

**When Words Take Lives:  
The Role of Language in the Dehumanization and  
Devastation of Jews in the Holocaust**

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## Abstract

This thesis will examine the ways in which anti-Semitic and more generalized racial theories were powerfully and effectively mobilized under Hitler and his Nazi regime. In the establishment of Nazi ideology and the practice of its principles, Hitler drew upon an old, extensive and specific genre of animalizing language. Hitler's regime skillfully employed contemporary and diverse modes of discourse to dehumanize and devastate the Jewish people. By juxtaposing traditional anti-Semitic beliefs with ideals of Aryan superiority, the Nazis were able to expand and strengthen pre-existing anti-Semitism whilst reaffirming Germany as the ultimate example of evolutionary progression. Integral to Hitler's success was the use of animal imagery and its respective connotations, associations and evocations. Throughout Hitler's regime, the term "animal" remained without an exact or precise definition; the ambiguous definition of "animal" allowed for multiple applications – both destructive and constructive. When used in reference to the Jews, the term "animal" was loaded with a barrage of degrading references, images and emotions. The Jews were described as dirty, disease-ridden rats: weak, despoiling animals that needed to be exterminated and bloodsucking parasites that presented an imminent threat to German bloodlines, culture, morality and economy. These images all stirred feelings of disgust, abhorrence and fear especially when linked to ideas of unpredictable and overwhelming plagues and swarms. The concept of human "animals" was also applied to the Germans but with completely different consequences. The German "animal" was a natural predator, a super wolf, a noble and loyal dog. This wolf/dog was upheld for its prowess, its commitment to the pack and its virile bloodline. This image of animalism was not a degradation or an admission of German inferiority; rather, it was a declaration of evolutionary achievement and innate superiority. The flexibility of the term "animal" was always loaded with emotive connotations and representations whilst remaining fluid in its applicability – only to be temporarily fixed as and when it suited Nazi ends. Hitler utilized the

ascribed authority of scientific and pseudo-scientific theories to reinforce a sense of legitimacy and add a compelling rationality to Nazi ideology. Modern media were efficiently employed to spread Nazi beliefs: emotive speeches and new legislative measures were broadcast on the radio; propaganda was printed and circulated whilst cinematography captured the imaginations of many Germans and represented the Jews' "animal" nature. With a wealth of resources available to his purposes, Hitler was able to form and strengthen an ideology that had every appearance of being credible, necessary, righteous and legitimate. Innovative concepts and practices of industrialism were important in the mobilization of Hitler's racial campaign; the employment of new technologies appealed to a sense of progress and national self-improvement as well as providing effective and detached methods of removing the Jewish presence from Germany. When placed within multiple modes of discourse, images of animalism became increasingly pervasive and the dehumanization of the Jews was well underway.

## Introduction

Because human life has often been considered to possess more value than the members of the animal kingdom, the redefinition or blurring of distinctions between humans and animals often contributes to the dehumanizing and degrading of human beings. Shifting classifications, definitions and interpretations of what is human and what is animal allow new boundaries to be drawn between peoples, races and species. Recent works on human/animal studies by authors such as Boria Sax, Jonathan Burt, Marjorie Spiegel and Charles Patterson will contribute to this thesis' exploration of the human/animal divide in relation to the Nazi dehumanization of the Jewish people. In *Regarding Animals*, Arnold Arluke and Clinton R. Sanders claim that the constant re-drawing and blurring of the human/animal boundary was essential to the paradoxical Nazi ideology (133). Under Hitler, the Nazis redefined what it is to be human and these new definitions excluded the Jewish people who were reclassified as inferior animals. In his study on group power dynamics, Elias Canetti expands upon the importance of redefined human/animal boundaries, stating that

the despot who reduces men to animals and only manages to rule them by regarding them as belonging to a lower species reduces to vermin all who do not qualify even to be ruled and ends by destroying them by the millions (363).

The reality of Canetti's statement can be seen in Hitler's Germany; Sax describes how "the Nazis herded human beings, branded them with numbers, neutered them, and slaughtered them industrially, as people had traditionally done with animals" (22). Reclassified as non-humans, the Jews were excluded from the ranks of humanity and their lives deemed both undesirable and expendable. Charles Patterson confirms this idea in *Eternal Treblinka* as he examines correlations between the Holocaust and the industrialization of animal slaughterhouses. He proposes that the degradation of "lower"

human races to animal status encourages and appears to justify their subjugation and subsequent elimination (27). Patterson concludes that the lower and more degraded the victim is in the eyes of the perpetrator, the easier it is to take the victim's life (47-8). Jonathan Burt also discusses the effects of industrialization upon human/animal relationships in his essay, "Conflicts around Slaughter in Modernity" in *Killing Animals*. Burt suggests that the mechanics of industrial processing allow for the disregarding of individual creatures and the desensitization of the perpetrators, as "one cannot see the animals for the industry" (122).

This thesis will examine the process of cultural change that enabled such extensive dehumanization. The main focus will be the role of language in the devaluation and dismissal of fellow human beings - the relationship between language and the dehumanizing process that appears to justify atrocity against fellow humans. By drawing on the human/animal distinction and the accompanying connotations of superiority and inferiority, Hitler maintained and widened the distance between Jews and non-Jews; the Nazis' manipulation of language transformed the Jewish people into a poisonous horde of vermin in desperate need of extermination. Hitler's *Mein Kampf* seems radical in its extremism, yet these racial theories did not appear from within a historical void; Hitler was influenced by a strong tradition of literature centered on issues of racial purity. This thesis will explore a selection of literature that significantly influenced Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and increased Germany's receptivity to destructive racial ideology. It will also consider the memoirs of Nazi Germans and Jewish survivors in order to more fully examine the applied reality of the dehumanizing racial theories; the dehumanizing language and attitudes were so effective that even the prisoners began to regard themselves as less than human (Arluke and Sanders, 152). A vocabulary of detachment, rationalization and euphemism hastened the Nazi invasion of German hearts, minds and consciences. Different animal metaphors were superimposed upon the Jews and further enabled the Nazis to gather and process human lives with

incredible efficiency and proficiency. Jews became perceived as cattle to be processed, parasites to be eradicated and rats to be exterminated. The development of technological concepts and practices provided an ideal environment for Nazi metaphors of Jewish animals to be realized. Old racial traditions, literary legacies, animal imagery and metaphors and contemporary industrialization were skillfully employed to redefine the boundaries of humanity at the devastating exclusion of the Jewish people.

The first chapter of this thesis is entitled “The Hierarchy of Race: Historical Definitions of the Human”, and it begins with an examination of some of the racial theory that Hitler read, absorbed and developed. From Comte Joseph Arthur de Gobineau, Charles Darwin, Ernst Haeckel, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, Madison Grant and Henry Ford, Hitler gleaned various principles and concepts of a humanity that he would claim was shaped by and revealed its perfection in the Germanic Aryans. Every other race was ranked below these Aryans and placed hierarchically in order of intelligence, beauty and evolutionary development. In contrast with the superiority of the Germanic Aryans, the Jews were ranked as the lowest of humanity: so low and corruptive that many of the authors Hitler read believed that the Jews did not even qualify as human beings. The difference between the Aryans and the Jews was to be regarded as greater than distinctions between species and, if the Aryans were to have any hope of self-preservation or advancement, the inferior, degenerate Jews must be eliminated.

Equipped with a wealth of theoretical conclusions and ideological visions that provided “a new and clearer view of the problem in question” (Hitler, 30-1), Hitler set about writing down his own beliefs. The second chapter of this thesis, “Theory’s Explosive Culmination: *Mein Kampf* and Nazism”, focuses on Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*, the infamous manifesto of Nazi ideology. In the establishment of his own ideology, Hitler named the Jew as “the Great Master of Lies” (199). Yet Hitler’s own mastery of

language reveals a man with a powerful ability to convince and persuade others. He entreats Germany to fight for the security necessary for

the existence and increase of our race, the subsistence of its children and the maintenance of our racial stock unmixed, the freedom and independence of the Fatherland; so that our people may be enabled to fulfill the mission assigned to it by the Creator (125).

According to Hitler, the “ultimate and most profound reason of the German downfall” is that racial issues were ignored and not regarded with the appropriate seriousness (161). In Hitler’s eyes, the answer to Germany’s preservation, freedom and increase is the elimination of what he perceives as Germany’s biggest threat, the Jewish race. In *Mein Kampf*, the Jews are constantly demeaned and decried as animals; Hitler is adamant that “the Jewish mongrels, with their repulsive waddle” (232), could not and should not be regarded as human. Immediate action must be taken against the Jews in order to protect Germany from further degeneration, deterioration or corruption.

Chapter three, “The Creation of Pest Exterminators: Detachment, Desensitization and Dehumanization”, explores the reality of principles transformed into policy and propaganda put into practice. Mass murder seemed to be justified by theories of racial hierarchy, the desensitization of German consciences and the adaption of industrial practices for the efficient processing of human lives. Hitler knew the incredible potential power of propaganda; although attributing this power to the Jews, he was fully aware that “heaven itself can be presented to the people as if it were hell and, vice versa, the most miserable kind of life can be presented as if it were paradise” (156). Many Germans were trained, at times unknowingly, to see only the animal representations of Jewry rather than any aspects of Jewish humanity. Through the use of subhuman terminology, Nazi soldiers and doctors often became able to think of themselves as pest exterminators rather than human executioners. The Nazi need for distancing, desensitization and the avoidance of personal exchange were greatly enhanced

through emphasis on the human/animal distinction established by the Nazis in regard to Jews and the consideration of the Jewish people as a herd of animals.

The final chapter of this thesis considers the experience of the dehumanized Jews. Hitler persuaded many Germans that any person who bore the name “Jew” was not a human being but a subhuman or a nonhuman animal: a creature to be treated respective to its name. To be named a German was to be identified as a worthy human; to be named a Jew was to receive a death sentence. Since they were regarded as more highly evolved than the Jews, even the animals belonging to Nazi soldiers were afforded better treatment, shelter and nourishment than the Jewish sub-humans. Stripped of their clothing, their individuality and their dignity, the Jews became exploitable and expendable animals during the Holocaust. This chapter examines the effect of such degrading language and practices upon its targets - so pervasive and comprehensive that many of the displaced and imprisoned Jews began to see themselves as something no longer human.

## **Chapter One:**

### **The Hierarchy of Race: Historical Definitions of the Human**

Hitler's famous racial politics were informed by various ideals, theories and perspectives on humanity put forward by authors such as Comte Joseph Arthur de Gobineau, Charles Darwin, Ernst Haeckel, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, Madison Grant and Henry Ford. Many of these authors believed that the human form was revealed its perfection in the Germanic Aryans whilst, at the other end of the scale, the Jews did not even qualify as human beings. Gobineau is adamant that human races cannot be considered equal and is concerned with the inevitable biological degeneration that occurs when different races cross bloodlines. Darwin discusses humanity's animal origins and the subsequent struggle for survival that faces the various human races. Haeckel reinforces scientific theories of human's animal ancestry. Chamberlain recognizes the danger of racial miscegenation and calls for the elimination of the weaker human races. Grant describes the differences between human races as more significant than those between animal species and appeals for selective breeding in order to preserve 'civilized' humanity. Ford warns his readers about the 'corruptive' and 'degenerate' presence of Jews and urges the white races to wake up to the life-threatening presence of the Jewry; if the white races continue to ignore this threat, the future of white, 'civilized' society is doomed. This chapter will examine some of the works written by these authors and consider how these texts informed and influenced Hitler's racial ideology.

A French aristocrat, Gobineau was a professional diplomat and an amateur Orientalist. He saw race as

the explanation for past, present and future events. Written in the early 1850s, *The Inequality of Human Races* is Gobineau's attempt to understand the influence of race in societal and historical phenomena as Europe began to recover from the 1848 revolutions (Mosse, 50). Gobineau believed that humanity could be divided into races – “unlike and equal parts” – which were ranked hierarchically according to differences of intellect (181). In his book, Gobineau centred his racial theories on themes of degeneration and miscegenation. He believed that degeneration was a biological inevitability and the result of crossing bloodlines; degeneration was defined by Gobineau as a people's loss of their initial intrinsic blood value. “Continual adulteration” of bloodlines gradually affects the overall quality of that blood for the worse (25). This degeneration is a societal phenomenon which results in “the sublime spectacle of a nation in agony” (Ibid.). Degeneration is the fate of all “mankind” since no race can possibly remain completely pure, as races are bound to cross blood with inferior races and thus to degenerate (Mosse, 52). The significance of racial inequalities to Gobineau's ideology is evident in this dismal concept of degeneration. For Gobineau, the notion of the universal equality of “mankind” was a ridiculous, false and empty idea. He argued that, if the human races were equal, history would boast an “affecting, glorious and magnificent picture” of intellectual equality, a “keen eye” for “mankind's” true interests and a shared “aptitude for conquest and domination” (168). However, history presents a far less ideal reality. Racial miscegenation is a destructive force that could corrupt even the most superior of races, the Germanics. As races recede from the pure and ideal white type, their features and limbs become incorrect in form: they acquire defects of proportion which, in the races that are completely foreign to us, end by producing an extreme ugliness (151).

While the physical degeneration of races is an alarming trend, more disturbing is the moral and intellectual degradation that it signifies. According to Gobineau's theories, it is the white races that possess the original monopoly on beauty, strength and intelligence. However, by mixing blood with other human types, “hybrids” are created and these hybrids are “beautiful without strength, strong

without intelligence, or, if intelligent, both weak and ugly” (209). The extent of this degeneration is directly proportional to the quantity and quality of the “new blood” (211); the less white blood that remains present, the more degenerate and undesirable the new blood becomes. Such notions of degeneration deprive people of their future promise as well as their human status (Sax, 53). According to Gobineau, a dire fate awaits all varieties of “mankind” and the history of bloodlines determines the destiny of each human group.

Whilst in his earliest stages of development, “man” assumed many unstable forms (Gobineau, 139) and Gobineau claimed these forms were all naturally divisible into three race types: the white, the yellow and the black (146). All other race types are blends of these three main types, but even these subtypes were ranked according to differences of intelligence. The white race is considered superior to all other races, and Gobineau declares that history owed all its activities to this one race. All true honour, nobility and freedom are due to the superiority of white bloodlines (Mosse, 57). Gobineau shows no hesitation in naming the white race as the most beautiful of “mankind” (151) especially since he considers physical appearance as strongly indicative of moral and intellectual aptitude. The pure white races are characterised by an “energetic intelligence” and an innate sense of utility. They are more courageous and idealistic than the lower “yellow” races and have

a greater physical power, an extraordinary instinct for order, not merely as a guarantee of peace and tranquillity, but as an indispensable means of self-preservation...the white races are, further, distinguished by an extraordinary attachment to life (207).

For Gobineau, there is only one flaw in the white race types: a lack of “intensity of their sensations” (Ibid.). Yet this supposed “inferiority” resulted in a strengthened sense of morality among the whites as they are less tempted and absorbed in the consideration of their bodies (Ibid.). As the superior race type, the white races have the “glory of giving the world such admirable types” (107) to

whom all civilization can trace their ancestry (210). Even within the elite white races, many differences of intellect could be found. As supposedly indicated by their incredibly superior beauty, the Europeans are eminent among the white types and, within the European group, the Germanic people are esteemed the greatest and most majestic people (xii). Although once wrongly regarded as barbaric, “these were Aryans” (212).

Gobineau praises the Germanics for showing the true superiority of their bloodline. He is certain that anything found to be praiseworthy within any of the other races could be traced back to Germanic blood; “everything great, noble, and fruitful in the works of man on this earth, in science, art, and civilization, derives from a single starting-point...it belongs to this one family alone (xv)”. The German or “Aryan” branch of humanity predominated in every “true” civilization (212); according to Gobineau, every civilization that has ever existed has in some way been initiated by the Aryans (Young, 100). Germanic ancestry is apparently evident through “the richness, variety and fertility of invention” (Gobineau, 93). It is the superior civilizing instincts of the Aryans that forces them to mix their blood with the lesser races (Young, 108). This instinct is an indication of their innate mastery over others and Gobineau claimed that an ideal state could only be imagined when “the undisputed superiority of those groups of the white races which have remained the purest” was recognised (208). Although absolute purity of blood could never be fully restored, the Germanics remain the most pure-blooded people on the earth. Full acknowledgment of this “fact” entails the safe-guarding of these bloodlines from further contamination and degeneration that comes from miscegenation:

If the three great types had remained strictly separate, the supremacy would no doubt have always been in the hands of the finest white races, and the yellow and black varieties would have crawled forever at the feet of the lowest of the whites (Ibid.).

Gobineau places the yellow and black races under the feet of the white races and maintains that there

are “numerous tribes of men” who, in all their history, have never risen above “a stunted and precarious existence” (163). The ‘yellow’ races include the “Altaic, Mongol, Finnish, and Tatar branches” of humanity and their descendants (146). The highest yellow races rank below the lowest of the white types. They are characterised by apathy, feebleness, obstinacy, materialism and mediocrity; their “whole desire is to live the easiest and most comfortable way possible” (206). Gobineau concedes that the yellow races could possibly make a stable middle class because of their mediocrity, but insisted that no society could ever be created by them (207). Although regarded as markedly inferior to the white races, Gobineau still values the yellow race types as “clearly superior” to the black types (206).

In his book, Gobineau regards racial differences to be such distinguishing factors that “the most reasonable view appears to be that the families into which man is divided are as distinct as are animals of different species” (108). With this concept of distinction and separation in mind, Gobineau claims “animal character” could be found “stamped all over” the Negro and “foreshadows his destiny” (205), although he also suggests that the black races could not simply be classified as mere brutes because they possess “a powerful energy, however crude its objects” (Ibid.). In contrast to the developed morality and intellect of the white races, the blacks have an extraordinary strength of sensation: “the most striking proof of inferiority” (Ibid.). Passion and sensuality have traditionally been perceived as instinctive, primitive, carnal and base. The blacks’ strength of sensation negates any distinction between good and evil that they may possess (206); this lack of morality aligns the blacks even more closely to the primates than the ideal white types. Gobineau describes the black races as “human machines” that “kill for the sake of killing” and show only “monstrous indifference or a cowardice that seeks voluntary refuge in death” (Ibid). Furthermore, Gobineau asserts that “the word honour, together with all the civilising influences connoted by it, is unknown to both the yellow and the black man” (207). He admits that the lowest savage possesses more extensive knowledge than any of the

animals, but he also believes that, despite their inferior knowledge, the animals knew what was useful to them while the savages did not (163). The “Negroid variety” is the lowest race and could be found at the lowest rung “at the foot of the ladder” of humanity (205). The underdevelopment of the black races is made undeniably evident by their physical appearance; Gobineau is certain the blacks had never surpassed “the original forms of their race” (147).

Akin to the blacks’ unchanging physical appearance, the “Jewish type” is another example of racial developmental stagnation. Gobineau alleges that the “Semitic face” still look exactly the same “in its main characteristics as it appears on the Egyptian paintings of three or four thousand years ago” (122). He claims that the Jews owe their few civilising qualities to “the great white invasions” that fill their history (212); any element of beauty in Jewry is due to Aryan influence and can only be found in “the Semitic peoples who are least infected by contact with the black race” (151). In addition to different physiques, Gobineau identifies language as another important indication of racial hierarchy:

The language of a race is closely bound up with its intelligence, and has the power of reflecting its various mental stages, as they are reached...where the mental development of a race is faulty or imperfect, the language suffers to the same extent (188).

Unsurprisingly, the Germanic language is upheld by Gobineau as *the* “noble speech” (202). In direct contrast, Gobineau insists that “the lack of precision in the Semitic tongues” wholly reflects the less-developed character of the Semites (189). He attributes the survival of the Jewish type to its religion which had given the Jews a constitution and legal system; he is adamant that “such societies have only been able to persist by placing themselves under a more or less strict theocracy” (66). The survival of Jewry is a result of religious ritual rather than evidence of any strength and value in Jewish bloodlines (Ibid.). According to Gobineau, the Jews, in their religiousness, had misinterpreted the meaning of “Covenant” and foolishly supposed that their “Empire” would never come to an end (3). Nevertheless,

like other race types, the Jews continue to degenerate by adulterating their blood with bloodlines tainted heavily by the black elements (Mosse, 54-5).

Gobineau does not consider Jewry as the only source of racial degeneration, but he does have a strong concern for the preservation and purity of the superior white race types. Gobineau believes that human stagnation would supervene with the inevitable exhaustion of Aryan blood (212). He writes that a society shares the fate of its members; a society “contracts the stain” from its members and thus shares a “like end” (31). Subsequently, a society composed of superior Germanic blood could and *should* endure whereas a society full of lesser degenerates could only end violently through terminal degeneration. Every element of life allegedly comes from the white types and every “seed of death” comes from “the inferior stocks that mingled with them” (210-1). This miscegenation may have raised some of the lower races to a seemingly higher ranking but “the great have been lowered by the same process: and this is an evil that nothing can balance or repair” (209). These permanent differences between races are intensified by a natural antagonism – “a secret repulsion”. While some races may appear to have conquered this repulsion, others have fortified it invincibly (29). Gobineau theorises that such “innate repulsion must imply unlikeness and inequality” (179). It is neither possible nor desirable for civilizations composed of racially distinct groups to ever be advantageously joined together:

If mixtures of blood are, in a certain extent, beneficial to the mass of mankind...this is merely at the expense of mankind itself, which is stunted, abased, enervated, and humiliated in the persons of its noblest sons (210).

