pompous authoritarian father figure whipping a top can be understood as Ernst's childhood fantasies concerning masturbation. Freud's "Bismarck" dream also offers a model for such a projection of the child's forbidden activity on to the father. The child ignores the fact that this activity is prohibited and punishable by using the dream mechanism as distortion. Instead of keeping his private thoughts secret from his father, the child dreams of reporting it to him.

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN MODERNISM AND NATIONAL SOCIALISM

During the twelve years of the Third Reich Modernism became synonymous with all that Nazi propaganda sought to denigrate. This was an art movement which through its representations of the irrational side of man's nature was considered as either French or un-German. The Nazis pursued a policy of downgrading Modern art to the level of what it termed Kulturbdschewismus (Cultural Bolshevism). This term, which was vaguely defined but all embracing, was used as a cultural equivalent to the term 'Marxism' and in the area of politics to denote everything that could be identified with the Weimar Republic. Instead, Nazism promoted the concept of an art that embodied a 'healthy popular consciousness' which was antipathetical to these ideas.

German neo-classicism helped to reinforce the already bombastic authoritarianism and austerity of the Reich. This rigid classical aesthetic was applied to everything, even the symmetrical lines of troops on the parade ground.

The terms 'war' and 'art' became interchangeable and indeed war-making was now considered the ultimate art form. The great warrior as artist came to be seen under National Socialism as equivalent to the great artist as warrior.

Within four years of taking power, the Nazis had transformed the nature of artistic practice in Germany.

The authoritarian administration had succeeded in taking complete control of all cultural and artistic production. It had laid down an official art which was totally in keeping with State ideology.

At the opening of the Haus der Deutschen Kunst on 18th July 1937, Hitler heralded the establishment of an official art of the third Reich. On the following day he opened the Entartete Kunst (Degenerate Art) exhibition at which he attacked the Modernism of the European avant-garde:

"What do these artists fabricate? Deformed cripples and cretins, women who inspire nothing but disgust, human beings who are more animal than human, children who, if they looked like this, could be nothing but God's curse on us! And these cruellest of dilettantes dare to present this to today's world as the art of our time....." (1)

The NSDAP had now adopted a highly conservative aesthetic which functioned more as propaganda than art. Speaking on the subject of 'Art and Propaganda' Dr. Goebbels said:

"We have been criticised frequently for degrading German art to the level of mere propaganda. 'Degrade' - how so? Is propaganda a matter to which anything else can be degraded? Is not propaganda as we understand it a kind of art?.....Would it mean degradation for art if it were placed side by side with that noble art of mass psychology which was instrumental in saving the Reich from destruction?" (2)

The State had the power to intervene directly in all cultural activities. A government official had the right to suspend any publication, forbid the performance of any play, deny the privilege of utterance over the radio or through any medium to any person, close down any school, institute or museum, and punish any person for any real or imaginary offence if and when he pleased.

(1) A. Hitler, words quoted in Guide to the Exhibition of Degenerate Art, from F. Roh, 'Entarte Kunst' - Kunstbarberei im Dritten Reich, Hanover, 1962, p.26 ff.

(2) Brady, Robert, The National Chamber of Culture (Reichskulturkammer) 1937, in "The Nazification of Art", eds; Brandon Taylor & Wilfried Van der Will, published UK 1990 by Winchester Press.

Instead, the art that was permitted by the State sought to promote all that was thought to be true to the German soul. What was termed Volkish art, depicted the Aryan to the absolute exclusion of the Jew.

However, in the early 1930s it was widely thought that the National Socialists in formulating an art policy would look to the German Expressionists as the embodiment of the German soul - which, indeed, many of them had attempted to be.

Nolde, for his part - and he may not have been a typical German Modernist - was partly impressed and partly uncomprehending.

"Much was said and the time was full of speeches and assemblies" he wrote in retrospect. "At first I did not concern myself about anything. Later I quietly observed events from a distance, while a new order was spoken of in my own area of art and great promises were made. An unknown great future for art was prophetically announced. We artists (he speaks here in the plural) often trusting and somewhat unworldly, really did not know what was happening. All, almost all, lived in tension, full of expectation. Therewith, I heard that my name had been mentioned. Whether in a good or a bad context I did not know. But a great artistic architecture was being projected....." (3)

Nolde's uncertainty was understandable, for in the summer of 1934 arguments were raised for and against Expressionist and Volkish art. To this end opinion was divided between Rosenberg who disliked Expressionism and Goebbels who admired it. Ever since the early 1920s Rosenberg had opposed modernistic - by