Gobineau realises that the white types were becoming more like the yellow types in their materialism and more like the blacks “as a mob that must be ruled by force” (Mosse, 54). The influence of the lower race types is becoming increasingly worrying and destructive. Degeneration was inevitable;

nevertheless, Gobineau's emphasis on the purity of bloodlines seems to indicate that degeneration could possibly be remedied, or at least held back, by the protection of the white races from any further miscegenation.

Charles Darwin's approach to humanity differs significantly from Gobineau's theories of degeneration. Darwin is concerned with the evolutionary history and progress of human beings. His theory of evolution centres on the development of human beings from a comprehensive and complex animal ancestry. Prior to Darwin, the common European understanding of "man's" origin was based upon the Judeo-Christian tradition: God created "man" in his own image and gave "mankind" dominion over all other inhabitants of the earth. Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* advances radically different theories of creation: evolution and natural selection. Evolving from animal ancestry, human beings are at the highest stage of evolutionary development. Subsequently, the traditional divide between humans and animals is greatly challenged by Darwin's theories (Sax, 23). No longer is humanity seen as the pinnacle of creation and completely superior to all of the animal kingdom; rather, Darwin advocates a shared ancestry and claimed that man is descended from "some lower form" although connecting links had not yet been discovered (185). In 1871, Darwin wrote *The Descent of Man*, examining human origins, ancestry and morality. He asserts that all human traits – including moral behaviour – are but a variation of animal traits (Weikart, 22). Most importantly, "the difference in mind between man and the higher animals, great as it is, is certainly one of degree and not of kind" (Darwin, 105; vol. 1). Upon consideration of the vast range of human intelligence and physical development, Darwin concludes that, "in a series of forms graduating insensibly from some ape-like creature to man as he now exists, it would be impossible to fix on any definite point when the term 'man' ought to be used" (235). Subject to the same evolutionary processes, human beings also remain subject to the same laws that govern other animals (Bolsche, 92). The advancement of a species is the result of the selection of the "slightly better-endowed" and the elimination of "slightly less-endowed" individuals

(Darwin, 172; vol. 1). Darwin refers to the breeding of domestic animals as an admirable example of artificial selection working to supplement natural evolutionary processes. In such breeding, the elimination of individuals “in any way marked inferior” is a vitally important element for the long-term success of that breed (173).

With the shift away from traditional values and beliefs about human life, evolutionary progress becomes the new moral imperative (Weikart, 3). Darwin theorises that, in the moment of action, ‘man’ would follow his strongest impulse “and though this may occasionally prompt him to the noblest deeds, it will far more commonly lead him to gratify his own desires at the expense of other men” (91; vol. 1). This inclination towards the “stronger impulse” of self-advancement may be at the expense of other ‘men’, but moral justification seems available through Darwin’s ambiguity about the definition of ‘man’ and when the term “ought to be” used (235). If the gratification of ‘man’s’ desires comes at the expense of a human or a race considered more animal than human, issues of morality seem to lessen in both relevance and significance. While concerned with the human treatment of non-human animals, Darwin writes that it is an action’s contribution to the “general good” of the community that determines the morality of that action (Farber, 20). This morality developed from social instincts, but its relativity seems to give certain groups a selective advantage (Ibid.). The removal of an exact distinction between humans and animals allows for the devaluation and dehumanisation of those human beings deemed less desirable; “The private self-interest of group members is often best served by keeping the group small. Where, therefore, pooled self-interest replaces hierarchical bonds, things may become worse, not better, for those currently excluded from the group” (Midgley, 68).

From one historical era to the next, the distinction between human beings and animals is constantly being redefined and re-determined (Sax, 25). A leading zoologist, Ernst Haeckel agrees with Darwin’s

animal ancestry of humans. He believes that this aspect of Darwinism would “bring forth a complete revolution in the entire world view of humanity” (qtd. in Weikart, 11) and describes the theory of evolution as the most important advance to be made in science thus far (Bolsche, 110). With Darwin’s theories in mind, Haeckel wrote *The Riddle of the Universe* in 1899. In this text, Haeckel declares that “man” belongs to the “legion of primates” alongside the half-apes and real apes; as a member of this legion, “man is a true primate” (27; new library ed.). For Haeckel, this close relationship to the “higher” mammals “dissipates the prevalent illusion of man’s supreme importance and the arrogance with which he exalts himself apart from the illimitable universe, and exalts himself to the position of its most valuable element” (12). Haeckel rejects the concept of humanity’s innate superiority over the animal kingdom and repeatedly points out the similarity between humans and the “higher” animals: “Everybody knows how closely the habits, movements, the sense-activity, the mental life, and the parental customs of apes resemble those of man” (42). Emotional expression had once been thought to be an exclusively human characteristic, but Haeckel claims that this expression could also be found in the “higher” animals, especially in “the anthropoid ape and the dog” (103). Reason was still recognised as “man’s highest gift” and differentiated human beings from the lower animals. It is a “gift” attributed to the progress of culture, education and knowledge (14). However, even this human “gift” is not exclusive to humanity; “the uneducated man and the savage are just as little (or just as much) “rational” as our nearest relative among the mammals (apes, dogs, elephants etc.)” (Ibid.). From the evidence found in their civilisation, Haeckel identifies the Germans with the highest mental development and, therefore, the furthest from the apes; in complete contrast, the Jews and Negroes are classified amongst the wild savages (Mosse, 87).

*The Riddle of the Universe* affirms the theory that human beings belong to the class of social vertebrates: the legion of primates (285; new library ed.). Haeckel’s emphasis on the evolutionary

proximity of humans to apes adds significance to his statements regarding racial differences:

It is true that we find, on close examination, certain minor differences in point of size and shape in most of the organs of man and the ape; but we discover the same, or similar, differences between the higher and lower races of men (31).

Given previous examples of human/ape similarities, Haeckel's remark leads to the conclusion that racial differences have the same, or at least similar, significance as the distinction between species. The differences between the high and low races of 'mankind' are also as fundamentally significant as the differences between 'men' and their evolutionary progenitors. Following this line of thought, it would be easy and even logical to conclude that the higher races of humanity are necessarily more evolved than the lower races. Haeckel combines this racial distinction with an emphasis on the need for the elimination of the "unfit". In a way that is reminiscent of Darwin's theories, many idealised perceptions of morality are once again disregarded as evolutionary progress redefines the moral imperatives:

The theory of selection teaches us that this organic process...is an inevitable consequence of the struggle for existence. Thousands of beautiful and remarkable species of animals and plants have perished...to give place to stronger competitors, and the victors in this struggle for life were not always the noblest or most perfect forms in a moral sense (222).

The great struggle for existence continues "in its eternal fluctuation, with no trace of moral order" (Ibid.). Haeckel agrees with the need to assist natural selection in order to keep the higher races from degeneration, and, as a scientist, believed that weak or diseased individuals must not be allowed to survive (Mosse, 87). His profession as a zoologist also added a heightened sense of credibility and authority to his idea that the social vertebrates had "far outstripped all other competitors in the evolutionary race" (Haeckel, 11; new library ed.), and, therefore, it is vital that these vertebrates can continue in their progression unhindered. 'Man' must realise that 'his' prosperity lies in the prosperity

of 'his' own society. In order to have "the advantage of living in an organised community", action must be taken to ensure the advance and safekeeping of such a developed civilization (285).

A contemporary of Haeckel's and a well-liked student of Darwin, Houston Stewart Chamberlain believed that race is the "yardstick of value" (Field, 77). In the nineteenth century, the myth of Aryanism was the central theme of European race theories (201) and this theme emerges in Gobineau's, Darwin's and Haeckel's writings. Aryan or "Teutonic" superiority is also a central theme in Chamberlain's *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*. Chamberlain believes that the Germanic "Teuton" is the "soul of our culture" and "only Teutons sit on the thrones of Europe" (257; vol. 1). Chamberlain's particular focus is the supremacy of the white races and he believes that both physical and mental superiority were intrinsically connected to bloodlines; "the richer the mind, the more closely and manifoldly it is connected with the substructure of a definitely formed blood" (520). He is adamant that a person belonging to a distinct, pure race could never lose their consciousness of race (269). Geoffrey G. Field claims that Chamberlain's writing style and his glorification of German cultural tradition sustained "the vanity and deepest prejudices of his readers" (179). A person's vanity is skilfully stoked when personal praise is accompanied with a clear degradation of another person: humans exalt themselves by abasing others (Canetti, 296). This concept is evident in many racial theories and any glorification of the Aryan, Germanic, white or Teutonic race is magnified when juxtaposed by a striking contrast of degeneration, underdevelopment or inferiority. Whilst praising the white races, Chamberlain suggests that certain distaste for the Jews is both respectable and warrantable (Field, 186). This distaste is apparently evident in the existence of a natural repugnance between the higher and lower races – repugnance so natural that it is even apparent in the innocence of childhood. Chamberlain notes that "it frequently happens that children who have no conception of what 'Jew' means, or that there is any such thing in the world, begin to cry as soon as a genuine Jew comes near

them” (537; vol. 1). According to Chamberlain, the Jews are a mongrel race that would always retain their “mongrel character (389). Furthermore, he claims Judaism was founded by men who were “goaded by a demoniacal power” (486). In the places where this Jewish “abstract ideology” had taken hold, any or “all possibility of a culture disappeared” (256). This demoniacal power that corrupts cultures is indicative of the Jews’ subhuman status. They are considered to be animal-like in their mongrel character and demonic in their religiosity yet they cling to the status of human. Chamberlain advocates the separation of the Germanic from the non-Germanic as the prime lesson of history and that this separation should be accompanied by a recognition of the “physical element and value at its true worth” (538). Influenced by his knowledge of Darwin and Haeckel, Chamberlain declares that “man does not walk upon the earth like a God, but as a creature among other creatures” (22). Not only does Chamberlain disagree with the positioning of human beings as some type of mortal reflection of divinity, but he also shares Darwin’s disdain for the concept of “humanity”, considering it inappropriate and poisonous:

The notion of “humanity” is, to begin with, nothing more than a linguistic makeshift...the theory of the essentially one and uniform humanity...stands in the way of all correct insight into the history of our time and of all times, and yet it has so thoroughly entered into our flesh and blood that it must, like a weed, be laboriously rooted out (Chamberlain, 207; vol. 2).

The idea of a universal equality of the human races was as absurd to Chamberlain as it was to Gobineau; the races exhibited fundamental differences in character, quality and individual capacity. Chamberlain believes that nature “inclines” itself towards inequality and that there is a real need for “specialization” into distinct species in order to produce anything noble or extraordinary (261; vol. 1). Chamberlain also suggests that the laws of nature which govern the animal kingdom are necessary, applicable and entirely relevant to the human races; “the laws of life are great simple laws, embracing

and moulding everything that lives; we have no reason to look upon the human race as an exception” (281). Chamberlain provides explicit examples of this concept through references to the treatment of animals:

Are the so-called (and rightly so-called) “noble” animal races...chosen by chance and promiscuity? Do we get them by giving the animals equality of rights, by throwing the same food to them and whipping them with the same whip? No, they are produced by artificial selection and strict maintenance of the purity of the race. Horses and especially dogs give us every chance of observing that the intellectual gifts go hand in hand with the physical; this is especially true of the moral qualities; a mongrel is frequently very clever, but never reliable; morally he is always a weed (260-1).

In a manner comparable to Gobineau’s preoccupation with degenerating miscegenation, Chamberlain states that continual promiscuity between animal races leads to the destruction of the pre-eminent characteristics of both: “why should the human race form an exception?” (Ibid.). With the constant danger of miscegenation close at hand, Chamberlain reasserts the need for the elimination of the weaker human races. This elimination would mean destruction for the “fundamentally weak”, but would serve to “steel the strong”; the removal of “weaker elements” would surely strengthen and enhance the races to whom evolution had already given the advantage (276).

The writings of Gobineau, Darwin, Haeckel and Chamberlain reflect a nineteenth-century European preoccupation with racial concerns. With the turn of the century, this concern also came to the fore of the public’s mind in the United States of America. In agreement with the sentiments of previous theorists, Madison Grant expounds the centrality of race to “the manifestation of modern society” (xxi; revised ed.) in his book, *The Passing of the Great Race*. Written in 1916, this book reveals Grant’s views on the “hierarchy of whiteness” while both reflecting and influencing the popular understandings

of ‘peoplehood’ and diversity (Jacobsen, 82). Key to Grant’s racial writing is the concept of humans as animals differing from “fellow inhabitants” of the Earth not in type but only in degree of development (Grant, 3; revised ed.). Grant uses a detailed examination of eye and hair colours to demonstrate the closeness of some human races to their nearest animal relations. “All but universal among wild mammals”, dark-coloured eyes are also prevalent among the lower human types such as the Jews and the Negroes and “entirely so among the primates” (24). In stark contrast, the “Nordic” blue eyes and blonde hair of the Aryan are “a specialization of this subspecies of man only”; not present in other animals, these fair features are of “extreme value” in the classification of human, especially the European, races (Ibid.). Accordingly, “fair” is seen by Grant as a synonym for beauty (229). Although these features were not the definitive indicators of Nordic blood (26), Grant was adamant that more notice needed to be taken of racial differences because “the differences between the most divergent human types are far greater than are usually deemed sufficient to constitute species and even subgenera in the animal kingdom” (32). For Grant, it is also significant that notable writers repeatedly depicted their heroes as “a tall, blond, honest and somewhat stupid youth and his villain a small, dark and exceptionally intelligent individual of warped moral character” (229). The Nordic hero may be depicted as “somewhat stupid” but, rather than contradicting Nordic superiority, the hero’s intelligence is contrasted to the intelligence of a warped, unattractive villain – a shrewd, crafty, rodent-like intelligence entirely appropriate to the villain’s close proximity to the animal kingdom. Rats have frequently been credited with a perverted type of intelligence that is comparable to some human intellects (Sax, 159); despite this rather high level of intelligence, rats remain abhorrent to most people as a parasitic image of disease and destruction. Grant draws a very specific connection between these abhorrent non-human animals and a human race, the Jews. This animalising language seems to be the next logical progression in the development of such an ardent racial ideology. Juxtaposed with this rat imagery, Grant underlines the parasitic nature of the Polish Jews who “swarm” America in search of

asylum, maintaining that “these immigrants adopt the language of the native American, they wear his clothes...steal his name and they begin to take his women” (91; revised ed.). Like the rats, these Jews survive in swarms and thrive off the labour and possessions of others. The word “swarm” brings connotations of insect infestation and plaques; the image of a swarm is easily connected to ideas of rodents, parasites and disease. Humans have always considered vermin and parasites as ill-fated and undesirable. Considered individually, such creatures are harmful yet expugnable. However, their threat lies in their ability to appear suddenly and in great numbers. In his observation of crowd behaviours, Elias Canetti discusses the way in which humans have “persuaded” themselves to see as vermin everything that opposed them or could be of no use to them (363). Opposition and undesirability become verminous traits: plagued and eradicable. Such concepts are highly alarming when these images of vermin hordes and parasitic swarms become representative of racial groups.

Grant perceives that, whilst “stealing” from America’s abundance, the Jews seldom adapt to western religions or ideals, but held fast to their own traditional worldview. For Grant, the fact that “nearly all species of men interbreed” left him with no option but to advocate the artificial separation of races in order to prevent the ultimate prevalence of strong, lower types such as the Jews (222; revised ed.).

Grant describes human society as:

a serpent dragging its long body on the ground, but with the head always thrust a little in advance and a little elevated above the ground. The serpent’s tail, in human society represented by the antisocial forces, was in the past dragged by sheer strength along the path of progress (7).

The antisocial forces or lower races of humanity have held societal evolution at bay for long enough.

Grant refers to the “brute strength of the unthinking herd” (Ibid.) and saw the elimination or, at the very least, the separation of the “unthinking herd” as crucial to the survival and progress of the superior races. Canetti refers to the moment of survival as the moment of power (227). If a being, a species or

a race is to survive, it must maintain that position of power. The laws of nature necessitate “the obliteration of the unfit and human life is valuable only when it is of use to the community” (Grant, 49; revised ed.). Grant puts forward two methods to ensure race improvement: breeding from the best blood and eliminating the lowest types by segregation and sterilization (51-2). Since his writing placed such a strong emphasis on race improvement, it is interesting to note that Grant served as the chairman of the Eugenics Committee of the United States Committees on Selective Immigration (Jacobsen, 83). The term ‘eugenics’ describes the belief, or the study of, the possibility of improving the qualities of humanity by such means as discouraging the reproduction of persons having genetic defects or ‘undesirable’ traits whilst encouraging the reproduction of those presumed to have ‘desirable’ traits. With the authority of this position, Grant was able to begin practically applying his racial theories at a national level. Grant was highly concerned that the privilege of birth and “good stock” was being corroded by lack of racial discrimination (6; revised ed.). He stresses the need to learn from previous racial experiences:

It has taken us fifty years to learn that speaking English, wearing good clothes and going to school and to church does not transform a Negro into a white man... Americans will have a similar experience with the Polish Jew, whose dwarf stature, peculiar mentality and ruthless concentration on self-interest are being engrafted upon the stock of the nation (16).

Grant believes that the “perpetuation of worthless types” only injured a superior society (50) and the remedy to this injury could be found in a rigorous system of selection.

Mistaken regard for what are believed to be divine laws and a sentimental belief in the sanctity of human life tend to prevent both the elimination of defective infants and the sterilization of such adults as are themselves of no value to the community (49).

Grant predicts that, as the “percentage of incompetents” continues to rise, they would become increasingly burdensome to the rest of society. Eventually, “society will in self-defence put a stop to

the supply of feeble-minded and criminal children of weaklings” (Ibid.).

As a well-respected eugenicist, Grant’s approach to racial concerns placed urgency on the practical application of theories of artificial selection. The elimination of “those who are weak or unfit – in other words, social failures” was a “practical and suitable solution” that enables societies to be rid of “the undesirables” and their burdensome care (50-1). In an unwitting precursor to Nazism, Grant promotes this “solution” as easily adaptable to “an ever-widening circle of social discards” and “perhaps ultimately to worthless race types” (51). He believes that racial discrimination must be exercised in America’s offer of support to non-Americans especially foreign immigrants or the socially weak (263). Grant disapproves of the placement of “undesirable immigrants” on farms because he considered the country villages and farms to be “the nurseries of nations” (209). In contrast, the cities were “consumers and seldom producers of men”, and therefore the immigrants should be confined “in crowded Ghettos or tenements” as if they were animals needing to be caged (Ibid.). Grant concludes *The Passing of the Great Race* with an emotive plea for his fellow Americans to be diligent and discriminating in racial issues before America is destroyed:

We Americans must realize that the altruistic ideals which have controlled our social development during the past century and the maudlin sentimentalism that has made America 'an asylum for the oppressed' are sweeping the nation toward a racial abyss. If the Melting Pot is allowed to boil without control and we continue to follow our national motto and deliberately blind ourselves to all 'distinctions of race, creed or colour', the type of native American of Colonial descent will become extinct...(263).

Grant leaves the American public with two possible courses of action: either the white Americans drive the lesser races out “or else they amalgamate and form a population of race bastards in which the lower types ultimately preponderate” (77).

Henry Ford shares Grant's urgency regarding the corruption of America through racial indiscrimination and interaction. Ford is famous for the establishment of his multi-million dollar automobile empire, the Ford Motor Company, but he also has a notorious reputation as an author. First published as a series of essays in the periodical *The Dearborn Independent* before being published as a book in 1922, Ford's *The International Jew: The World's Foremost Problem* is a collation of virulently anti-Semitic teaching – “outlandish tales of alleged Jewish vices” (Dinnerstein, 81). Although not generally held to be the author of *The International Jew: The World's Foremost Problem*, Ford lent his name and endorsement to the publication and, consequently, the book is often attributed to him<sup>1</sup>. Racial tensions were particularly volatile in the United States during Ford's lifetime. Ford was born into the decade that saw the abolition of America's black slave trade. Since society's opinion of animals was so low, racist authors and anti-abolitionists propagandised against African Americans by comparing them to negative and degrading stereotypes of non-human animals (Spiegel, 33). In the eyes of white slave owners, black people were “just animals” (47) and were treated accordingly. Intimate relationships between black slaves were regarded as “animal attraction” or “animal lust” (48). These “savages” were seen as products of their less-evolved race; blacks could not be expected to rise above their primitive behaviours and their subsequent treatment as slaves because black savagery flowed through their very blood. Although slavery was outlawed in the early 1860s, many racial prejudices lingered well into the 1900s. Many white men felt bitterly towards African Americans because of the financial losses following abolition. While the blacks had been emancipated, they were far from being regarded as equal to the superior white races in beauty, morality, intellect and evolution.

This inequality and impurity extends its contaminating influence into the realm of music. Revealing

<sup>1</sup> To avoid confusion and for the purposes of this thesis, Ford will be referred to as the author of *The International Jew: The World's Foremost Problem*.

traces of primitive African jungle elements, the Jews created such debased compositions that their music “swiftly degenerated into a rather more bestial type than the beasts themselves arrive at” (166-7). This old trope brings with it connotations of both primitive and pagan behaviour. It suggests that the Jews are influenced by something even lower than the animals – an underworld connection similar to the “demoniacal power” Chamberlain asserts as the goading motivation for the foundation of Judaism (486; vol. 1). Ford observes that song topics had indeed been degraded into “the dredges of the slimy bottom of the underworld” (Ford, 166-7; abridged). Jewish jazz is denigrated into terms of uncivilised jungle mayhem:

Monkey talk, jungle squeals, grunts and squeaks and gasps suggestive of calf love are camouflaged by a few feverish notes...Sentiment has turned into sensuous suggestion.

Romance has been turned into eroticism...It need just their touch of cleverness to camouflage the moral filth and raise it half a degree above that natural stage where it begets nothing but disgust (163, 169).

Jewish music may flaunt its sensuality, but Ford suggests these grunts and groans were more fittingly ascribed to primitive apes and non-human animals rather than civilised humans. The association of Jews with primitive African elements enabled Ford to increase and widen the appeal of anti-Semitism. Gobineau writes about the passion and sensuality of the black people as “the most striking proof of inferiority” (205); Ford draws on this connection to primitive African passion, carnality and baseness. Black people’s supposed lack of morality aligns them closely to the primates and, linking the Jews to the “ape-men” of the Congo, Ford distances the Jews further from the whites by placing them alongside the primates. In line with contemporary racial theories, Africans were often granted only “marginally human” status; apparently, they had not evolved sufficiently to be considered fully human (Sax, 52). By linking Jewish degeneracy to the legacy of racial anxiety and hatred against black people, Ford adds another powerful element of prejudice to anti-Semitism. The non-human animal stereotypes that were

loaded upon the African Americans dramatically increased anti-Semitic tensions. The Jews were also victims of stereotype and were inaccurately portrayed as a dark and hairy race. Although incorrect in its portrayal, this generalised stereotype enabled Ford to suggest a connection between animals, black people and Jews based on physical appearance. When human beings are defined on the grounds of differing physical traits as signifiers of mental and moral differences, the definition of their humanity is narrowed or denied (Montagu, 48). In the maintenance of racial hierarchy, prohibitions were essential to make it impossible for members of one race to feel equal or related to members of a superior race (Canetti, 380). Even with the abolition of slavery, African Americans lived often educationally and economically disadvantaged in comparison with the white races under tight, oppressive prohibitions that kept them separate from and often educationally and economically disadvantaged in comparison with the white races. Making the connection between the “low” black races and the degeneracy of the Jews, many white Americans began to wonder if Jews should also be placed under some kind of prohibition. If it were accepted that Jews were definitely not from the same stock as the “highly evolved” white races, then this unquestionable distinction needed to be guarded from Jewish corruption. Ford alleges that Jewry had popularised tribal African styles in order to destroy the “moral fabric” of the superior white race (Pool, 99). Such primitivism could not be left unopposed to wreak devastation and degeneration within a glorious white America.

The parasitic “germ of Judaism” (Ford, 122; abridged) continued to degenerate and consume the greater races of America. The parasitic nature of Jewry is blatantly evident in the “crime of mental pick-pocketing” (167). “The Jews do not create; they take what others have done, give it a clever twist, and exploit it” (Ibid.). Ford describes the supposedly Jewish philosophy of money as “get money” rather than “make money” (23). This concept of ‘get’ was allegedly developed by the Jews into a ‘vicious, anti-social and destructive idea’ that caused the very cement of human society to lose

adhesion and begin to crumble (24). Jews were portrayed as a foreign parasite living off their host nation and, as such, they were non-human animals of the lowest kind. They could offer nothing to society, but were the “greatest cream-skimmers of the world...the usurpers, the exploiters” (157). According to Ford, the Jews had never been builders or pioneers, but a group of people that moves in and profits from the labours of other men (27); he describes the genius of Jews as the ability to live *off* people – not off land, production or raw materials, but off *people*. With this suggestion of racial vampirism, Ford considers the term “parasitic” as more than justified when applied to Jewry (201-2).

Ford's racial concerns were concentrated on the Jewish race, and *The International Jew* applies animal traits and behaviours to Jewry as part of the process of degradation. Ford's publication depicts a Jewish banker reacting to bad news by frothing at the mouth as if he were a rabid dog (Ford, 220; abridged). In another instance, Ford describes the manipulative voice of Jewry in politics as a Jewish hound emitting its warning bay against the roar of the American public (118): hounds sniffing for the blood of the nation. Jewish gambling is reported to have had a thoroughly corrupting influence over traditional American sports such as wrestling, baseball and racing; such is the extent of this degradation that Ford remarks that, within racing, “the horses remain the only well-bred creatures connected with it” (182). A thoroughbred example of pedigree and bloodlines, the horse stands in direct contrast to the degenerate, impure Jew.

Closely linked to these animal representations is the image of Jews *en masse*. As a great industrialist, Ford wanted to approach all aspects of life from the concept of mass production (Lee, 16). In *Henry Ford and the Jews*, Albert Lee observes Ford's application of this attitude beyond the factory and into racial issues. In reference to Jews, Ford remarked to Ernest Liebold, his personal secretary, “you can't single them out. You have to go after them all. They are all part of the same system” (34):

When one addressed Jews he knows that the Jew is always a Jew; that every Jew acknowledges every other Jew; that Jews understand each other and are loyal to each other against “outsiders”; that they think together and act together; that they stand together for Jewish defence, no matter how just the charge brought against them. When you address the Jews you address a unit, and when you discuss Jews you get a united reaction from them (Ford, “An Address to ‘Gentiles’ on the Jewish Problem”; online).

In alignment with his considerations of Jewry as a unit, Ford’s writings are filled with references to Jews as swarms, mobs and masses: “wherever the seat of power may be, thither they swarm obsequiously” (116; abridged). As previously mentioned with reference to Grant’s writing, swarms are a powerful force to be reckoned with, and the extent of their power is directly proportionate to their density and size. They are even more concerning for Ford because they seem to connote a communist agenda – individuals thinking, living, and acting together as one political body. Jews were already perceived by many Americans as a financial threat and this connotation poses a further threat to America’s capitalism and existing political systems. Applying these associations of infestation, destruction and parasitism, Ford enforces existing ideas of Jewish undesirability and degeneration. He continues to erode the individual identities and value of the Jews by depersonalisation via mass consideration. The less familiar the public is with the individual, the more likely it is to treat him or her in terms of their ascribed group membership; a mass of nameless faces is much easier to dismiss and demonise than a brother, father, daughter, or wife. A single individual confronts the public with his or her humanity, whereas a swarm of bodies loses individual identity as bodies move and act as one. This marginalization transforms men and women into rats, and the removal of such pestilential nuisances as rats is acceptable and highly desirable, especially as a large body of rodents is frightening in its unpredictability and sheer strength of numbers. In self-defence, Ford insists that the consideration of

Jewry *en masse* was actually Jewish in origin (27; abridged). The Jews had never fully assimilated with any nation and staunchly maintained their racial separation (230). It was typical for Jews to “gather in numbers” and gather “in their greatest numbers in those places and among those people where they complain they are least wanted!” (201). Canetti observes that the biblical image derived from Exodus of a great multitude moving year after year has become the crowd symbol of Jews (179). Similarly, *The International Jew* recognises that the Jew of the ghetto is often considered by Jewry as a norm of Judaism (37). Distinctive looks aside, Jews were easily recognisable by their resistance to assimilation and tendency towards segregated congregation. Congregations, masses, mobs and swarms are powerful in their method, which appears to revolve around “an intelligent core which gets done under the appearance of excitement what has been planned beforehand” (125-6). Ford blames the Jewish masses for the increasing prevalence of immorality, debauchery and delinquency; as a degenerate people, the Jews had corrupted America with their degenerate ways.

Like Gobineau and other likeminded theorists, Ford is certain that it was possible for a mass of men with small ability to pull down greater men. With the threat of this possibility being realised, Ford fears that Jews are taking over and defiling America (Lee, 60) with a corrupting swarm of moral filth. He claims that Jews originated the idea of contamination (Ford, 26; abridged) and, on these grounds, concludes that “the main source of the sickness in our national body is charged to be the influence of the Jews” (201). In order to restore moral and social order, the source of this diabolical corruption must be addressed. This societal disease is the product of “the Jewish characteristic which spoils everything by ruthless commercial exploitation” (185). This Jewish disease may be too far gone for any cure (Ibid.), yet such speculations strongly suggest the necessity of urgent action; the term “may be” implies a chance that this disease may yet be halted or even remedied if immediate action is taken. However, oppression had proven itself to be an insufficient means of controlling Jewry and their

corrupting influence. As a race, Jews were in possession of a tenacity that enabled them to thrive under oppression rather than waste away:

As nature encysts the harmful foreign element in the flesh, building a wall around it, so nations have found it expedient to do with the Jew...however, the Jew has found a means of knocking down the walls and throwing the whole national house into confusion, and in the darkness and riot that follows, seize the place he has long coveted (“Germany’s Reaction Against the Jew”; online).

With the catastrophic failure of oppressive action, Ford advocates societal purgation as the most valid course of action:

The point of attack should be the *cause*, not the effect. Yet, that is precisely where the point of attack has not been made, presumably because of lack of knowledge, possibly because of fear...the victims are everywhere. But too few of the opponents of this moral poison see the futility of scolding the young people thus diseased. Common sense dictates a cleaning out, and a clearing out, of the sources of the disease (170; abridged).

Although Ford’s ideas of purgation are mainly aimed at the emigration and immigration laws, his notion of “common sense” takes on undertones of racial cleansing when coupled with the representation of Jews as a parasitic, degenerate and disease-ridden race.

The idea of universal equality among human races is ridiculous to Ford. He believes “there was no greater absurdity and no greater disservice to humanity in general than to insist that all men are equal” (Lee, 60). Concern was rising about the superior Anglo-Saxon culture being undermined by “hordes of foreigners with ‘inferior’ backgrounds”, and Jews were seen as the most threatening of the invading immigrants (Dinnerstein, 85). In Ford’s perception, “there is a chosen racial breed, a select seed, a superior strain of blood and soul in the world, but it is not Judah” (“An Address to ‘Gentiles’ on

the Jewish Problem”; online). Echoing traditional Aryan views, Ford states that there are no stronger racial contrasts in the world than between the pure Germanic and Semitic races (204; abridged). White superiority is most fully realised in the Germanic bloodlines and the Anglo-Saxons are heralded as the “World-Builders, the Makers of cities and commerce and continents” (27). In direct contrast, the Jews are attributed with an ancient policy of “Divide-Conquer-Destroy” (180). Jewry is portrayed as everything the Anglo-Saxons are not: degenerate, greedy, subversive, Satanic and tribal in their primitivism. Ford claims that “the Sons of the Builders, the Makers, are being subverted to the philosophy of the destroyers” (28). Accompanying America’s heightened awareness of the Jewish role in national demoralization, there is a strong emphasis on the necessity of protecting pure racial stock. Ford urges white Americans to return to

the principles which made our race great, the principles to which we have been recreant and therefore have fallen an easy prey – this is the only invincible course. It is an opposition which evil Jews cannot understand and cannot defeat (“An Address to ‘Gentiles’ on the Jewish Problem”; online).

The full strength of Jewish subversion could only be realised when the white races ceased to uphold the superiority of their own breeding. For too long, white Americans had been ignorant of the lineage, heritage and dignity of the “stock” upon which their civilization had been founded. Ford calls for a return to the racially superior roots, for white races to set about “engrafting themselves again on the parent tree and draw again the sustenance which made it great and fruitful” (Ibid.). He explains that the Jewish idea never triumphs unless it first denies its victims the “nurture of their native culture” (32; abridged). The greatest danger to America is not the alert Jew, but the sleepiness of the white races (127). Ironically, the harsh call for the return to superior racial roots is also perpetuated as an act of true friendship towards the degenerate Jews. Many evolutionists noted that it was significantly instructive that the discovery of natural evolution of humanity from the apes aroused indignation in the

races who, “so far as their intellectual equipment is concerned, hitherto travelled the least distance, themselves, from the apes” (Haeckel qtd. in Sax, 49). Any Jewish outcry in retaliation to Ford’s writing is to be expected; after all, the Jews are degenerate and have not travelled anywhere as far from the apes as the glorious white races. Ford writes that “Judah’s friends” would demonstrate their concern for Jewry by speaking “the surgical truth to him, braving his fury in the knowledge that the future will justify the word” (“Candid Address to the Jews on the Jewish Problem”; online). Americans who chose to speak out against Jewish degeneracy were upheld as caring citizens; confronting Jews with the error of their ways would then empower them to change before change was no longer possible. Ford maintains that the emergence of the “Jewish Question” is “part of the culmination of destiny” that had come upon America and the rest of the world for the good of all “mankind”.

The emergence of the “Jewish Question” is inevitable in the process of self-examination that was necessary for further evolutionary advancement. *The International Jew* is not to be simply considered as anti-Semitic propaganda but, rather, an overdue exposure of a hidden social dilemma:

The purpose of this series of articles is to let in the light – to show the Jews generally that the stench had become too great, and to show the rest of the people where the stench arose... The justification of a discussion of the Jewish Question is the good of the Jews, and the greatest present obstacle to that good is the Jews themselves. The time is here when they shall see it (“Candid Address to the Jews on the Jewish Problem”; online).

According to Ford, once the Jews were made aware of their own role in social degeneration, they would be able to do something about the situation. However, whilst appearing just and moral, this perspective is far from realistic in both its stance and expectation. Yet it became another argument in support of the move towards societal and, subsequently, racial cleansing. Gobineau and Chamberlain both raise issues of racial miscegenation and preservation of bloodlines while Darwin and Haeckel are

more concerned with man's animal ancestry and future evolutionary progression. Grant urges vigilant eugenics to protect racial purity and Ford gleans from the works of these authors to create his significant piece of anti-Semitic literature, *The International Jew*. Ford underlines the dangers of crossing racial bloodlines, the alleged evolutionary stagnation of Jews, the threat Jews represent to Aryan advancement and the need to take urgent action to ensure a successful and secure future for the Anglo-Saxon "World-Builders, the Makers of cities and commerce and continents" (27; abridged). By drawing upon a long legacy of racist ideologies, evolutionary theories, eugenicist thought and nationalistic propaganda, Ford's publications lent the authority of his name and position to the anti-Semitic movement in the United States and further abroad (Dawidowicz, *On Equal Terms*, 91). Ford's propaganda was read by millions of Americans, mostly in rural areas, who knew little or nothing about Jews except what they had already been taught through religious instruction, gossip and *The Dearborn Independent* (Dinnerstein, 81). Copies of Ford's publications were translated into several languages and internationally circulated throughout the 1920s and 1930s (83). *The International Jew* met its greatest reception in Germany where Ford had gained large popularity (Patterson, 75). Between 1920 and 1922 alone, six editions of *The Dearborn Independent* were published in Germany in order to meet the popular demand (Ibid). Fuelled and reinforced by *The International Jew*, anti-Semitic feelings continued to rise across the States and re-ignited similar attitudes and concerns in Europe. There is no doubt as to the influence of Ford's ideas on Adolf Hitler. Hitler greatly admired Ford and praised him as his inspiration (Lee, 46). While Ford's remedies to the "Jewish Question" appear less brutal and more humane than Hitler's they contributed to the groundwork for the genocidal Nazi programme (Pool, 99); Ford's text served as an avenue for the racist, evolutionary and eugenicist theories discussed in this chapter to flow into Nazi ideology where they were utilized and distorted to horrific ends.

## Chapter Two:

### Theory's Explosive Culmination: *Mein Kampf* and Nazism

Written during his years in prison, *Mein Kampf* is Hitler's description of the aims and development of the National Socialist Movement. Alongside the development of the movement, *Mein Kampf* details much of Hitler's own personal development. Hitler was a very well-read young man; he was familiar with the Comte Joseph Arthur de Gobineau's writing and drew upon Gobineau's ideas of degenerating miscegenation extensively without adopting his fatal pessimism (Maser, 66). The influence of Charles Darwin is also indisputable especially in regards to concepts of biological inferiority and the evolutionary struggle for survival (Maser, 77). Many of Hitler's evolutionary ideas can be traced back to Ernst Haeckel and his pseudo-Darwinism (67). Without any sound scientific evidence to work from, Haeckel "reconstructed" the human ancestor, Pithecanthropus alalus, a small-brained ape-man (Gould, 210), a reconstruction that appeared to provide scientific 'proof' of Darwin's theories. Houston Stewart Chamberlain is one of the few men actually named in *Mein Kampf*; Hitler considered him a great "thinker" who firmly laid down "principles of civil wisdom" (153). Chamberlain's book, *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, became one of the seminal works of the Nazi movement (Pool, 121). Similarly, Hitler owned a personal copy of Madison Grant's *The Passing of the Great Race* (Weikart, 10); in a letter to Grant, Hitler referred to the text as "his Bible" (Patterson, 92) and many of Grant's ideas could be seen as precursors to Nazism.

Yet it was Henry Ford whose life and literature had the most influence upon Hitler's own writings.

Ford's name appears in the original editions of *Mein Kampf*, and he was described by Hitler as the only

great man in America who remained independent of the Jews' hold on the labour market (Maser, 54). Ford was greatly admired by Hitler and later became the first American to be awarded the Grand Cross of the Supreme Order of the German Eagle, the highest award that could be bestowed by Germany on any non-German citizen (Pool, 129). Hitler was powerfully impressed by Ford's industrial aspirations, attitudes and accomplishments. He praised Ford's outlook, saying he would do his best "to put Ford's theory into Germany, which is still very backward as far as motorization goes" (Lee, 58). Yet Hitler's admiration extended beyond Ford's automobile and industrial successes. Ford's industrial ideas and assembly-line productions found their way beyond the common application of motorization and into the very heart of Hitler's anti-Semitic program; Ford's development of the assembly-line method was utilized by Nazi Germany to 'remove' the Jews (Patterson, 72). Many of Hitler's ideas seem to be a direct reflection of Ford's racial philosophies and some of Hitler's writing looks so similar to Ford's that it has been said Hitler directly copied from some of Ford's publications (Pool, 91). The propaganda Ford published after the First World War was circulated through Europe as well as the United States, encouraging the rising wave of anti-Semitism "that found its ultimate expression in German National Socialism" (Dawidowicz, *On Equal Terms*, 93). Many young Germans envied men such as Ford, regarding them as "symbols of success and prosperity" and his success lent an even greater air of authority to Ford's words; in reference to Ford, a young German man revealed that "if he said the Jews were to blame, why naturally we believed him" (Patterson, 75).

Aware of the power of propaganda, Hitler believed that it "must be limited to a few simple themes and these must be represented again and again" in order to achieve maximum effectiveness (110). *Mein Kampf* follows this system, and two central themes dominate Hitler's writing: the superiority of the German Aryans and the utter inferiority of the Jews. Hitler's promotion of the superiority of the Germans builds upon the long-standing European tradition of thought which elevates the Aryans to the

top of the racial and evolutionary ladder. The inferiority of the Jews is demonstrated through three main representations – the Jew as a parasite, as a disease-carrying germ and as a subterranean creature in league with demonic powers. The denigration of ‘lower’ races to the rank of animal is used to encourage, enforce and justify their subjugation (Patterson, 27). Hitler’s denigration of Jews is a powerful step in their dismissal and dehumanisation. By aligning the Jews with parasites, disease and demons, Hitler creates a representation of the Jews that was loaded with feelings of abhorrence, disgust, fear, peril and hatred. Ford believes that “the idea of contamination originated with the Jews” and “spread by suggestion” to the Gentiles (Ford, 36; abridged); *Mein Kampf* confirms Jews as the originators of contamination and corruption whilst stressing to Germany the need to end the spread of such deadly biological and moral poison. Germany *must* be freed from the death-grip of the Jews and Hitler takes this call to action as his own “mission, which in the literal sense of the word was consecrated by history” with its connotations of righteous, religious actions of salvation (Maser, 158).

During his youth, Hitler realised that studying history involved more than simple knowledge and memorisation of dates; it meant “to search for and discover the forces that are the causes of those results which appear before our eyes as historical events” (19). According to Gobineau’s theories, the origin and cause of all historical events is race and “the racial question” over-shadows all other “problems of history” (Gobineau, xiv). Consequently, he believes that human societies share the fate of their members and, therefore, the racial foundations of a society determine its entire destiny (3); race is the key factor that decided the ultimate fate of civilizations. Hitler believes that the “highest aim” of humanity is the conservation and maintenance of races (63). Yet this conservation is concerned only with the strong and noble races. Darwin’s theory of evolution and his notion of the evolutionary struggle for survival are upheld by Hitler as irrefutable truth. As part of the evolutionary progression, human existence is subject to “the law of eternal struggle and strife” that governs the natural world

without exception (Hitler, 140). In this struggle, the strong are always the masters of the weak (Ibid.). Hitler interprets Darwin's ideas, surmising that "the race that fails to come through the test will simply die out and its place will be taken by the healthier and stronger races, which will be able to endure greater hardships" (142). Faint-hearted races would never be in possession or mastery of the world (63). However, as long as they are in existence, these weaker races would have a fierce battle for their survival. There is no doubt in Hitler's mind that there would be dreadful struggles for existence among the various races but, ultimately, only self-preservation can and will triumph (85).