(3) E. Nolde, "Achtung, Befreiung", 1919-1946, Köln, 1967, p 115. Quote taken from "The Nazification of Art" eds. Brandon Taylor and Wilfried Van der Will, Winchester Press, 1990.

which he meant abstract, intellectual, individualistic art.(4) In his best selling book 'Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts' of 1930, Rosenberg embellished the thesis that true art should be Volkisch, now claiming fervently that Volkisch art evolved according to its own irreducible laws and denied the influence of sterile formalism or foreign art. Volkisch art was in essence unreflective, even naive, and represented the unconscious striving of the Volksgeist for self-expression in artistic form. It was the art of the peasant and the artisan, wholesome and warm hearted, devoted not to the urban individual but to the rural and peasant collectivity. (5)

It needs no argument to show that 'Expressionism' itself was based on similar principles i.e. the priority given to the instinctual, spontaneous act over the rational approach of the trained artist. Yet these fairly obvious parallels were bypassed in Rosenberg's vitriolic attack on the ills of Modernist culture.

However, Expressionist artists such as Nolde saw in Joseph Geobels someone who was interested in supporting their work. He did not subscribe to the Rosenberg doctrine on Volkisch art, though he agreed that art should be supported and enjoyed by the Volk. Thus, in the debate that ensued, one camp sided with Rosenberg in looking backwards to traditional German themes and folksy stylistic devices, while another camp, supported by

(4) A. Rosenberg, "Volkische Kunst", 10th May 1922, cited in R. A. Pois, "German Expressionism in the Plastic Arts and Nazism", German Life and Letters, Vol. XXI, No. 3, April 1968, p 206. Also to be found in B. Taylor & Wilfried Van der Will "Nazification of Art" page 131.

(5) A. Rosenberg, "Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts", Munich, 1938, pp 303-4, taken from "Nazification of Art" page 131.

Goebbels, saw in Expressionism an adequate foundation for a national style that came near to expressing "true German feelings" towards the land, nature and the body and which joined the fight against the big city and the machine-minded Modernism of the abstract schools, particularly Constructivist-inspired art that had originated, after all, in the USSR.

It must have seemed for a time as if the debate between Rosenberg and his opponents might have continued for many months, even for years.

In the remaining months of 1933 the intellectual climate still allowed for a healthy airing of ideas. However, in 1934 this changed. In the wake of Hitler's consolidation of power in the Summer of 1934, speeches began to be made by the Fuhrer which did much to resolve the question of Volkisch art versus Modernism - though he neither followed Rosenberg's doctrinaire policy nor supported the Expressionists as the true heirs to German art.

It is from this point onwards that the widely understood 'polarity' between National Socialist and Modernist art began to be constructed. At the Party Congress of the NSDAP in November 1934, Hitler first sided with Rosenberg in warning his audience of "the saboteurs of art" such as "the Cubists, Futurists, Dadaists and others". The Expressionists were not yet identified as a group. The creation of the new Reich would "not be intimidated by their twaddle", he said. "They will see that the commissioning of what may be the greatest cultural and artistic projects of all time will pass them by as if they had never existed". It may be assumed, perhaps, that Goebbels and his Expressionist sympathies were also a target of the Fuhrer's invective. But Hitler gave vent to another danger, that presented by those who wished to make "an old-fashioned German art" based on thoroughly Alt-Volkisch principles without any attempt made to take account of modern demands. These people,

he said, who would even advocate fashion designs "based on Gretchen and Faust" were never National Socialists and did not belong to their ranks. Even the Jews thought they were ridiculous.

However, in spite of the condemnation of both Expressionist and Volkisch art in the new policy, it remains true that what was still lacking in 1934 was a firm 'theory' developed within the Reich which would positively associate National Socialism with a particular style. Yet the events of the Rohm putsch in the middle of 1934 had shown, if proof were needed, that Hitler was prepared to engage in deliberate and calculated murder to resolve any difficulties which remained in the consolidation of National Socialist power. The task of consolidating a 'total' culture around the activities of the SS and centred even more explicitly upon the deeds and personality of the Fuhrer, was now paramount.

But something else was needed as well. The incorruptible presence of the NSDAP embodied in the person of the Fuhrer required the construction of a channel for the expression of hate. The likelihood of venting grievances against the Fuhrer would be decreased if it were made possible to hurl ridicule at something else, an impure 'other' within the body of the Nazi State. The Jew was one such impurity. But another could be 'Modern' art. The process had been begun, perhaps, in 1933. Then, in the latter part of 1936 and the whole of 1937 there was launched a further exceptionally fierce assault in which relations between National Socialism and Modernism were finally fixed for all to see.