Hitler regards every historical event in the world as "nothing more nor less than a manifestation of the instinct of racial self-preservation" (167). It is this concept of the self-preservation of the Aryan race that motivates and dominates Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. Gobineau claims that "our special kind of civilisation" cannot and does not exist where the "Germanic element has never penetrated" (93). As evident in the writings of Gobineau, Chamberlain, Grant and Ford, the myth of Aryan supremacy was very familiar and well-established within white societies. Hitler monopolises this familiarity and reinforces Aryan superiority with a particular focus on the supremacy of Germanic blood. He writes that the Aryan represents "the archetype for what we understand by the term: MAN" (164). The Aryan alone is the founder of cultures (Ibid.) and remains the "standard-bearer" of human progress (166). In a way strongly reminiscent of Gobineau's ideas, Hitler upholds the Aryan races as the source of

all that we admire in the world to-day, its science, its art, its technical developments and discoveries...the products of the creative activities of a few peoples, and it may be true that their first beginnings must be attributed to one race (163).

Among the Aryans, the Germans were regarded as the members of the highest "species" of humanity (356). However, this privileged position at the top of the racial and evolutionary ladder did not come without significant responsibilities:

We have a correspondingly high duty, and that we shall fulfil this duty only if we inspire the German people with the racial idea, so that they will occupy themselves not merely with the breeding of good dogs and horses and cats, but also care for the purity of their own blood (Ibid.).

Within an Aryan State, Hitler wanted to see marriage consecrated as an institution that is devoted to the procreation of “creatures made in the likeness of the Lord” rather than the “monsters that are a mixture of man and ape” (226). The German people had lost the natural instinct and impulse for self-preservation (355). Self-preservation is achieved by the safe-guarding of nations and races from degenerating and corrupting miscegenation. Hitler was troubled that the Germans had defiled their nation and their bloodlines by neglecting to maintain purity of race and, consequently, were being made degenerate by those of lesser racial stock (167). In Hitler’s mind, the most corrupting of those lesser races is the Jew. Hitler firmly believes that the innate, constructive principles of “Aryan humanity” are displaced by the destructive principles of the Jews whom he despised as “the wreckers of human civilization” (250-1).

According to Hitler, Jews are destroying the racial basis of Aryan existence and thus annihilating the Aryans (311). The Aryan state needed to put an end to such destruction and preserve its racial stock if it was to one day become “ruler of the Earth” (378). When applied simplistically to human society, Darwin’s theory of evolution suggests that, in the struggle for existence, the stronger races would always prevail. Hitler adamantly maintains that “he who would live must fight” (163). Furthermore, Hitler also agrees with Ford that the greatest threat to the future of the Aryans is not simply the alert Jew, but the sleepiness of the white races (Ford, 127; abridged). “The ultimate and most profound reason of the German downfall is to be found in the fact that the racial problem was ignored and that its importance in the historical development of nation was not grasped” (Hitler, 161). In accordance with

his understanding of Darwin's theory of evolution, Hitler is adamant that "Nature" did not favour the "mongrel" races and when "the pure race holds its ground the mongrel breaks down" (225). This "corrective provision which Nature adopts" must now be fully embraced by the German Aryans (Ibid.). The superiority of the Aryans must be retained and protected; only "people of the same blood should be in the same Reich" (13). Hitler is both jubilant and relieved to know for certain that the Jew is not a German (43); in fact, for Hitler, the Jew is the complete and utter opposite of the Aryan. Having established the innately superior value of Aryan blood, Hitler portrays the Jewish races as the most striking contrast to such excellence (170). Chamberlain claims it is the Aryans' "right and duty" to look upon the Jews and consider them as "a peculiar, and in fact, alien element" (336; vol. 1). Chamberlain depicts Jews as a mongrel race (389) yet his depictions seem to contradict some of his other ideas. In his writing, Chamberlain repeatedly comments on the Jewish development of a "peculiar, pure race profoundly different from others" (263); he believes that "this one race has established as its guiding principle the purity of blood" (253). However, Hitler is quick to ignore these admissions of purity and he emphasises the description of Jews as "mongrels, with their repulsive crooked waddle" (232).

Hitler differentiates the Jews from the Germans by their "unkempt" and "ignoble" appearances, but he writes that their most "revolting feature was that beneath their unclean exterior one suddenly perceived the moral mildew of the chosen race" (42). The influence of *The International Jew* is obvious in Hitler's depictions of Jewish degeneration. The Jews are described as despoilers (Hitler, 114) and masterful liars (199). Hitler believes that it is Jews who control the financial forces of America (351) and shares Ford's belief that Judaism is primarily concerned with economics rather than morality; their "spiritual mission" represents the "grossest materialism of the day" and is merely "a means of sordid acquisition" (Ford, 22; abridged). Ford's ideas about the Jew's vicious philosophy of getting money

rather than making it (24) are seemingly confirmed by Hitler's observation that the culture which Jews enjoy is "the product of the work of others and this product is debased in the hands of the Jew" (Hitler, 171). This parasitic existence of Jewry is recognisable economically, but Hitler claims that the extent of this parasitism was much more damaging and comprehensive than mere finances.

A key theme in *Mein Kampf* is the parasitic nature of the Jewish race. According to Hitler, this race feeds off the human races but falls well short of the Aryan standard of what is human. Hitler portrays the Jew as "a parasite, battenning on the substance of others...Jewish self-expansion is a parasitic phenomenon...He is and remains a parasite, a sponger who, like a pernicious bacillus, spreads over wider and wider areas" (172). The depiction of Jews as parasites was a familiar concept for many European people. Various medieval legends told of Jews murdering Christian children and drinking their blood during the feast of Passover (Mosse, 113). It was a common belief among some Christian circles that the Jews had an uncontrollable and insatiable desire to pierce the Eucharistic host until it bled (Gossett, 11). Both Grant's and Ford's writings are insistent upon the intrusive, parasitic nature of the Jews (Grant, 91; revised ed.; Ford, 201-2; abridged). Hitler continues this tradition, becoming even more blatant, evocative and degrading in his depictions. As one of the lowest and most detested classes in the animal kingdom, the parasite is despised for the way it lives off others – nourishing its body by stealing life from its host. An expert in parasitology, D. W. T Crompton defines a parasite as an organism that *must* spend at least part of its life on or in another living organism - to the detriment of the organism being lived on or in (1). In *Parasitic Animals*, prominent zoologist Geoffrey LaPage states that a parasitic animal is *not* a particular species of animal; rather, it is an animal that has adopted a parasitic way of living (1). He surmises that many different species have become parasitic in the course of evolution (Ibid.). Similarly, Chamberlain speculates that, though Jews may seem "eternally unchangeable, so constant", the Jewish parasite "really grew into what he is, grew slowly, even

artificially. And of a surety he will pass away like all that has grown” (352; vol. 1).

In the course of common everyday usage, the word ‘parasite’ and its various derivatives have become loaded with emotional and moral connotations (LaPage, 1). They have become labels of abhorrence and signal

a way of living that we usually deprecate and despise – the life, that is to say, of the sycophant, the hanger-on, the person who does no honest work, but lives by depending upon the efforts of others, or who goes even further along what we regard as a downward path and lives by actually preying upon and harming his fellow human beings and their society (1-2).

Hitler cleverly employs these emotive connotations and represents Jews as parasites wriggling their way into the body of nations in order to hollow them out from the inside (364). Hitler was keenly aware of the power of propaganda, and his representation of Jewry as parasites demonstrates this awareness. He believes that the art of propaganda consist in the ability to find the “appropriate psychological form” that will awaken the imagination of the public and strongly appeal to their hearts (108). In modern times, humans have come to feel increasing levels of shame and disgust at the presence of parasites (Busvine, 47); many people regard these feelings as healthy and akin to the repulsion and abhorrence of refuse or excrement (65). Hitler’s constant juxtaposition of Jewry with the imagery and connotations of parasites causes such an overlapping of representations that the two subjects start to become indistinguishable to his readers. The “Jewish parasitic colonies” (Hitler, 95)

sneak their way, like parasites, into the human body politic and make others work for them... without possessing any definite delimited territory. This is chiefly applicable to that parasitic nation which, particularly at the present time, preys upon the honest portion of mankind; I mean the Jews (93).

Consequently, the feelings of abhorrence and despicability traditionally associated with parasitism were

transferred on to Jewry.

“Man is a louse for other men. Thus man is a host for other men” (Serres, 5). Philosopher Michel Serres suggests that human societies necessarily operate in a parasitic nature: one human providing food and shelter for another human who, in turn, may be a ‘host’ supplying the necessities of life for another or may simply be feasting off his own supplier’s life. Either way, the host suffers loss and is always injured by the parasite (LaPage, 5), and Hitler emphasises this notion when representing the Jews. Gobineau assumes that “everyone must have seen how certain agglomerations of men have descended on some country, and utterly transformed its way of life” (xiv). Hitler goes to great lengths in *Mein Kampf* to demonstrate the devastating, transformative power of the Jew and the effect their supposed parasitism was having upon Germany. He describes the Jew as “a real leech who clings to the body of his unfortunate victims and cannot be removed” (176). The Jew is a “ferment of decomposition” (361) and, as such, has been exploiting and contaminating the German national body. A parasitic animal is not concerned with human values or morals; it follows the “natural urges” which impel all living creatures to seek their own food supply, mate with their kind and attempt to ensure the survival of their species (LaPage, 327). This relationship both makes life and kills; one being is maintained by the survival of another (Serres, 168). For the parasite, ensuring survival means feeding off the host, and Hitler could not bear to see the Jewish race flourish at the expense of Germany. A definitive measure needed to be taken to stop this parasitism because “the man who thinks he can bind himself by treaty with parasites is like a tree that believes it can form a profitable bargain with the ivy that surrounds it” (Hitler, 364). Hitler believes that Germany and, more importantly, German bloodlines had become infected by the Jew’s parasitic infection. Crompton defines infection as “the means whereby a parasite becomes established and physiologically committed to dependence on the next host” (76). The arrival of a parasite can sometimes provoke infectious disease (Serres, 198) and

the parasite's infectious power is measured "by its capability to adapt itself to one or several hosts" (190). Throughout history, the Jews have demonstrated a tenacity and adaptability that have enabled them to inhabit many nations. Their ability to survive is renowned, but Hitler saw it as a growing threat to Germany's own survival.

The most serious harm associated with parasites and parasitic animals is when they become vectors of disease (Busvine, 47). Indeed Serres goes so far as to suggest that "sickness, in general, is parasitic" (197). Humans cannot expect to live for a healthy, normal life span if they are constantly exposed to "agents" of infectious disease (Crompton, 87). The association of parasites with disease is scientifically grounded and Hitler's use of this association adds further degradation to his portrayal of Jews. Since childhood, Hitler believed that the poison of foreign races was eating away at the national body of the German people (19). He holds Jews responsible for the "wholesale poisoning of the public mind" (139). Hitler concludes that recognition of the internal cause of a disease is absolutely essential to the implementation of a cure. The root cause of the disease must be differentiated from the symptomatic circumstances developing out of it (134); disease of the body in this case is merely the result of a diseased condition of the moral, social and racial instincts (146). Like Ford, Hitler traces the roots of his nation's bodily corruption and degeneration back to the presence of the destructive Jew:

Was there any shady undertaking, any form of foulness...in which at least one Jew did not participate? On putting the probing knife carefully to that kind of abscess, on immediately discovery, like a maggot in a putrescent body, a little Jew who was often blinded by the sudden light (42).

By reducing them to repulsive maggots feasting off decaying flesh, Hitler stripped the Jews of their humanity and, once again, fortified German attitudes of abhorrence towards Jewry.

According to this picture, then, the germ-carrying Jews are spreading infection throughout the German national body. Hitler paints a dire picture of the moral, economical and biological health of the infected nation. For most people, the idea of germs stood as a way of explaining the inexplicable; germs seem to take possession of the body like an evil spirit, causing misfortune and death (Helman, 31-2). These Jewish germs, “which give rise to protuberant growths that must sooner or later bring about the ruin of our culture”, riddled Germany and the minds of the German public (Hitler, 148). However, the Germans had gradually grown accustomed to the Jewish presence and, consequently, were slowly succumbing to the disease of the Jews (134). Hitler’s florid and emotive writings aim to alert Germany to the precarious position of their national health. The Jewish presence was invading every area of Germany’s life:

Here was a pestilence, a moral pestilence, with which the public was being infected...worse than the Black Plague...And in what mighty doses this poison was manufactured and distributed. Naturally, the lower the moral and intellectual level of such an author of artistic products the more inexhaustible fecundity. Sometime it went so far that one of these fellows, acting like a sewage pump, would shoot his filth directly in the face of other members of the human race...despoilers who act as the worst kind of germ-carriers in poisoning human souls (42).

Hitler portrays the Jews as dirty and disgusting despoilers who poison the German nation with faeces, filth and immorality. The association with sewage underlines Hitler’s perception and valuation of Jewry; they are the human waste that must be removed from the presence of ‘civilised’ society.

In *The Parasite*, Michel Serres suggests that “whoever wants to kill his dog says that the dog has scabies” (78). By emphasising the link between parasitic organisms and disease-carrying germs, Hitler simultaneously links the Jews to disease via analogy. Germs bring with them connotations of the

imagery of war – of attack and counter-attack against an invisible enemy (Helman, 34-5). Such an association could only be detrimental to Jewry, who could only “either conquer or be conquered” (Gobineau, 30). No one would willingly let disease corrupt their body and gradually steal their life. Once aware of the presence of disease, every effort would be made to excise that disease from the body. The much-needed national “immunity” is dependent on “the ability of an organism to distinguish between ‘self’ and ‘non-self’” (Crompton, 76). In *Medicine and the German Jews: A History*, John Efron comments that German medical discussions about Jews were as much about German identity as they were about Jewish identity; they were central to Germany’s nationalistic project of self-definition (106-7). Hitler himself describes the Jews as the most striking contrast to the Germans. If the German Aryans are the epitome of strength, beauty and vigour, then the Jews, by very definition, must be weak, ugly and degenerate.

“A human being needs a human life” (Midgley, 107) but, by identifying the Jews with parasites and disease, Hitler reinforces the concept the Jew as a non-human or sub-human animal. In *Animals and Why They Matter*, Mary Midgley refers to this part of the process of dehumanisation as “pseudo-speciation”: the tendency for human beings to regard their different cultures or races as if they were separate species (109). ‘Pseudo-speciation’ allows the so-called superior races to deny other races any human value and, subsequently, any human rights – robbing ‘inferior’ races of their humanity through the use of animal analogy (Mosse, 117). In all cultures, animals were generally not extended the same rights as human beings and are still commonly regarded as lesser creatures than humans. Midgley speculates that

in ordinary speech...to say that somebody has a certain right is a moral judgement; it means that something should be done about it, that we ought to consider him...Accordingly, to say that ‘animals do not have rights’ does not sound like a remark about *rights* but one about animals -

namely...that one need not consider them (63).

By extension, if a race is relegated to animal status, it also loses any claim to 'human' rights; moral laws, human concepts of justice and ideas of humane treatment are no longer applicable to the dehumanised race. Such a race could expect to be treated as any other non-human animal without the need for human consciences to be offended, guilt-ridden or outraged. This approach to morality brings significant consequences when coupled with an evolutionary system that ranks races hierarchically; the 'most human' races become even more highly valued morally and culturally whilst 'inferior' races are excluded from most, if not all, moral consideration. 'Pseudo-speciation' further enables the self-advancement of superior races; by drawing on the distinctions of species as well as human/animal delineations, the superior races can morally justify their dismissal and disregard for the lower races.

Hitler's anti-Semitism may seem even more justifiable by the apparently insurmountable evolutionary distance between the Aryans and parasitic, germ-like Jewry. If the absence of animal rights means that animals are not worth human consideration as Midgley's argument suggests, then, portrayed as the lowest and most despicable creatures, the 'parasitic' Jews should not expect even the slightest human consideration let alone equality. Furthermore, the Nazi blurring of the human-animal boundary enabled the traditional categories of humans and non-human animals to be significantly re-configured. Whilst certain types of animals now became highly valued and protected, it suited Hitler's racial purposes to place Jews at the bottom of the animal hierarchy. Contrary to Hitler's claims, research has shown that Jews lived longer and experienced lower mortality rates than non-Jews during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Efron, 117-8). Hitler portrays the complete reverse of these findings and depicts the Jews as ugly, deformed, sickly and un-heroic – "the exact opposite of genuine, healthy masculinity, that being the Germanic ideal" (Efron, 149). This employment of 'otherness' is enforced and encouraged by Hitler's depictions of Jewish parasites, infectors, vampires and molesters.

Closely aligning them with the images of destructive parasites and deadly diseases, Hitler also represents the Jews as demonic, sub-human creatures whose rightful home is the underworld. The Jews have long been seen as the enemies of Christianity – Christ-killers – and thus aligned with evil, the devil and the demonic. If the Jews had been bold enough to commit deicide, many people feared that nothing would stop them from killing all Christians (Efron, 24). Chamberlain claims it is the Jew who was “the teacher of all fanaticism in faith, and of all murder for the sake of religion; that he only appealed to toleration where he felt himself oppressed” (457; vol. 1). The nomadic restlessness of the nation-less Jews only added to German suspicion and aversion. In many religious traditions, the devil is named as the father of lies; Hitler calls the Jew the “Great Master of Lies” (199), insinuating that the devil and the Jew are one and the same. Similarly, Hitler uses the image of the serpent, an ancient Judeo-Christian symbol for Satan, and transfers it to the Jews. Like the snake, the Jew is described as shameless, thick-skinned and cold-blooded (43). Jews became the “international serpent” that wraps its coils around nations and could only be stopped by “all the force of a fresh missionary idea” (364). As serpents, the Jews did not “move about this earth as men of honour and sincerity but as representatives of lies and deception, thievery, plunder and robbery” (364). According to Hitler, such creatures fall so far short of the Aryan standard of ‘man’ that it seems ridiculous to even conceive of them as human. With such an evil influence, Hitler considers Jews to be more correctly classified as evil spirits that continually lead the German people astray (43).

As early as the eighteenth century, definitions of the term ‘vampire’ described evil spirits who “animate” the bodies of the dead (Auerbach, 20). Vampires are indeterminate creatures that flourish through their dangerously close proximity to mortals (13). They are legendary for seducing their victims before piercing their victim’s necks with their teeth and then drinking the victim’s blood. Seen

as a parasitic, life-stealing creature, Jews are also likened to vampires, “for wherever he establishes himself the people who grant him hospitality are bound to be bled to death” (Hitler, 179). By engaging this simile, Hitler instructs the German people about the seductive, human-like ways of the Jew which were but a thin disguise to “mask his tactics and fool his victims” (Ibid.). This disguise could be hard to discern, especially as a Jew allegedly masked his true identity by talking of the equality of all 'men' regardless of race or colour (Ibid.). Like Jews, the vampires “go everywhere *but* home” (Auerbach, 17) and, characterised by such vagrancy, embody entrenched social parasitism (34). The Jewish vampire is threatening to Hitler because it aims at Germany’s most precious possession: Aryan bloodlines. With such a tremendous value placed on blood, any threat to that blood must be met with extreme seriousness and vigilance. Moreover, a threat that comes disguised in the form of another human and is able to sneak its way into the midst of the German people is a cause for huge alarm. Hitler manipulates the tenacious longevity of the Jewish people to appear as if it were the plunder of bloodsucking Jews who continue to steal the lifeblood out of Germany. In order to save German bloodlines, desperate action must be taken “to send back to Lucifer him who would assault the heavens” (Hitler, 364). In a further effort to solidify the representation of Jews as demonic sub-humans, Hitler takes on the tone of a biblical prophet, lamenting that if the Jew, “with the aid of his Marxist creed”, should conquer all the people in the world, “his Crown will be the funeral wreath of mankind, and this planet will once again follow its orbit through ether, without any human life on its surface” (46). By guarding against the rise of the Jew, Hitler declares himself to be “defending the handiwork of God” (Ibid.). In line with common thought, Hitler attributes the Jews with the development of Marxism. In his opinion, Marxism is yet more evidence of the Jews’ devilish, degenerating, sub-human nature since “the original authors of this evil which has infected the nations were devils incarnate” (45). Such a plan could only possibly be conceived “in the brain of a monster, and not that of a man” (Ibid.). Hitler considers the “utterly low-down conduct” of the Jews as so despicable that he insists no one could possibly be surprised if

“the Jew is pictured as the incarnation of Satan and the symbol of evil” in the imagination of the German public (184). In Hitler’s opinion, such a representation is more than merited and absolutely right in its depiction.

For Hitler, the Jew’s supposed life-draining nature is comprehensive in its corruptibility. Tainted heavily by miscegenation with black people (Gobineau, 55), Jews had developed a strong, insatiable sensuality and sexuality that had traditionally been associated with black people. Superstition has long surrounded the Jews’ sexuality to such an extent that the beard of a Jewish man was often seen as resembling that of the goat, “notorious as a lecherous beast” (Gossett, 11). An influential nineteenth century German psychiatrist and sexologist, Richard von Krafft-Ebing, advanced an idea regarding the Jews’ 'lecherous' sexual behaviour that, “not infrequently, concealed under a veil of religious enthusiasm there is abnormally intensified sensuality and sexual excitement that lead to sexual errors that are of etiologic significance” (qtd. in Efron, 155). Hitler continues this tradition of portraying Jewish sexuality as extremely base and perverted; sounding more like a novelist, he illustrates the merciless predation of the Jew: “The black-haired Jewish youth lies in wait for hours on end, satanically glaring at and spying on the suspicious girl whom he plans to seduce, adulterating her and removing her from the bosom of her own people” (184). The alleged efforts of Jews to undermine the racial foundations of the German people are portrayed as shrewd and vicious in their thoroughness. Hitler depicts even the young Jew as a threat, preying upon and ruining Germany’s innocent maidens. Mosse observes that, for Hitler, the “dirty and un-heroic Jew with sidelocks and caftan” seemed to be immediately linked to sex (111). The “male in his individual development” is an indication of “the direction in which a whole race is tending” (Grant, 27; revised ed.). Hitler agrees with Darwin’s belief that habits followed during the passing of many generations tend to be inherited (Darwin, 164; vol. 1); moral, intellectual and spiritual attributes are believed to be as persistent in hereditary as physical

characteristics (Grant, 226; revised ed.). Applying this belief to sexual habits, Hitler shows the Jews' supposed predatory sexual appetite, even if acquired through miscegenation, as a fixed, inherited trait. This fixed, over-sexed perversion confirms their bestial nature and their threat to German bloodlines. If 'pseudo-speciation' is accepted as fact, the old concept of transformation through copulation becomes extremely relevant; since each species normally copulates only with the other sex of its own species, any deviation from this rule is felt as a transformation (Canetti, 380). Through sexual relation, the Jews had the power to both corrupt Aryans and transform them – the animal degrading and destroying the Aryan.

Jewish appearance was easily stereotyped as dark and hairy and this 'appearance' was seen as a signifier of a devious sexuality, but it was also used as 'evidence' of the Jews' proximity to the animal kingdom. It enabled Hitler to associate Jewry with the destructive, furtive and disgusting habits of vermin. In an easily understandable mode of reasoning, differences in physical appearances are frequently believed to indicate fundamental biological differences (Montagu, 76). Stereotyped as dark and hairy, the generalised 'appearance' of Jews was likened to furry animals, especially rodents. The association with rodents allows Hitler to heighten the 'threat' of parasitic infestations or plaques of disease; the presence of filthy rodents brings the possibility of health risks especially when the animals appear in large numbers. Both Grant and Ford promote the perception of Jews *en masse* – an integral part of the dehumanisation process. With constant mention of the swarms of Jews arriving in America, Grant refers to the power of Jews as the "brute strength of the unthinking herd" (Grant, 7; revised ed.). According to Ford, it is the co-ordination of Jewish activity that has been, and continues to be, "harmful to the world" (196; abridged). Hitler agrees with Ford's belief that Jews cannot be singled out and refers to Jewry as "the promiscuous swarm of foreign peoples" (79). Of the same mind as Ford, Hitler writes that the consideration of the Jews *en masse* was Jewish in its conception: a "typically

Jewish and democratic apotheosis of the power of numbers” (Hitler, 159). Hitler describes Jews as “a swarm of rats that bitterly fight against each other” (171). Serres seems to capture Hitler’s attitude in his description of a generic parasitic group, speculating that, “whatever the size of the group, from two on up to all human kind, the transcendental condition of its constitution is the existence of the Demon” (Serres, 54). As a swarm, the members of a group are most united when they felt threatened by a common danger or prey (Ibid.); however, Hitler also suggests that another cause is powerfully drawing Jews into group action. Deflecting attention from his own desire regarding Jewry, Hitler credits the Jews themselves with the desire to see the German people “degenerate into an unthinking herd which can be reduced to total subjection” (Hitler, 183).

Concepts of the Jews *en masse* – whether as parasites, germs or swarms – make it possible for Hitler to suggest the need for extreme and total action. The health of the German national body could not be fully restored until *every* threat and trace of sickness had been removed; preventative and remedial action must be absolutely thorough in its removal of infectious organisms; “we must get rid of those foreign germs in the national body which are the cause of its failing and false ways” (192). According to Hitler, there could be no such thing as “coming to an understanding with the Jews”; “it must be the hard-and-fast ‘Either-Or’” (121). Drastic action needed to be taken if Germany was to have any hope of recovery from its present state of degeneration and deterioration. Hitler shows concern about the trend towards “visionary humanitarianisms” (151); he believes that “the future of millions of human beings was sacrificed” by the weak submission to these aberrations and efforts to spare the feelings of the individual (Ibid.). The consideration of Jews *en masse* or as a swarm worked to relieve the consciences of the German people from any moral qualms or anxieties. Mass consideration of Jews depersonalised the individual, and the less familiar the public are with the individual, the more likely they are to treat them in terms of their ascribed group membership; a single individual confronts the

human conscience with his or her humanity whereas a swarm of bodies – parasitic, diseased and animal - loses individual identity as it moves and acts as one body. Consequently,

when the individual is no longer burdened with his own consciousness of blame in this regard, then and only then will he have that inner tranquillity and outer force to cut off drastically and ruthlessly all the parasite growth and root out the weeds (27).

“Nature cares not for the individual nor how he can be modified by the environment” (Grant, 18; revised ed.); the people of Germany necessarily needed to disregard any humanitarian concerns for the individual Jew and be solely concerned with the moral and biological well-being of the German national body.

When the Jews are depersonalised and dehumanised in the collective German eye, “the laws of hospitality become laws of hostility” (Serres, 54) and every effort needs to be made to expel Jews from the German national body.

To those regimes who use the metaphor of the ‘sick society’, infected by enemies from without or within, the air in the political sickroom will always be polluted. It can only be cleaned of invisible germs of dissent and agitation by a vigorous spray of political carbolic. Or by applying the rules of antiseptics, by washing out the brains of the victims, or killing their carriers by genocide, deportation, or by ‘starving a fever’. Or by quarantining those carriers... banishment...apartheid (Helman, 42-3).

Hitler is determined to cure the German national body of its debilitating Jewish ailment, urging German citizens to “devote ourselves to arousing general indignation against the maleficent enemy of humanity and the real author of all our sufferings” (352). Hatred lingers longer in the heart than aversion (191) and Hitler’s metaphors work to evoke a need for immediate action and arouse intense feelings of abhorrence, hatred and resentment. “Like leeches”, the Jews are portrayed “slowly sucking the blood

from the pores of the national body” (114). The Jews are united in their ‘swarm’ of despoilers, liars, and religious fanatics. Hitler strongly desires Germany to take united action in order to rid their body of Jewish disease:

the more the militant energies of the people are directed towards one objective the more will new recruits join the movement, attracted by the magnetism of its unified action, and thus the striking power will be all the more enhanced (75-6).

Hitler is convinced that such uniformity would intensify the belief of the German public “in the justice of their own cause” and would also strengthen “their feeling of hostility towards the opponent” (Ibid.). Only the “born weakling” would consider the self-preservation of the stronger races as “cruel”; “and if he does so, it is merely because he is of a feebler nature and narrow-minded” (161).

Darwin writes that, amongst individuals and races, natural selection acts only in a tentative manner (Darwin, 178; vol. 1). Because of its tentativeness, natural selection must be significantly aided by artificial selection if the superior races are to be protected from the parasitic and the diseased. Darwin expresses surprise about

how soon a want of care, or care wrongly directed, leads to the degeneration of a domestic race; but excepting in the case of man himself, hardly any one is so ignorant as to allow his worst animals to breed (168).

In a similar appeal for racial self-preservation, Ford strongly asserted that simple “common sense” dictated “a cleaning out, and a clearing out, of the sources of disease” (170; abridged). In Hitler’s mind, it is urgent that Aryans take drastic action in order to prevent any further degeneration of their race. Natural repugnance, repulsion and immunity could no longer be the only racial safe-guards in the struggle for existence; the Aryans needed additional resources if they were to retain the upper hand in this struggle. In order to ensure their own health and survival, the German public needed to do away

with their “mistaken regard for what are believed to be divine laws and a sentimental belief in the sanctity of human life” (Grant, 49; revised ed.). When the future of the Aryan race is at stake, “all humane and aesthetic considerations” should be “set aside” as the “products of man’s creative imagination” (Hitler, 106). The blurring of the boundaries between humans and animals allows for the disregard of humane considerations and serves as an “intellectual resource” which is easily distortable when expedient (Arluke and Sanders, 138). Convincing the public of the need for expulsion and destruction is an essential step in dehumanisation (Patterson, 49); the dehumanising progression is obvious when “our collective is the expulsion of the stranger, of the enemy, of the parasite” (Serres, 56). The lower and more degraded a being is, the easier it is to kill (47-8). “The social body is occupied merely with safeguarding itself and could not care less about a life that has been damaged” (Amery, 70). By reducing the Jews to parasites, germs, disease, and rodents, Hitler successfully dehumanises them to such an extent that many Germans could no longer see or recognise any trace of humanity within the Jewish race. Hitler’s dehumanisation of the Jews paves the way for his aggressive program of artificial selection; that which is deemed sub- or non-human can no longer be allowed to threaten the lives of humanity. The next chapter will now explore how Hitler’s dehumanizing program was put into action against Jews and the power of his racist ideology, propounded in *Mein Kampf*, when its principles are put into practice.

### **Chapter Three:**

#### **When Representation becomes Reality: Dehumanizing Principles put into Action**

The aftermath of World War I, the collapse of the Weimar Republic and the Great Depression all contributed to the receptivity of Germany to Adolf Hitler's message. World War I had left Germany with the Treaty of Versailles as its legacy, a treaty felt by many Germans to be extremely harsh and unfair. Delivered in 1919, the Treaty and the reparation payments it demanded came as a huge blow to the demoralized nation that was already struggling to come to terms with its loss in the War.

Furthermore, Germany was excluded from the international community for almost a decade (Fritsche, 151-2), an exclusion that also contributed to building resentments and feelings of isolation among German citizens. The end of the war was followed by revolution in Germany and seemed to bring some reprieve to German Jews. Following World War I, the founding of the Weimar Republic appeared to end the Jewish struggle for equal rights in Germany, but many Germans still perceived Jews as unwelcome outsiders (Yahil, *The Holocaust*, 20). Increasingly unstable, the Weimar Republic's parliament split into more than a dozen political parties, adding to the national feeling of unrest and uncertainty (Gellately, 9). Germany's political scene became one of division, indecision and confusion. From 1929, the Great Depression crippled Germany's struggle to restore financial and political stability. By the winter of 1932, more than 40 per cent of German workers were registered as unemployed; many more remained unregistered and most of the unemployed had long since claimed their full entitlement to unemployment compensation (Fritsche, 155). As Germany struggled with economic depression, anti-Semitic rumours led many in the lower-middle classes to believe that Jews were to blame for both capitalist oppression and increasing Marxist dominance that had apparently

contributed to Germany's ailing economy (Yahil, *The Holocaust*, 18). Anti-Jewish sentiment was reinforced as Nazi misinformation intentionally aligned Jews with the Communists - the biggest threat to the National Socialist party - in order to incite further anti-Semitic and anti-Communist feelings. With increasing political instability, soaring unemployment, slumping business revenues and diminishing national self-esteem, Germany was hungry for social reform and, on 30 January, 1933, Hitler was appointed Chancellor (Gellately, 9). His appointment was celebrated by a parade of almost one million Berliners eager to demonstrate allegiance to a party that promised to do away with the remains of the Weimar democracy and to establish "a strong-willed and strong-armed racial state" (Fritsche, 141-2). Many of the senior military officers had felt dissatisfied with the Weimar Republic and, despite some initial misgivings, were pleased with Nazi Germany's pursuit of a more aggressive foreign policy and its expansion of the army (Breitman, 107). Hitler delivered a vision for Germany as a nation of racial purity, economic productivity and military prowess (Fritsche, 185), a vision that was eagerly embraced by a despondent people. Following Hitler's appointment as Chancellor, Nazi violence against political opposition boosted the party's popularity and avoided civil war, putting to rest a fear that had been a dominant political issue since the November revolution of 1918 (147-8). Hitler won acclaim for "beating" the Great Depression and for curing the massive unemployment rates (Gellately, 259) yet it was his vision for Germany's complete national and racial restoration that appears to have captured many German hearts – the reclamation of Germany for the Germans, as he had foreshadowed in *Mein Kampf*:

What we have to fight for is the necessary security for the existence and increase of our race and people, the subsistence of its children and the maintenance of our racial stock unmixed, the freedom and independence of the Fatherland; so that our people may be enabled to fulfill the mission assigned to it by the Creator... All ideas and ideals, all teaching and all knowledge, must serve these ends. It is from this standpoint that everything must be examined and turned

to practical uses or else discarded (Hitler, 125).

Hitler's ascent to power was enabled by a tradition of anti-Semitic sentiment. Germany's cultural heritage was not "uniformly" anti-Semitic (Gordon, 27) but there was a strong foundation of political, social and religious anti-Semitism upon which Hitler was able to build. Religious anti-Semitism had its roots in the Catholic Church as some ardent followers viewed Jews as "Christ-killers". Prior to the Reformation in Germany, Martin Luther had favored Jews. Luther had aspirations of inspiring Jews to follow his revolutionary creed, but, once the Reformation had begun, they refused to follow him and his favoritism turned to hatred (Trepp, 243). As that of a publicly religious figure, his anti-Semitic attitude became well-known and gave some Germans yet another reassurance that anti-Semitism was morally acceptable and even sanctioned. From 1879-1886, an influential Christian-Social party in Berlin promoted anti-Jewish measures under the organization of Pastor Adolf Stöcker. The party advocated a suspension of Jewish immigration, the restoration of a special census for the Jews, a reduction of Jewish employment in the civil service and a strengthening of a "Christian-German spirit against 'pernicious' Jewish influence" (29). A series of political parties advocated the complete expulsion of Jews from Germany: these included the German People's League, the German Anti-Semitic League, the German Social Anti-Semitic Party and the Anti-Semitic People's Party (32). As Germans looked back upon their history as a nation, they realized that, although Jews now expected to be treated as equals, Jewry had for centuries been regarded as an alien body within German society (Trepp, 316). Many Germans felt that Jews had actively profited from World War I and had even promoted postwar inflation by questionable financial dealings (Gordon, 52-3) – feelings that increased smoldering anti-Jewish resentments amongst Germans.

As they became obsessed with the integrity of the nation, German nationalists were beginning to think

in increasingly exclusive or racist terms. Hitler's vision appealed to their "honed and apocalyptic rhetoric of danger and redemption"; Germany must be saved from the damage it had suffered and this salvation must include the purification of the nation's blood (Fritsche, 130). In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler writes that "more often than not the result of a catastrophe is that a cure is at once undertaken and carried through with rigid determination" (134). Germany had suffered a series of catastrophes and action needed to be taken if there was to be any hope for a German future. According to Hitler, one of the 'catastrophes' facing Germany is the unwanted presence of Jewry. In the period from 1911 to 1932, the rate of Jewish-German intermarriage had risen to sixty percent of all the Jewish marriages within Germany (Yahil, *The Holocaust*, 22). Hitler alleges that a world composed of Jewish "mongrels" would mean that "all ideals of human beauty and nobility and all hopes of an idealized future for our humanity would be lost for ever" (216). Everything and everyone that was hindering German progress *must* be left behind or discarded if Germany was to have any hope of an "idealized future" for German "humanity"; "the struggle for daily livelihood leaves behind in the ruck everything that is weak or diseased or wavering" (161). Hitler had torn up the Treaty of Versailles (Gellately, 260) and Germany began to set about reclaiming its national and racial pride. In earlier years, Houston Stewart Chamberlain had established "as a rule that man is only Germanic who is descended from Germanic nations" (Chamberlain, 521; vol. 1). Hitler writes in *Mein Kampf* that the revival of a nation cannot be imagined unless that revival is preceded by a process of nationalization (334): Germany for the Germans.

In order to reinstate its status as a superior people, Germany needed an enemy. When asked if he thought it was necessary to eliminate the Jews, Hitler insists that otherwise it would be necessary to invent them because "it is necessary to have a tangible enemy not merely an abstract one" (qtd. in Yahil, "The Double", 38). By relegating something or someone to an inferior group, Germany would

be able to presuppose a higher group to which it belonged – exalting itself by abasing an ‘other’ (Canetti, 296). The Jewish race was “the non-national, transnational enemy within” and Jews became the enemy that the National Socialists brought back into the political arena, “literally with a vengeance, when the war was lost and the economy in ruins” (Barta, 54). German nationalists often traced their roots back to the Aryans, holding fast to the tradition of the Aryan/Nordic superiority. Hitler writes that the Germanic people are the founders of a superior type of humanity (164). The Nazi government believed that “there are no stronger contrasts in the world than the pure Germanic and the pure Semitic races” (Ford, 204; abridged) and Nazi Germany became increasingly obsessed with the ‘vital’ disentangling of Germany’s destiny from that of Jews. As a member of the Eugenics Committee of the United States (Jacobsen, 83), Madison Grant had forewarned that “races must be kept apart by artificial devices...or they ultimately amalgamate and in the offspring the more generalized or lower type prevails” (Grant, 222; revised ed.). Furthermore, it was commonly held that the proportion of Aryan blood in each nation was “a very fair measure of its strength in war and standing in civilization” (193). Accordingly, the proportion of superior blood within a nation could be bolstered by the removal or elimination of inferior non-Aryan blood from the population. This concept was important to Hitler, who claims that,

as a nationalist who appreciates the worth of the racial basis of humanity, I must recognize the racial inferiority of the so-called “Oppressed Nations”, and that is enough to prevent me from linking the destiny of my people with the destiny of those inferior races” (363).

The link between warfare and Aryan bloodlines was strengthened by a tradition of German legends, folklore and iconography. In German mythology, a warrior clan of legendary strength, the Volsungs, was very closely identified with wolves and would enter in war with wolf pelts hung around their necks (Sax, 74). The self-proclaimed association between Nazis and wolves transferred a legacy of heroism

and natural strength. Wolves suggested a type of “primeval vitality” that Hitler was bent on recapturing within the hearts of the German people. Dogs and wolves were seen by many Nazis as examples of admirable traits: “loyalty, hierarchy, fierceness, courage, obedience, and sometimes even cruelty”. To impress upon the public the importance of wolf-like vitality and attributes, Hitler’s code name was “the wolf” (75-6), which also reinforced his position as the “alpha male” to be followed and revered. The Nazi identification with idealized images of predator animals enabled them to claim an instinctive and natural right to kill (34). The traditional symbolism associated with wolves also provided a kind of mythical justification for Hitler’s strident anti-Semitism:

wolves are the enemy of flocks and shepherds, and the people of Israel were... frequently identified as sheep... in the Old Testament, wolves were repeatedly associated with destruction and with the enemies of Israel... association with dogs or wolves was used as a means of demeaning and tormenting Jews (Sax, 75).

This ‘justification’, coupled with ideas of innate racial repulsion, completely naturalized the Nazi’s anti-Semitism – as though it was in their blood and simply an innate part of their biological makeup. The reduction of the “degenerate” Jews to animal status and the adoption of the wolf as a Nazi symbol did not seem contradictory for the Nazi mindset. The pure Darwinian concept of evolution placed all of humanity at the top of the evolutionary hierarchy and then differentiated between the different human races. However, the Nazis adopted a somewhat different interpretation of evolution that considered human races as distinct species. These pseudo-species were then ranked among other animal species; this integration meant that some animal species ranked higher than ‘inferior’ races of humans. In this version of evolution, the Aryans were at the top of the scale whilst the Jews were classed alongside parasites, rodents and lice. Dogs, wolves and horses were regarded as highly evolved beings and held a status well above the position of the degraded sub-human Jew whom Hitler described as “a parasite, a sponger... a pernicious bacillus” (Hitler, 172).

Hopes of restoring Germany to its 'rightful' state as a flourishing nation of warriors were accompanied by strong anti-Jewish sentiment. Without a defined territory, a flag, a national anthem or a national army, Jews were seen as "the antithesis of European nations...rootless, homeless, and devoid of martial values and spirit" (Efron, 105). Represented as Europe's antithesis, the Jews were constantly viewed from a dual perspective that fueled German aversion; on the one hand, they were seen as degenerate, parasitic and diseased germ-carriers, while on the other they were simultaneously regarded as a predatory, expanding power that was set on world domination and racial conquest. Rats, parasites, germs and lice are most threatening and dangerous to human beings when they are present in large numbers; in 1932, Berlin's Jewish population commonly settled in clustered communities, a practice that was heralded by the Nazis as evidence of the Jewish 'parasitic threat'. Largely uninhibited in the expansion of their numbers, the Jews' 'parasitism' had become a major threat to the 'superior' Gentile races. Henry Ford had already outlined this viewpoint:

There is a super-government which is allied to no government, which is free from all, and yet which has its hands in them all. There is a race, a part of humanity, which has never yet been received as a welcome part, and which has succeeded in raising itself to a power that the proudest Gentile race has never claimed...they are ordinary men whom the rest of the world has permitted to obtain an undue and unsafe degree of power. Unless the Jews are super-men, the Gentiles will have themselves to blame... (198-9; abridged).