Yet despite the marginalization of Modernism in German culture, the Nazis were highly dependant on modern production techniques in order to help them compete as a progressive industrial nation. To this end National Socialist design was entirely in keeping with Bauhaus-inspired ideals of form following

function, with a rejection of all unnecessary decoration. The fact that Germany was busy preparing its huge military machine for war compelled the introduction of modern labour saving devices, thus making them more efficient.

But shunning modern Avant-Garde art and at the same time being smart enough to be open to employing Modern Design did present a problem. The situation was that the NSDAP somehow had to show that its regime was inspired by a noble culture. It was by returning to Classicism (and specifically Greek forms) that the Nazis wished to invest their culture with historical integrity. Adolf Hitler was particularly impressed with the idea that his masterpiece might have been born in the twilight of the Gods, beautiful athletes and sensuous nymphs.

"Never was humanity closer to antiquity than today", Hitler had written in *mein Kampf*. "It is the marvellous fusion of the most splendid physical beauty with the most brilliant intellect and the noblest soul that makes the Greek ideal of beauty eternal....As a rule the spirit dwells, if healthy, only in the healthy body with any degree of permanence". (6)

Classicism, in this context, meant at least two things: the cult of the body and a tendency towards discipline and militarisation. Indeed, it was plagiarism at its best. Classicism in the 1930s functioned as a leitmotif for a mass aesthetic seduction.

However, the cult of the body was already embedded in an older Germany and consequently lent itself to a host of other associations. The concept of a healthy soul inside a healthy body, which had characterized the gymnastic movement of the early nineteenth century, had now turned towards the concept of the physical by the closing years of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth.

(6) A. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*.



Arno Breker, *Readiness*, 3m high version of
the 11 metre high sculpture for the planned
Mussolini monument, 1939

Here, sheer adulation of the physical body was deemed sufficient to guarantee moral and spiritual strength. Whiteness of skin was considered symptomatic of inner purity. Correct proportions effortlessly substituted for intelligence or culture.

Artists like Franz von Stuck (1863-1928) and Franz von Lenbach (1863-1904) perfected marble surfaces and perfect proportions in their nudes precisely as an expression of inner wholeness and completeness of being - and these were artists at whose feet Kandinsky, Marc, Beckmann and others were students. In many ways the Nazis relied more heavily on the example of these artists than they did on the work of the Romans and Greeks. It was Expressionism through its unorthodox practice of breaking up the surface of the canvass, initiated by Impressionism, that had challenged the imperatives of predictability, ease of movement, comfort of transition from one experience to another, consistency of view and the uninterrupted 'illusion' of a situation or a character.

It was into this intellectual environment, which venerated a synthetic purity of form over an independence and integrity of thought, that the artist Arno Breker (sculptor) rose to fame.

His talent for aggrandisement of the human figure, particularly the male figure, emphasised a positive image of a Nordic super-race within a framework of Classicising representation. However, given the all-pervasive nature of Nazi propaganda, the leading members of the regime endorsed Breker's work because it reaffirmed the polarities of gender and especially race. Indeed, his work presented the racial ideal towering above humanity. His statues were like icons which only the superior people in Germany could appreciate. It was this hierarchy of superior, useful peoples and worthless, useless races which could be used as slaves or eliminated, which formed the core of National Socialist ideology. Looked at in relation to the cartoons of the time that produced negative images of 'inferior' races, Breker sculpture functioned as a sanitized version of the same message.

CONCLUSION

The Problem of the Hearth Fire is an investigation into the repression of positive sexual feelings in National Socialist Germany. The suppressed sexual energy of the authoritarian character is channelled instead into an erotically tinged Nationalism.

Nazi Germany sought to reproduce this suppliant yet stubborn character through the structure of an authoritarian family unit.

The art of National Socialist Germany was similarly designed to instill such feelings of identification with the State and subordination of one's instinctual energies. Images of nature and landscape abound with titles such as 'Blood and Soil'. The effect was of seducing people into forging strong emotional links with the National Socialist State. Likewise, images of mother and child reassured the stone faced soldiers that their "Fatherland", while a strong military force, was at heart a soothing, comforting regime. On their own these images could even represent the return to the romantic and classical, evident in Post-Modernism. Yet, looked at in the context of their historical background, they represent epitaphs of a highly restrictive debilitating regime.

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