The Jews' ability to "obtain an undue and unsafe degree of power" was most evident in the area of finances and it was with respect to money that perspectives of the Jews as both parasitic and predatory overlapped most. The Jews had a heavy involvement in brokerage, finance and commerce; mainly middle class, the Jewish communities lacked representation in the two main centers of German

economic power: heavy industry and the working class (Yahil, *The Holocaust*, 22). Historian Tony Barta suggests that modern anti-Semitism was indicative of the crisis in coping with modernization as soon as it appeared; overall, the Jews “very visibly” managed and fared better in the upheaval than those “tied into the structures and mentality of the agrarian and artisan order” (46-7). In 1932, forty-six percent of German Jews were self-employed and many Jewish craftsmen and tradesmen were financially better off than their German counterparts (Yahil, *The Holocaust*, 22).

Jews’ significant financial presence in Germany became a target for an economically struggling nation and, inevitably, Jews were identified with the capitalist revolution (Barta, 47). In the internationally renowned *The International Jew*, Ford had warned the world that “most of the national animosities that exist today arose out of resentment against what Jewish money power did under the camouflage of national names” (17; abridged). Ford described the Jewish financial philosophy as one of “‘getting mine’; ‘getting while the getting is good’; ‘honestly if you can, dishonestly if you must – but *get it*’ – all of which are notes of this reasonable philosophy” (24). The alleged greed and the real power of Jewish finance were held responsible for inter-national animosities and Hitler’s new government worked to enforce this concept in the minds of the German public, which was still resentful of the Treaty of Versailles and its financial ramifications on Germany. Hitler writes that the Jews controlled “the financial forces of America” and believes that they would go on to similarly “devour the other nations of the earth” (351). He agrees with Ford’s statement that “the genius of the Jew is to live off people, not off land, nor off the production of commodities from raw materials, but off people” (Ford, 201; abridged). Germany was making efforts to conquer its national poverty, yet “parasitic” Jews were leeching off and profiting from the German economy, welfare and body politic – yet another financial injustice facing Germany.

An ‘alien’, parasitic race was living off the labor of a superior, native German race while Germany was still struggling to recover from significant financial setbacks. Hitler writes that even “Jewish religious teaching” were concerned with economic rather than moral issues (173). Some clerics from within the Catholic Church confirmed Hitler’s concern, and references to Jewish impulses for making money, Jewish legalism and Jewish materialism, are documented in Catholic publications (Barta, 47). Hitler depicts “the inexorable cosmopolitan Jew” as fighting for world dominion (358) and publicizes the “Jewish aim” as the enslavement and thereby annihilation of the non-Jewish races (182). He claims that “the sword is the only means whereby a nation can thrust that clutch from its throat” (358) and reiterates that,

if we are to free the German people from all those failings and ways of acting which do not spring from their original character, we must get rid of those foreign germs in the national body which are the cause of its failings and false ways (192).

These ‘foreign germs’ needed to be removed from the national body if Germany was to have any hope of making full recovery and advance its own innate ‘superiority’. The “Jewish Question” was not primarily about the number of Jews who resided in the nation, but the mere presence of the Jews in the first place (Ford, 21; abridged).

After a brief visit to the Lodz ghetto in November 1939 and seeing the misery of its Jewish inhabitants, Goebbels alleged that these Jews were not human beings “but animals” and so Germany faced “not a humanitarian but a surgical task” (1939, qtd in Gellately, 76). This perception of the Jews as animal negated any anxieties that could arise with the genocide of a human race. The notion of a “surgical task” also implied a health emergency and tied the representation of Jews as animals together with the critical state of Germany’s national health. The link between genocide and national hygiene became stronger as it was transferred from theory into application. Goebbels had defined enmity towards the

Jew as a matter of personal cleanliness (21 January, 1929, qtd. in Maser, 196). In *The Body of Frankenstein's Monster: Essays in Myth and Medicine*, Cecil Helman observes that, within despotic societies that are built on hierarchies of fear and repression, the exercise of power often manifests as a form of “treatment” of the “sick” body politic. Such authorities claimed that “invisible and contagious indulgences” are passed from person to person, thus providing a justification for societal cleansing (Helman, 42). As in an epidemic, the community was under attack and someone must be held to blame (44). Hitler’s racial program demonstrates the realization of Helman’s observations:

Everywhere we find the presence of those germs which give rise to protuberant growths that sooner or later bring about the ruin of our culture. Here we find the undoubted symptoms of slow corruption; and woe to the nations that are no longer able bring that morbid process to a halt (Hitler, 148).

Today we must conduct the same struggle that Pasteur and Koch had to fight. The cause of countless ills is a bacillus: the Jew... we will become healthy if we eliminate the Jew (Hitler, Jan 30, 1942, qtd. in Bretiman, 234).

In this metaphor of cleanliness and sanitation, there is no place for “good germs” (Helman, 34). Nazi officials were well aware that, although the Jewish race as a whole was generally loathed by the German public, exceptions were sought for Jewish individuals: “They all come, those worthy 80 million Germans, and each one has his own decent Jew. Of course, the others are swine, but this one is a great Jew” (Himmler, 4 October, 1943, qtd. in Aly, 251). Hitler believed that only complete elimination of the Jews would ensure the health of Germany’s future; any state that retained Jews would provide “a new seat of infection and decomposition” (Breitman, 187). “There can be no such thing as coming to an understanding with the Jews. It must be the hard-and-fast ‘Either-Or’” (Hitler, 121).

Nazi treatment of the Jews enforced the representation of the Jewry as dirty disease-carriers. Ghettos were often established in the worst districts within a city where it was virtually impossible to introduce even basic conditions of hygiene. Inhumane overcrowding and filth within the ghettos resulted in severe and almost constant epidemics (Pearlman, 259). The word 'dirty' was used to refer to "every impurity assigned to the Jews that necessitated their annihilation" (Lifton, 183). The combination of medical euphemisms and animal representations resulted in a strange world of mixed metaphors. Hitler decried the Jews as parasites, wriggling their way "in among the body of nations and bores them hollow from the inside" (364). The Nazi's goal was the 'removal' of every Jew from Germany but, towards the end of 1940, Reichminister Hans Frank admitted to his staff at the Government General that he had not been able "to get rid of all the lice nor all the Jews" within a year. He laughed before assuring his staff that, "in the course of time...if you will help me, that will be accomplished" (Breitman, 144). The depiction of Jews as lice had become vastly recognizable within the German state. Closely related to the idea of filthy "Jewish lice" was the representation of Jews as vermin. Once the suggestion had been made, many people found it easy and plausible to draw a resemblance between Jews, who were stereotyped as having dark, hairy faces with pronounced 'rodent-like' noses, and the common dark rats. Readily understood, this crude, oversimplified stereotype of Jews worked to distance the 'superior' Germans from the Jews (Felsenstein, 11). Frank Felsenstein claims that stereotypes reveal far more about "those who invoke them than of those they attempt to describe" (12). The white, Germanic Aryans were regarded as "superior to all others in beauty" (Chamberlain, 151; vol. 1), founders of "a superior type of humanity" and "archetypes" of "the term: MAN" (Hitler, 164). Thus Jews *needed* to be seen as dark, inferior, ugly and as far from the "archetype" of humanity as possible. By identifying Jews with rodents, Hitler was able to emphasize the 'otherness' of the Jews (Felsenstein, 15). However, this stereotype did not match up to the actual

appearance of Jews. Conventionally supposed to be dark-haired, many European Jews were fair-haired or red-haired and outnumbered their fellow dark-haired Jews (Robertson, 166). From New York, Maurice Fishburg's investigations into the claim that Jews characteristically had hooked noses revealed that most Jews had straight 'Grecian' noses (166).

Despite these actualities, the suggestion of resemblance based on physical appearance, however obvious or obscure, creates a connection that subsequently alters the way both objects are ultimately perceived by an audience. As a public audience becomes increasingly alert to these 'similarities', they also begin to ascribe the same emotional and mental reactions to both objects; in the case of the Jews, the public eye begins to increasingly view them as loathsome, despicable creatures that steal food, carry disease and scurry along the gutters. Once the resemblance was firmly established in the public mind, the Jews were then *likened* to the non-human animals they apparently resembled. In his observations, Jacobsen notes that "likening" individuals or groups to "what they most resemble conveys the cognitive work of racial perception" (173). Likening one object, human or animal to another it supposedly resembles brings implications not only of physical similarity but of character and nature. Rats were believed to be soulless and without "that intangible quality of justice, mercy and reason that physic evolution has bestowed upon man" (Zinsser, 209). By being likened to rodents, Jews are no longer seen merely as resembling rats in appearance but also sharing a likeness in disposition by their very moral and mental nature – soulless, furtive, shrewd, cunning, self-centered, and destructive non-human animals. This idea of "likening" was reinforced by a common perception that identified physical appearance as an "external sign of more profound ineradicable mental and moral inferiorities" (Montagu, 76).

As the public was being alerted to the objectionable 'similarities' between Jews and rats,

another strongly persuasive was being made which appeared to reinforce these degrading representations. When understood in evolutionary terms, concepts of animality took on more 'scientific' tones and their application became increasingly focused on the evolutionary struggle for survival. The Jews had been degraded to low-ranking types of animals; in the evolutionary hierarchy of 'species', this ranking implies that Jews are necessarily less-evolved, weak and a threat to the advancement of more highly-evolved 'species'. "The Jewish intellect will never be constructive but always destructive" (Hitler, 171). As a weaker and destructive race, the Jews needed to be removed from their illegitimate position in Germany:

A stronger race will oust that which has grown weak; for the vital urge, in its ultimate form, will burst asunder all the absurd chains of this so-called humane consideration for the individual and will replace it with the humanity of Nature, which wipes out what is weak in order to give place to the strong (83).

Hitler believes that the necessary and inevitable defeat of the Jews is the rightful course of Nature:

if a people be defeated in the struggle for its human rights this means that its weight has proved too light in the scale of Destiny to have the luck of being able to endure in this terrestrial world (63).

According to evolutionary laws, Darwin determines that the contest between rival or competing tribes, races, or/species would be settled "by war, slaughter, cannibalism, slavery and absorption"; even when a weaker side was not "abruptly swept away, if it once begins to decrease, it generally goes on decreasing until it is extinct" (238). Although Hitler does not agree with the absorption of the Jews into the Germanic race, he is sure that, in contest against Germany, the Jews would face devastation, decrease and eventual extinction. The degenerate Jews could not possibly stand up against the might of the awakened Aryan race.

Hitler maintains that the internal characteristics of a race are always the causes which decide the effect that external circumstances had on them (163); the degenerate, corrupt nature of the Jews is the true cause of their doomed future. An individual's worth is determined by his or her racial personality, which in turn would determine the individual's fate. But those individuals belonging to superior races need to be protected from the weak and degenerate lest their own fate or bloodlines, or both, be compromised. The degenerate Jews had only been able to become a "world-embracing power" because of their insistence on "purity of race" as an "inflexible fundamental law" (Chamberlain, 271; vol. 1) and the complacency of the Gentile world. "Races which are culturally superior but less ruthless" would be restricted in their expansion and development (Hitler, 84) as the ruthless Jews were allowed to continue unimpeded. Grant writes that "the most practical and hopeful method of race improvement" is "the elimination of the least desirable elements in the nation by depriving them of the power to contribute to future generations" (53; revised ed.). Hitler is in full agreement with Grant's idea of race improvement. Greater care is necessary to secure the future of Germany and weaker races must be prevented from strengthening their degenerate bloodlines.

The weaker members of civilized societies propagate their kind. No one who has attended to the breeding of domestic animals will doubt that this must be highly injurious to the race of man. It is surprising how soon a want of care, or care wrongly directed, leads to the degeneration of a domestic race; but excepting in the case of man himself, hardly any one is so ignorant as to allow his worst animals to breed (Darwin, 168; vol. 1).

A leading Austrian scientist and a committed member of the Nazi party, Konrad Lorenz contributed to the intellectual respectability of the party through his comparative research into humans and animals (Sax 130). The Nazis were determined to portray and discuss human behavior and the body politic in biological terms; Lorenz's ideas were ideologically compatible with this approach (Burkhardt, 241-2).

Since childhood, Lorenz had been fascinated with the theory of evolution and saw comparative anatomy as a method of exploring Darwin's theory in depth. From a prominent position in the German Society for Animal Psychology (232), Lorenz was able to teach and circulate the findings of his research. In his lecture, "Breakdown in the Instinctive Behavior of Domestic Animals and their Social-Psychological Meaning", Lorenz claims that the degeneration of instinctive behavior in domestic ducks directly correlated to the genetic and cultural degeneration of "civilized man" (Burkhardt, 244). Observing the "abhorrence" of certain geese for "streetwalkers" and by applying the findings of his wildlife research to human beings, Lorenz arrives at some potent conclusions:

I believe man has an inborn abhorrence for humans who have degenerate instincts. This abhorrence has also certainly a species-preserving value, since in humans degenerate mating drives and similar brood-care reactions go along with each other, as, e.g., with my greylag/domestic geese crosses (Lorenz, qtd. in Burkhardt, 242-3).

Such conclusions were eagerly accepted by Nazi professionals and applied broadly to humanity; the Nazi abhorrence for the degenerate Jews was simply an inborn, species-preserving mechanism provided by nature to safe-guard superior species or races.

The concept of an innate racial repugnance was long-standing and well-accepted in academic circles. Lorenz's research lent scientific credibility to the concept, made it seem immediately relevant and his comparative studies were used to justify ideologies of national and Nordic superiority (Sax, 126). The degenerate species needed to be removed from within Germany in order to protect the nation from contamination. This action could not be seen as cruel prejudice or hatred; it was merely a response to natural preservative instincts and necessitated by the natural laws of survival. Later, some corpses were salvaged from the gas chambers so that the structure of their skulls could be examined in attempts to acquire 'scientific' biological research material that would confirm "a repulsive but typical species of subhumanity" (Lifton, 285). As science progressed, the Jew was rejected from humanity for

“scientific” reasons – race. Men like Gobineau, Chamberlain and Lorenz advanced their racial theories and the Jews became the anti-thesis to the master race. The Jew could now be attacked from two sides. To the Church, he was the “non-Christian stumbling block; to the ‘scientific’ romanticists he belonged to an inferior race” (Trepp, 317). Gobineau writes that the superior, conquering empire would need to constantly draw new distinctions, new classifications of people, and increase the number of social grades (31-2). The supremacy of a white state could only be imagined “by the recognizing the undisputed superiority of those groups of the white races which have remained the purest” (208). Like Gobineau and other visionary Aryans, Hitler dreams of “a nobler era, in which men will no longer pay exclusive attention to breeding and rearing pedigree dogs and horses and cats, but will endeavor to improve the breed of the human race itself” (228). German Aryans were to consider themselves as stock to breed the purest biological forms and the Jews as pests that could contaminate that racial purity (Arluke and Sanders, 158).

In the minds of many Germans, the Bolshevik conquest of Germany was a completely Jewish objective. Himmler regarded Bolshevism as a “surface manifestation”, a symptom of a societal disease. Breitman suggests that a Marxist might refer to such an ideological threat as “mere superstructure”. Himmler was convinced that Bolshevism was the “mere superstructure” or “surface manifestation” of a greater, more threatening Jewish conspiracy (Breitman, 245). In a speech to inspire German soldiers, Himmler described some of the supposed history of Jewish Bolshevism and the subhuman nature of its followers “whose physique is such that one can shoot them down without pity or compassion” (Breitman, 177):

These animals, that torture and ill-treat every prisoner from our side...these people have been welded by the Jews into one religion, one ideology, that is called bolshevism, with the task: now we have Russia, half of Asia, a part of Europe, now we will overwhelm Germany and the whole

world...when you, my men, fight over there in the East, you are carrying on the same struggle, against the same subhumanity, the same inferior races that at one time appeared under the name of the Huns...under the name of Magyars...under the name of Tartars...under the name Genghis Khan and the Mongols... (Ibid.).

Both Hitler and Himmler believed that the Bolsheviks had a conscious policy of racial miscegenation (179). This supposed policy seemed to provide further confirmation of the Jewish-Bolshevik link; the Jews had long been believed to be the racial “mongrels” responsible for biological degeneration. The terms “Bolshevik” and “Jew” became practically synonymous for Hitler; being a Jew remained the ultimate crime, but many Communist party members were executed because Hitler regarded them as “spiritual Jews” even if they had no Jewish blood (Gordon, 103).

Frustrated with Jewish influence and pervasiveness, Houston Stewart Chamberlain asks if it is possible to “read the daily paper without becoming acquainted with Jewish ways of thinking, Jewish taste, Jewish morals, Jewish aims” (340; vol.1). Euthanasia was one of the initial movements in the Nazi social cleansing and, regardless of any opposition, Nazi powers took the comparison of ‘inferior’ humans to animals to its ultimate end. The infamous commandant of Auschwitz, Rudolf Hoess, expresses an attitude that became accepted by many of his fellow Germans:

There was nothing new in anti-Semitism. It has always existed all over the world, but has only come into the limelight when the Jews have pushed themselves forward too much in their quest for power, and when their evil machinations have become too obvious for the general public to stomach (Hoess, 145).

This attitude became so entrenched that, in post-war hindsight, Hoess makes an enlightening observation of regret, saying, “I now see that the extermination of the Jews was fundamentally wrong...It in no way served the cause of anti-Semitism, but on the contrary brought the Jews far closer

to their ultimate objective” (201). On August 3, 1941, Clemens Count von Galen, the Catholic bishop of Munster, spoke out against racial and social “euthanasia”:

It is said of these patients: They are like an old machine which no longer runs, like an old horse which is hopelessly paralyzed, like a cow which no longer gives milk. What do we do with a machine of this kind? We put it in the junkyard. What do we do with a paralyzed horse? No, I do not wish to push the comparison to the end...we are not talking here about a machine, a horse, nor a cow...no, we are talking about men and women, our compatriots, our brothers and sisters. Poor unproductive people if you wish, but does this mean that they have lost their right to live? (Lifton, 93-4).

The Jews had been reduced to non-human animals in need of culling. On 15 April, 1942, a law was passed that forbade Jews from keeping cats, dogs, birds or other pets (Maser, 199); Jewish ‘animals’ could not possibly own other animals as pets especially if the pet was considered superior to the Jew. The Nazi worldview functioned as a screen that allowed German officials and soldiers to unremittently target their victims (Orth, 313).

Hitler was determined that Germany should once again be a pure, conquering nation and, in September 1935, the “Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor” came into effect. It outlawed new marriages between non-Jews and Jews and prohibited sexual relations between them. The law also forbade Jews to employ non-Jewish women under 45 as servants and made it illegal for Jews to raise the German flag (Gellately, 122). Hitler left the official definition of a Jew vague, but the law successfully worked to further exclude Jews from life as German citizens. Houston Stewart Chamberlain suggests that the “sound and normal evolution” of humanity was “from racelessness to ever clearer distinctness of race” (196; vol. 1). Hitler’s legal proceedings made the division between the Germans and the Jews official, but this was merely a preliminary proceeding; *Mein Kampf* reveals

Hitler's conviction that, "if Nature does not wish that weaker individuals should mate with the stronger, she wishes even less that a superior race should intermingle with an inferior one" (162). By legally emphasizing the differences between the races and criminalizing certain racial interaction, Hitler officially approved the marginalization and segregation of the Jews in the minds of German public. The anti-Semitic laws lent an air of legal and moral justification to "because criminal laws became part of a mirage of law and order" (Koonz, 192). Breitman suggests that the aspiration to free Germany of the Jews was a goal that initially did not *sound* criminal to the general public (152); it appealed to the growing feelings of nationalism and seemed like a logical and necessary goal. Hitler employed an ideology that motivated racial destruction by reducing an entire group of persons to the status of "nonpersons" (Hungerford, 157); the inferior and often non-human status attributed to Jews permitted Nazi Germany to take drastic measures to ensure the complete solution of the Jewish Question. The dismissal of humane considerations was seemingly justified in the struggle between Germany and the Jews – after all, the Jews were inferior and had negligible, if any, claim to human status.

Hitler's anti-Semitic legislation gave a sense of legal 'rightness' to his campaign against Jews and the concept of Jewish inferiority was further backed up by diverse modes of propaganda. This deluge of propaganda was focused on informing Germany of the Jewish threat, re-educating German racial perceptions and convincing society that the removal of Jews from within Germany was both sound and logical. The constant use of animal rhetoric and imagery entrenched the non-human status of Jews in Germany's national consciousness. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler clarified the "purpose of propaganda" as the attraction of "public attention to certain things, the importance of which can be brought home to the masses only by this means" (107-8). Personal instruction was unnecessary as mass "education" was carried out by Nazi propaganda and vigilantly enforced by German police, soldiers and politicians. Himmler felt it was unnecessary to even "educate" party officials regarding the "Jewish Question"

because of the pervasiveness of anti-Semitic attitudes and beliefs (Breitman, 100). In reference to the comprehensive power of propaganda, Primo Levi wrote that almost all of the German public “had been deaf, blind, and dumb: a mass of ‘invalids’ surrounded by a core of ferocious beasts” (Levi, *The Drowned*, 169). A significant part of the power of the Nazi regime was its ability to mobilize and utilize the new media of mass communication provided by modern technology – especially radio and cinema. Radios became an important tool of Nazi propaganda and the gradual desensitization of the German public. In 1919, Hitler signed the “extraordinary radio measures” decree that had been compiled by Goebbels. The decree stated that “in modern war the enemy fights not only with military weapons... but also with methods intended to influence and undermine the morale of the people. One of these methods is the radio” (Gellately, 184). Hitler was completely aware of the significance of language and representation as means of influencing and directing public opinion. Years earlier, he had written that

Propaganda must not investigate the truth objectively and, in so far as it is favorable to the other side, present it according to the theoretical rules of justice; yet it must present only that aspect of the truth which is favorable to its own side (109).

The portrayal of Jews as non-human or sub-human creatures is a non-objective representation that was embellished with associations, connotations and deceptions in order to favor the Nazi programme. Montagu defines race as “an abstraction, an arbitrary label of a human grouping culturally defined in a given society” (196). Therefore, according to Montagu, race prejudice was “a system of reciprocal relations of stereotyping, discrimination, and segregation existing between human groupings that are considered as races” (Ibid.).

Stereotyping, discrimination and segregation were all integral to the success of the Nazi racial operation. When newsreels showed images of the evacuation of the Jews, many German citizens

reacted with disgust rather than pity; the images heightened German concern about what ought to happen to protect Germany from such ‘hoards’ (Gellately, 141). Walter Gross, founder of the Office for Enlightenment on Population Policy and Racial Welfare (Koonz, 105), believed film was an ideal medium to reinforce racial ideology because it appealed to the physical senses while simultaneously speaking to the heart and mind (125). From the mid-1930s, the Office of Racial Politics (ORP) released anti-Semitic documentaries with titles such as “Sins against Blood and Race”, “What You Inherit”, “All Life is a Battle”, “Palace for the Mentally Ill”, and “Genetically Sick” (Koonz, 125). Throughout the films, male ‘experts’ wore white lab coats and provide “resonant movietone” commentaries that starkly contrasted with the chaotic images they described (Ibid.).

Other modes of visual propaganda were also prolific in their endorsement of Nazi racial ideals. Pamphlets were widely distributed and similarly titled e.g. “Can You Think Racially?” and “German Racial Care” (Koonz, 123). Alongside photographs that juxtapose ‘undesirables’ with ideal German types, a SS manual declares that “the genetically ill damage the community. The healthy preserve the *Volk*.” (120). From 1923 to 1945, a popular SA publication, *Der Sturmer*, was filled with demeaning, often pornographic, illustrations that supplied the public with the ‘truth’ about the Jews. Vampires, rodents, reptiles and spiders were drawn wearing the Star of David and attacking healthy Aryan homes while “Jewish-looking” men stalked young blonde girls (Koonz, 232). A photo essay, “Animals, Look at Yourselves!” showed images of the Jews whose features had been artificially retouched and exaggerated in order for readers to grasp the connection between external appearance and internal degeneration/corruption (Ibid.). Judges at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials considered the dehumanizing language and “obscene racial libels” of the anti-Semitic *Der Sturmer* important enough to have “perverted the attitudes of countless Germans toward, and incited genocidal acts against the Jewish people” (Brennan, 189). “No matter if words and beliefs are false, if men define them as real,

they will be real in their consequences” (Montagu, 176).

The recognition and representation of the rat as a Jew and the Jew as a rat has even further implications when loaded with a political agenda: “a dynamic relationship between visual ‘difference’ ...and deep social and political meaning” (Jacobsen, 173). Released in 1940, the film *Der Ewige Jude* (The Eternal Jew) was part of a deluge of visual propaganda that swamped Germany and solidified the perceptions of Jews as non-human animals or diseased, destructive, inferior beings. The film juxtaposes images of the gaunt and disheveled Jews living within the ghettos with images of rats scurrying in German sewers. The overlap of images was cemented by the commentary which said that, “just as the rat is the lowest of animals, the Jew is the lowest of human beings” (Patterson, 46). Although discussing horror films, Helman’s words are just as applicable to the power of films such as *Der Ewige Jude*:

Reflecting as they do some of the basic themes in modern culture, they tend to leak off the screen and into our lives – and there is nothing we can do to stop them. Some people find they can use these images to conceptualize themselves and their own behavior. Horror and fantasy films, for instance, offer us the idea of the human as half-animal (7).

*Der Ewige Jude* overlapped the image of the Jews with the image of rats in such a powerful way that the overlap “leaked off the screen” and into people’s lives. The disgust, detachment and desensitization that such imagery provoked also increased feelings of anti-Semitism and the regard of Jews as sub- or non-humans. The film appealed to primitive, medieval conceptions of a wandering Jew carrying epidemics and disease in an effort to “desecrate” other races (Welch, 78). Moreover, the constant analogy made with rats reinforced the growing belief that Jews had no souls (80).

The rat was a “nuisance of nature and nothing could be said in its favor” (Zinsser, 202). A German newspaper from the mid-1930s proclaimed

Mickey Mouse is the most miserable ideal ever revealed...Healthy emotions tell every

independent young man and every honorable youth that the dirty and filth-covered vermin, the greatest bacteria carrier in the animal kingdom, cannot be the ideal type of animal...Away with Jewish brutalization of the people! Down with Mickey Mouse! Wear the Swastika Cross! (qtd. in Hungerford, 87).

The juxtaposition and likening of rats to Jews highlighted a menace which Germany needed to resist. "Terror cannot be overcome by the weapons of the mind but only by counter-terror" (Hitler, 203) and the Jewish terror that had for so long gone unheeded must now be dealt with severely if Germany was to retain any hope for a future. Retrospectively, Hans Frank attributed the image of the Pied Piper who rid the fictional village of Hamelin of rats and children to Hitler, the savior of Germany (Sax, 159). Police were given a certain "quota" of Jews they were to hunt in the streets (Pearlman, 240). Many incidents have been reported of German soldiers having contests and boasting about the number of Jews they had managed to kill per day (272, 279). The removal of the Jewish race was not seen as a crime but a necessity; Jews were not human beings, but pests which had to be exterminated.

So *Der Ewige Jude* finished up being shown on the one hand to the populations of the occupied countries and on the other hand to guards at the concentration camps before a new batch of victims arrived for processing and extermination. It would not have done for them of all people to think of the Jews as human beings (Welch, 80-1).

Through appeals to German nationalism, 'evolutionary' arguments, legal measures and a constant barrage of emotive and evocative propaganda, Hitler had transposed a comprehensive portrayal of sub-humanity upon the Jews as a race. Many Germans became convinced of the logistical need to remove Jews from within Germany even if they were not completely convinced of the morality of such an action. As the primary target of Hitler's racial campaign, Jews faced an increasingly troublesome future as the implications of dehumanizing rhetoric and Nazi degradation became reality.

## Chapter Four:

### Life on the Lowest Level: The Stories of the Subhuman and Non-human Animals

Many Germans had been wooed by Hitler and became “instrumentally and emotionally invested” in the Nazi program (Gellately, 256). Hitler called for Germany to rise up and fight for “the freedom and independence of the Fatherland” (125); he depicted Jews as the foremost threat to the future of Germany. In regards to Jewry, Hitler was adamant that it must be “the hard-and-fast ‘Either-Or’” (121). While Nazi soldiers were trained to consider Jews as less than human, the German public were alerted to the need to protect Germany from foreign, ‘degenerate’ influences. The consistent representations of Jews as parasites, rats, germ-carriers, corrupters and despoilers became increasingly potent as they were constantly repeated. These representations convinced many Germans that Jews were abhorrent sub-human creatures that *must be* and deserved to be treated accordingly. Hitler’s portrayal of Jews as non-human may have empowered many Germans or stirred them to defend their national identity; yet its effect upon Jews themselves was degrading and incredibly destructive. This chapter will show how the dehumanizing representations of the Jews actually manifested in practice and in the lives of those living and dying under Hitler’s genocidal regime.

Once they could be represented as sub-human animals, Jews were not entitled to either human rights or humane treatment; rather, as animals, the Jews were treated with disdain and contempt. They were herded, branded with numbers, neutered, and slaughtered industrially “as people had traditionally done with animals” (Sax, 22). However, within Nazi Germany and particularly within the confines of the concentration camp, certain animals were entitled to a level of privilege that contrasted radically with

the treatment of the ‘subhuman’ Jews. The Nazis’ extension of privilege to their own animals demonstrated to the prisoners that these non-human animals held value far surpassing that extended to the internees. Rodd stipulates that the ‘personhood’ of select animal species does not mean that *all* animals would or should have to be granted equal status (Rodd, 254); nowhere is this more evident than in the Nazi regard of the Jews. The zoological gardens in Buchenwald housed bears, monkeys and birds and, despite serious food shortages, these animals received a daily ration of meat taken from the prisoners’ portions. Whilst the prisoners were lucky to get their hands upon a rotten potato to gnaw at, these animals were given honey, jam, mashed potatoes, milk, oats, wine, meat, eggs and white bread (Kogon, 49, 115). With human races regarded as several distinct species, it can be no surprise that many animals were favorably treated whilst the evolutionarily ‘inferior’ Jews were starved, neglected, herded up, kept captive, and exterminated.

In Nazi Germany’s ostensibly more evolved state, only ‘sick’ animals and those required for food were meant to be killed (Arluke and Sanders, 142). The Germans were permitted to hunt ‘sick’ animals and that category included the ‘non-human animal’, the Jew. In her investigation of the parallels between human and animal slavery, Marjorie Spiegel suggests that “hunting” – human or animal - can be seen as “turning *someone* into *something*”: “turning a vital, living being with a past and a potential future into a corpse” (59). In this way, Spiegel concludes, the hunter has proven him- or herself by establishing that he or she has the power, “the ultimate power of life and death’, and is capable of exerting that power over someone else (Ibid.). The hunt and extermination of unwanted ‘creatures’ took on dangerous implications under Hitler’s rule; the Nazis’ ‘pest extermination’ of the Jews changed the perception of the Jew from being a *someone* to being a mere *something*. From this vantage point, the Jews were completely dispensable and their eradication became even more desirable. The Nazi revision of the conventional valuation of human over nonhuman animal life was exemplified by

Himmler, who was one of a number of Nazis emphatically opposed to the hunting of animals as a sport, questioning how it could be possible to “find pleasure in shooting from behind cover at poor creatures browsing in the edge of a wood, innocent, defenseless and unsuspecting” (qtd. in Sax, 121). Himmler viewed hunting for sport as “pure murder” (Ibid.) yet he saw the German hunting of the Jews as the necessary removal of threatening non-human animals, a group of dangerous *things*. In 1940, Himmler made the suggestion to Hitler that poachers serving time in prison, although currently barred from military service, might be of some use in the East. An alleged vegetarian, Hitler was also strongly opposed to hunting and considered it as cruel slaughter of helpless animals. However, he reacted with enthusiasm to Himmler’s idea; since the poachers were experienced in killing animals, they could be employed to help manage “another species considered subhuman - the Jews” (Breitman, 129).

Himmler was keenly interested in animals but had no tolerance for the ‘subhuman’ Jews whom he considered to be inferior to many non-human animals. Under the Nazi regime, Jews were attributed with diminishing levels of humanity until many Germans did not or could not recognize the Jews as fellow human beings. References to the Jews often sounded more like references to cattle or beasts. Himmler, making reference to the Polish Jews, declared that it was “high time that this riff-raff be herded together in ghettos; then bring in epidemics and let them rot” (1939, qtd. in Aly, 17). In 1939, Reinhard Heydrich stated that, instead of building a “Jewish reservation”, a “nature preserve” or “Reich ghetto” was to be built for the Jewish “elements” (Aly, 23) – a nature preserve for the non-human Jewish animals. In 1942, Himmler declared that the “extermination of people” was “unGermanic” but, in his mind, the Jews were not human beings (Manvell and Fraenkel, 119). As he ordered the destruction of the Warsaw ghetto, Himmler ardently declared that the “500,000 subhuman creatures, who are in any case useless to the Germans, must disappear” (Pearlman, 265).

The Nazi treatment of their animals was starkly contrasted with the reality of camp life for its internees. Amongst the animals kept by the Germans, dogs were very highly valued and were given ‘human’ privileges and authority. The companionship of a dog was believed to connect “the soil and humanity” (Arluke and Sanders, 143), strengthening the link between Germany and its true citizens. Thus honored, the German dogs were kept in large, spacious kennels whilst the Jewish ‘mongrels’ at Dachau were often put in the “dog cells” where they could only lie huddled together on one side and had to bark for their food as it was passed to them (Kogon, 207). Some dogs were even trained specifically for the sexual violation of young girls who survived initial selections at the concentration camps (Lengyel, 199) as if they were men entitled to the sexuality of the captive girls. It has been suggested that many Nazi soldiers and leaders developed strong bonds with the animals under their care because their beliefs and daily activities marginalized or alienated them from human society (Arluke and Sanders, 150-1). In *Reckoning with the Beast*, James Turner suggests another possible explanation. In his examination of human-animal relationships from the mid-nineteenth century into the early twentieth, Turner identifies kindness to animals as “the surest refutation of the human being’s bestial savagery” (Turner, 77). According to this line of thought, the kind treatment of animals allowed the German soldiers to call themselves humane despite any atrocities carried out during the day. After a day of maintaining order, delivering beatings and burning bodies, German soldiers and officials were able to briefly retreat from the barbarity of their daily duties with their much loved pets. Ironically, as the soldiers’ humanity was reassured through their mastery and affection for their pets, the idealistic Nazi association of the Aryan with the wolf or dog was simultaneously being reinforced. Dogs and wolves were seen by many Nazis as examples of admirable traits, and the Nazi identification with idealized images of predator animals strengthened their claim to an instinctive or natural right to kill (Sax, 34). Rosemary Rodd suggests that human beings take the place of pack leaders or parents in their relationships with their dogs (173). Thus the relationships of Nazi men to their dogs could be seen as

enforcing their own animal representation: the ‘alpha male’, a German wolf or dog leading his pack in the struggle for survival. To the Nazi mind, the Jews were subhuman pests whose moral and evolutionary status ranked much lower than the German dogs – “pests and vermin that any farmer had to dispose of if he was going to sustain himself and his family” (Breitman, 245). For Jean Amery, the only son of a Catholic mother and a Jewish father (Amery, 106), being a Jew meant “being a dead man on leave, someone to be murdered, who only by chance was not yet where he properly belonged” (86). Having been relegated to a status that completely stripped them of their humanity, the prisoners struggled to maintain their existence as “the denial of human dignity sounded the death threat” (Ibid.). Deprived of humane conditions and human status, the Jews had been reduced to animals by the Nazis.

“Before dying the victim must be degraded, so that the murderer will be less burdened by guilt” (Levi, *The Drowned*, 126). Combined with the appalling conditions in the camps, the use of animal names and terms made it easier for SS jobs (Patterson, 47). After all, they were able to consider their work as pest extermination or animal slaughter. A survivor of Dachau recalled the “usual welcome to prisoners was ‘Swine’” – a term not only dehumanizing but also offensive to the Jews who considered pigs religiously unclean (Pearlman, 411). Hans Franz, an SS officer at Treblinka, saw it as his duty to rid Germany of the Jewish pests and liked to indulge in occasional “pigeon shooting” whenever it took his fancy. An excellent shot, Franz would climb a pile of Jewish clothing that was in need of sorting. These piles often reached the height of a two or three storey house and, from this vantage point, “the prisoners who were working below were not allowed to look up...he immediately killed those whom he caught doing nothing” (Steiner, 126-7). Another SS officer at Treblinka, Kurt Franz appointed a Jewish commandant to work under him in the concentration camp and presented the man to the internees: “Behold your leader’, he shouted. ‘The leader of the subhumans! To me, he is a Jew; to you, he is a leader!’” (Steiner, 71). Hitler maintained that the first stages of any civilization were not

based on the use of animals but the employment of human beings belonging to the inferior races; only after subjugated races were employed as slaves was a similar fate allotted to animals...at first it was the conquered enemy who had to draw the plough and only afterwards did the ox and horse take his place (167).

Germany was a civilization being rebuilt and, in Hitler's mind, the horse was an animal of much greater value than the Jew – an attitude that was borne out by German soldiers who loaded wagons with baggage, un-harnessed the horses and harnessed Jewish men in the horses' place (Pearlman, 248-9). Max Burger, a Jewish prisoner who witnessed such proceedings, describes how he and his fellow prisoners were also ordered to carry water for two kilometers only to have “the water distributed in this order: first the guards, then the horses, and then the Jews” (qtd. in Pearlman, 250). Prisoners were often made to trot to the camps and then “they selected you as you trotted into the gates” (Lifton, 183). Large numbers of Jews were frequently herded by soldiers who maintained control by use of horse or dog whips. Inmates at the Maidanek camp were held in stables and stables designed for 52 horses which were crammed with over 800 Jews (Goldhagen, 387); similarly, on the way to Buchenwald, 500 Jews were packed into a small sheep barn (Gellately, 128). Himmler referred to the concentration camp prisoners as the “offal of criminals and freaks, for the most part, slave-like souls” (Manvell and Fraenkel, 61); now this “offal” risked disease and beatings to ransack the garbage for edible offal or bones that could be boiled (Levi, *The Drowned*, 114). Many tried to work in the dogs' mess in hope of eating any scraps that may have fallen from the dogs' mouths (115). Driven by desperate thirst, many prisoners resorted to lapping rainwater from old puddles as if they were dogs (Lengyel, 56). Tedeschi recalls the women's “sense of disgust for this animal way of eating” was “even greater than our repugnance for the contents” (8). In Auschwitz, “to eat” was described as “fressen”, a verb which in “good German” applies only to animals (Levi, *The Drowned*, 99). In every aspect of concentration

camp life, the prisoners were constantly reminded of their ‘animal’ status. Regarded and treated like ‘low’ animals, the Jews were accordingly ‘housed’ within the concentration camps. On 15 June, 1938, after the usual initial selections at Buchenwald, 500 Jewish prisoners were sent to the small “sheepshed” where there were no tables, bunks, benches or water (Kogon, 162). In Birkenau, the bunks were carved out one above the other in the walls and “human forms, thickly packed as rabbits in their hutches, lay under rough army blankets” (Tedeschi, 2). Pawelczynska details similar bunks in Auschwitz: three horizontal layers measuring 75 centimeters high, 200 centimeters wide and 200 centimeters deep. These bunks, or “roosts”, were the bedrooms for five to twelve women, “depending on the congestion” (Pawelczynska, 28). In Treblinka, it was not uncommon for camp barracks to resemble butcheries because of the high number of prisoner suicides; “when you got up in the night... you had to walk with your arms out in front of your face to keep from running into the hanging bodies” (Steiner, 81).

The harsh conditions that the Nazis forced upon Jewish men and women saw the embodiment of many of the animal images that Germany had increasingly associated with Jewry. If a Jew was caught stealing ration cards or accepting bribes for the cards, they were labeled “parasite” and, if they survived the confrontation, were sentenced to death (Gellately, 29). Therefore, many Germans felt justified in labeling Jews as parasites; after all, they were stealing from German citizens. In Mauthausen, Dutch Jews were repeatedly forced to clean out latrines with their bare hands, rub the feces into their skin and then made to eat the fecal matter (Le Chêne, 115). Such incidents almost seem to be an enforced fulfillment of Hitler’s claim regarding the “fabricator of these unclean products” (Hitler, 42), the Jews: one of these fellows, acting like a sewage pump, would shoot his filth directly in the face of other members of the human race...despoilers who act as the worst kind of germ-carrier in poisoning human souls (Ibid.).

Hitler was certain that the internal characteristics of a race were always the causes which determined “the nature of the effect that outer circumstances have on them” (Hitler, 163). Thus, according to Hitler, the ‘despoiling’, ‘parasitic’, ‘mongrel’ Jews could hardly be surprised when they were in turn despoiled, parasitic and regarded as mongrels.; “Oh, if one could only affront the wind as we once used to, on equal terms, and not as we do here, like cringing dogs” (Levi, *The Drowned*, 76).

Apparently developed by Jewish scientist, Fritz Haber, Zyklon-B was used extensively as an pesticide “against rodent and insect spreaders of disease” (Lifton, 161). Ironically, Zyklon-B became the most common gas used in the Nazi crematoriums, Germany’s most effective ‘pesticide’ for the destruction of millions. Sax reflects on how, in World War I, it had become common to compare one’s enemies to beetles, ants, locusts, and other pests; at the same time, pesticides were frequently transferred to the battlefield as an effective weapon (21). Similarly, methods of insect/pest extermination were employed in the racial battlefields of World War II. During 1941-43, the gas chambers built in the extermination camps were officially labeled “delousing units”. Although little reference was made to the actual function of these units, Himmler often called them crematorium-delousing units, alluding to their real purpose (Breitman, 88). The public were often told that these “delousing units” were installed to delouse the Jews before they began their time in the camps. In reality, the crematoriums fulfilled the function of delousing, but it was the removal of Jewish lice from Germany because, as Goebbels announced, “the Jews are the lice of civilized humanity” (Aly, 245). Haber’s wife supposedly committed suicide when she discovered how Zyklon-B had been used in the hands of the Nazis (Stern, 135). Referred to by a range of medical euphemisms, mass murder and cruel torture were integral to the power and success of the Nazi genocidal program. SS “medical corpsmen” were trained in the correct handling and use of the crematoriums’ lethal chemicals; these men became known as the “disinfectors” (Ibid.). Because its use in the gas chambers, Zyklon B was regarded as a form of

“medical equipment” and consequently stored in the Auschwitz pharmacy (Lifton, 161). German soldiers became increasingly obsessed with the idea of ‘infection’; in the camp of Janowska, six men who apparently “looked” ill were left outside to freeze overnight “so as not to infect the others”. A few days later, the camp commandant, Obersturmfuehrer Fritz Gebauer, determined that eight strong prisoners did not look “clean” enough; they were left outside in a large barrel of water for twenty-four hours and their bodies had to be chipped out of the ice (Pearlman, 279). The notion of delousing and national hygiene had become extremely perverted in its realization.

The regarding of Jews as non-human animals was designed to make mass-cruelty and murder seem justifiable or, at least, permissible. Many officials, officers and soldiers derived their motives and “the knowledge that governed their actions” from their “healthy common sense” (Orth, 330-1). The Jews were a hazard and a threat to Germany’s future; naturally, the threat needed to be removed. They were not humans that ought to be treated with dignity but inferior animals that needed to be slaughtered.

The Jews were not a race of human beings; rather, Hitler theorized that their

feeling of racial solidarity... is nothing but a very primitive gregarious instinct, similar to that which may be found among other organisms in this world... this herd instinct brings individuals together for mutual protection only as long as there is a common danger (170).

The herd instinct of these non-humans was yet more ‘proof’ of their nonhuman status; it was an innate safety mechanism that responded when “a common danger threatens them or a common prey attracts them” (171). The German consideration and subsequent control of the Jewish ‘herds’ reflects a traditional power relationship between master and slave, ‘man’ and beast. In *The Parasite*, Serres examines the dynamics of power relations:

The oppressor is rare; the slave is ordinary – in droves. The relation between a master and his

slaves is always a relation between one and many...the master always knows where the slaves goes and will go; he has marked the entrances and exits and has stamped the passports (59).

The master retained human status whilst tightly governing the disempowered and dehumanized lives of the slave. Consideration of the Jews *en masse* further enabled Germany's genocidal actions. In preparation for murdering them, the Nazis would force the Jews to completely undress and huddle together. Sax explains that this process enforced the perception of Jews as animals; nakedness suggests an identity as animals and, when combined with crowding, suggests a herd of cattle or sheep ( 150). The emaciated, clean-shaven and skeletal state of the Jewish 'herds' would have made them even less recognizable as fellow human beings and more similar to the image of vermin. Large numbers of vermin have always induced feelings of repulsion in other animals whilst frequently occupying "man's imaginations" as a terror and/or threat (Canetti, 363). In *Crowds and Power*, Canetti wrote that any ruler who reduces men to animals and only manages to maintain his power over them by regarding them as belonging to an inferior species, "reduces to vermin all who do not qualify even to be ruled and ends by destroying them by the millions" (362).

The horrific dehumanizing circumstances saw many of the prisoners band together in order to support one another. Roll calls were taken in the very early morning hours regardless of the weather; during the winter, prisoners stood for hours in the snow, trying "to squeeze against one another like a herd of sheep" (Lengyel, 47). Prisoners often formed small groups within their barracks or with those with whom they had known outside the camps' confines:

In such groups men again became human beings, after the humiliation suffered in the toil of the day... Despite the prison stripes and the shorn skulls, they were able to look their fellows in the face, beholding the same sorrow and the same pride, and drawing renewed strength...

Membership in such a group was perhaps the finest experience in a concentration camp (Kogon,

280).

Within the camps' boundaries, many Jews found camaraderie and comfort amongst their fellow Jews as they all stared death in the face. For many prisoners, the 'herd' provided a way of clinging onto a fading sense of humanity and dignity. Unfortunately, it also provided the German soldiers and officers with a way of achieving greater detachment and desensitization, making it "easier for the murderers to destroy them, not one by one, but wholesale" (Aly, 165). Hoess believed that the "iron determination" that was needed to carry out Hitler's orders could only be obtained "by a stifling of all human emotions" (Hoess, 173). Cruelty towards the victims was one way to stifle "human emotion" as it reinforced the distance between soldiers and prisoners; Lengyel likens the Nazi soldiers to the "heartless children who amuse themselves by tearing off the legs and wings of insects. Here there was one difference: the insects were human beings" (185).

However, the emotions were even more easily stifled when one was confronted with a mass of nameless, faceless bodies rather than the pleading eyes of a desperate individual that was somebody's mother, daughter, sister or wife. Steiner explains how, by shooting Jews, a relationship was created "between executioner and the victim" which was damaging to the executioner's morale:

It was no longer squad number such-and-such, but rifleman so-and-so. Moreover, this personalization of the act was accompanied by a physical proximity, since the executioner stood less than a yard away from his victim (48).

Mass execution provided a means by which the exterminations could be achieved whilst maintaining distance between the perpetrator and victims. Thousands of Jews were stripped, gassed and cremated each day, reaching astronomical numbers that could simply not be accomplished by one-on-one executions; even if the Nazis had been able to shoot the Jews at such rates, the task would have driven many of them mad. Tedeschi recalls the simple truth that "amid a sea of faces, all of the same

complexion, the fact that you have dark skin and dark hair condemns you...” (13). That same 'sea of faces, all of the same complexion' was a factor in the efficiency of the German death camps; individuals were not being murdered, but a herd was being processed.

The method of killing large numbers of Jews in the infamous gas chambers was an especially effective and expedient method of maintaining distance between killers and victims (Lifton, 15) - efficient mass murder that provided individuals with at least a little distance from the actuality of their actions.

Although German soldiers and doctors generally regarded the Jews as inferior and non-human, moral qualms still presented problems for some of the Germans and steps needed to be taken to ensure their compliance and mental protection. In regards to mass executions, Himmler was dissatisfied with the shooting of the Jews because this method of murder was having a significant effect on his soldiers; shooting meant close proximity of the killer to the victim and made detachment almost impossible for the killers. Himmler held commanders and officers personally responsible for ensuring their men who carried out the executions did not suffer damage “to spirit or character” (Breitman, 220-1). This “numbed violence” of the gas chambers (Lifton, 15) could only be witnessed through a small grate or peephole in the gas chamber walls, enabling the Nazi “master” to “avoid a confrontation, which would endanger his mastery and possession. This ruse is mastery itself and the way of keeping it” (Serres, 58). In order to deal with the horrific task before them, Robert Jay Lifton suggests that concentration camp staff developed an outlook that became a “Nazi trademark - that of collective diagnosis” (135-6).

What Serres describes as the “ruse” of mastery became a technique of mental and psychological survival for the Germans; when confronted with trainloads of Jews, the staff had to consider only two things – that these were Jews and that they were presented *as a group* (Lifton, 135-6). Rudolf Hoess described the majority of German guards as uninterested or indifferent:

They carry out their tasks stolidly and discharge their duties, so far as they must, in a competent or indolent fashion... prisoners are mere objects that they have to supervise and guard. They scarcely regard them as human beings with lives of their own...but because of their indifference and narrow-mindedness and their desire for an easy life, they do cause a lot of harm (Hoess, 75-6).

A member of Police Battalion 101 remarked that, when it came to the Jews, “the category of human being was not applicable” (qtd. in Goldhagen, 279). In 1938, after being moved from management in Dachau to Sachsenhausen, Hoess had his own struggle to come to terms with his work within the concentration camps, but noted that his “inner scruples...receded into the background now that I no longer came into direct contact with the prisoners” (Hoess, 88). For those soldiers whose daily duties necessitated close interaction with the prisoners, cruelty became a way of maintaining distance between the Jewish subhumans and themselves. The prisoners became objects on which the soldiers’ frustration, contempt or anger could be taken out. Prestige amongst the SS was rapidly increased by a reputation for relentlessness, inducing fear and maintaining a proud, arrogant bearing (Kogon, 267); prisoners felt that the soldiers “toyed” with them “as a cat does with a mouse it will surely kill” (Lengyel, 34). The soldiers' 'toying' with the Jewish mice was often psychological as much as physical. Irma Griese, a young SS female soldier nicknamed the “blonde angel”, was known for her extravagant use of perfume, described by an inmate as

perhaps the supreme refinement of cruelty. The internees, who had fallen to a state of physical degradation, inhaled these fragrances pitifully. By contrast, when she left us and the stale, sickening odor of burnt human flesh, which covered the camp like a blanket, crept over us again, the atmosphere became even more unbearable (Lengyel, 160).

Amery suggests that torture completes the transformation of a person into a non-human being; vulnerable, suffering, awaiting no help and capable of no resistance, “the tortured person is only a body

and nothing else beside that” (33). Victims of brutality, psychological torture and degradation, vast numbers of human beings were unwillingly becoming animals whilst their bodies clung to a basic humanity.

Amongst the Jews interned in the German camps, Emmanuel Levinas has described himself as subjected to a soldiers’ gaze that “stripped us of our human skin” and reduced him and his companions to “a quasi-humanity, a gang of apes” (153). He recalls an occasion where a stray dog wandered into the camp for a few weeks:

He came to meet this rabble as we returned under guard from work. He survived in some wild patch in the region of the camp. But we called him Bobby, an exotic name, as one does with a cherished dog. He would appear at morning assembly and was waiting for us as we returned, jumping up and down and barking in delight. For him, there was no doubt we were men (Ibid.)

Under their Nazi captors, the prisoners had been reduced to inferior animals without freedom or dignity, yet it is the presence of a wandering dog that “restores the humanity and reverses the shame of the prisoners” (Simmons, 33). Free from racial ideology, the dog’s gaze did not distinguish or value the prisoners by their race but simply distinguished the prisoners as human beings. The prisoners’ interaction with different animals within the concentration camp boundaries had significant effects in either upholding or undermining their frail humanity. While this incident restored Levinas’ and his friends’ belief in their humanity, different encounters with animals made other prisoners feel even more degraded. A report of an incident in Sobibor details how an SS guard had a dog that he would pass to one of the other guards, Unterscharfuehrer Pavel, while he carried out his work. Pavel nicknamed the dog “*Mensch*,” German for “man”. Pavel would set the dog on a Jewish prisoner, “saying ‘Man, get that dog. You are my deputy’, he would say to the dog. The dog would tear lumps of flesh of the prisoners” (Pearlman, 390).

Dov Freiberg, a survivor of Solibor, recalled an ironic, torturous situation that demonstrates the captor's awareness of the demoralizing effect that interaction with animals had upon German's Jewish prisoners:

The shed was ridden with mice...we got the order, "five men, outside. The rest start catching mice; each man is to catch two mice. Anyone failing to do so will be killed." It was not difficult to catch them. The five men were then brought in and we had to tie the bottoms of their trousers. We then had to fill their trousers with mice, and they were ordered to stand to attention. They couldn't, and they kept wriggling. For this they were murderously beaten. The Germans roared with laughter (Pearlman, 391).

The terror and discomfort of the five men before their death would have seemed quite apt to the Germans who felt that the Jews were the unwelcome vermin causing havoc within the German nation; the Jewish 'vermin' were being betrayed by their alleged animal counterparts. Hitler describes the Jews as a "swarm of rats that bitterly fight against each other" (171) and only ceased fighting amongst themselves when they felt threatened. Within the camps, the 'real' rodents were unthreatened by the demoralized Jews and Lengyel describes "the great joy of the rats, who were surely the happiest occupants of Auschwitz-Birkenau":

These rodents, fattening on the dead flesh of our unfortunate companions, were so much at home that nothing we could do would drive them from our barracks. They were not afraid of us. Quite the contrary. They may have felt that they were the real masters (133).

Even the rats that the Jews were alleged to resemble exerted an element of power over the trapped and demeaned prisoners, feasting on the bodies of those no longer able to defend themselves or their humanity.

Vulnerable and degraded, Jewish prisoners were regarded as the lowest of the animals and treated accordingly. Stripped of their humanity, the Jews were simply a herd of animals to be processed. Industrial methods of agriculture, medicine, transport and slaughter were applied to these 'sub-humans' with great efficiency. During the Weimar Republic, the veterinary profession began to assert professional authority on the subject of industrial animal slaughter and within a short time, employment at the slaughter yards was recognized as a particularly prestigious and lucrative veterinary specialty (Sax, 145). Before his political rise to power under Hitler, Himmler was a chicken farmer. Thus, although he was strongly opposed to hunting, Himmler was a keen advocate of the industrialization of agriculture. His interest stemmed from his experiences as an apprentice farmer and his subsequent time spent studying for an agricultural diploma in Munich (Manvell and Fraenkel, 5). Hoess recalled how Himmler wanted Auschwitz to become "*the* agricultural research station for the eastern territories" (Hoess, 231). Himmler's initial designs for Auschwitz extended beyond bare concentration camp facilities and included stock-breeding, nurseries and fisheries (Ibid.). His knowledge of selective breeding, mechanized farming and systematic slaughter became politicized and devastatingly extended to include human individuals and races (Sax, 150). Camps were surrounded by high-voltage electric fences to help keep the prisoners inside (Pearlman, 387). In Auschwitz, human flesh was regarded as more expendable than the highly-valuable animal meat; using human flesh for experiments instead of animal meat was seen as acceptable and sensible (Lifton, 289). Among the young adult victims selected for castration and/or sterilization experiments at Auschwitz, a Greek Jewish woman astutely perceived that "they took us because they didn't have rabbits" (282).

Dr. Johann Paul Kremer, an anatomy professor who carried out extensive 'research' at Auschwitz, reveals in his diary the extent of his detachment and disregard for the Jewish prisoners upon whom he experimented:

Sept 4, 1942...present at a special action (selection) in the women's camp...The most horrible of horrors...

Sept 6...Today, Sunday, an excellent dinner: tomato soup, half a chicken with potatoes and re cabbage (20 g. of fat), sweet pudding and magnificent vanilla ice cream...

October 10...I took and preserved...material from quite fresh corpses, namely the liver, spleen and pancreas...

October 11...Today, Sunday, we got for dinner quite a big piece of roast hare with dumplings and re cabbage for 1.25 RM ("Kremers Tagebuch" in *Hefte con Auschwitz* 13. 1971. qtd. In Lifton, 292).

In an interview with Lifton, Dr. B, a former Nazi doctor, who did not want his full name revealed, tried to explain the desensitization that takes place within camp staff:

I think I can give you a kind of impression of it. When you have gone into a slaughterhouse where animals are being slaughtered...the smell is also a part of it...not just the fact that they (the cattle) fall over (dead) and so forth. A steak will probably not taste good to us afterward. And when you do that (stay in the situation) every day for two weeks, then your steak again tastes as good as before (qtd in Lifton, 197).

When asked about the ethics of his actions, Dr. Fritz Klein replied that as a doctor he wants to preserve life and, because of his respect for human life, he would remove "a gangrenous appendix from a diseased body". He then pronounced that "the Jew is the gangrenous appendix in the body of mankind" (qtd. in Lifton, 16). Helman speculates that to be a doctor one must live one's life largely within "a world of narratives, of tales and legends that are told and re-told many times over" (8). A slaughterhouse mentality or "narrative" replaced any humane or human consideration of the Jews; they had become merely low-grade pieces of meat for experimentation or extermination.

Canetti wrote that the desire to “turn men into animals” was the primary motive behind the development of slavery (384). What awaited these ‘animals’ was imprisonment, isolation from human society, torture, and “the ultimate extreme to which slavery can be taken: the deprivation of life itself – slaughter” (Spiegel, 58). Much as the camp barracks were described as resembling butcheries, the Jews’ fate was to be that of many captive animals deemed subject to human whim, want or need. Theodor Adorno, a German Jew, believed that Auschwitz began at the slaughterhouse “with people thinking - they’re just animals” (qtd. in Patterson, 72). Pawelczyńska shared Adorno’s belief, stating that

The categories of person and non-person coincided with German and non-German respectively. In this connection, the beings to be murdered constituted in the killers’ minds something like beasts for slaughter – except that slaughterhouses, as institutions with long traditions, observed regulations concerning humanitarian methods of killing... (Pawelczyńska, 20-1).

As part of this ‘German industry’, Kurt Franz, an SS officer at Treblinka, was determined to reach the point where we no longer have to do anything, not even press a button when we get up in the morning. We create a perfect system, then we watch it work. As masters, our role is not to do, but to be (qtd. in Steiner, 68).

Madison Grant believed that “race lies at the base of all the manifestations of modern society” ( xxi). “All the networks of modernity” such as transport, labor and technology are implicated in “the cumulative horror of the whole picture, of which the actual killing is only a small part” (Burt, “Conflicts”, 121). This “segmentation of the genocidal task” seemed to spread the responsibility, making it “all too easy to avoid explicit awareness of (or inquiry into) the lethal nature of the process”:

Although it took all of these people to perpetrate the Holocaust, no one in particular felt responsible for the killing. It seems very plausible that in fact many German perpetrators used self-deceptive tactics like these to avoid feeling guilty about what they were doing and that

these tactics were facilitated psychologically by the bureaucratic structures in which they worked (Jones, 150).

The “networks of modernity” created an industrial environment where each participant fulfilled their individual duty as required. The genocidal action against the Jews was the effort of many hands – none of which were responsible for the whole action, but each “a cog in the wheel of the great extermination machine created by the Third Reich” (Hoess, 205).

The scale of the production and the huge numbers of animals subjected to the slaughter process erase each individual moment of death because of the sheer frequency and quantity of deaths per hour: “One cannot see the animals for the industry” (Burt, “Conflicts”, 121-2). The “industry” of the Nazi regime dealt with human ‘animals’ whose individual names were replaced by branded serial numbers as if they really had become German-owned cattle. Lengyel described the transport to Auschwitz that she shared with many Jewish victims. Crammed in with a train-load of panicking civilians, she observed as the cattle car had become “an abattoir” (19); the dehumanizing process had already begun to turn ‘men’ into disposable beasts. Wiesel expresses the same feelings of being treated like an animal:

We were caught in a trap, right up to our necks. The doors were nailed up; the way back was finally cut off. The world was a cattle wagon hermetically sealed (Wiesel, 33).

German observers were both amused and disgusted by the Jewish captives as they disembarked the cattle trucks and squatted wherever they could to relieve themselves; the sight seemed to confirm for the observers that the Jews deserved their fate if they behaved in such animal fashion (Levi, *The Drowned*, 111).

Orders were barked at the bewildered and terrified travelers when they arrived at the camps. Many of the new arrivals could not understand the German instructions and this lack of understanding became

another stage of dehumanization:

an order that had been pronounced in the calm voice of a man who knows he will be obeyed was repeated word for word in a loud, angry voice, then screamed...as if he were addressing a deaf person or indeed a domestic animal, more responsive to the tone than the content of the message...This was a signal: for those people we were no longer men. With us, as with cows or mules, there was no substantial difference between a scream and a punch. For a horse to run or stop, turn, pull or stop pulling, it is not necessary to come to terms with it, or give it detailed explanations...pulling on the reins, jabbing the spurs, screams, gestures, cracking the whip, trumpeting with the lips, slams on the back are all equally good. Speaking to it, just like speaking to oneself, would be a foolish act...what would the horse understand anyway? (Levi, *The Drowned*, 91-2)

Language has frequently been upheld as one of the key distinctions between humans and animals, but now “we were shut out of German reality and therefore also from the German language” (Amery, 52). Many of the Jews had been rounded up from various European nations and could not understand the German commands apart from the tone of voice or the accompanying physical actions. The removal of civil, human communication and the use of non-verbal directives continued to enforce the distance between the Germans and the Jews as well as the Jews’ subhuman or non-human status. The process continued as the SS officers usually made their selections at the camps’ main gates, separating the new internees into two groups and sending one off to the right and on to the left - to death or to become beasts of burden until they dropped from exhaustion (Tedeschi, 88): “‘you...you...you and you....’ They pointed a finger, as though choosing cattle or merchandise” (Wiesel, 57). In the men’s enclosure at Auschwitz, boys were also selected as if they were cattle being measured up for sale. A cord was stretched to a certain height and all the boys that passed under it were automatically set aside for the gas chambers; only those who were taller than the cord were considered suitable for work (Lengyel,

123). As if in a butchery, German technicians used special hook-tipped poles which they thrust deep into the flesh of the gas chamber corpses to untangle the bodies and pull them out (87-8).

Whilst enabling the German soldiers to consider the Jews as insignificant, disposable non-human animals, the concept of Jewish ‘cattle’ also implies a Jewish ‘herd’. Hitler’s Germany had succeeded in rounding up large numbers of Jews as it had collected animals for processing and slaughter. With hundreds of Jews arriving daily, the swarms of prisoners became a “compact mass of animal humanity” (21) “always to the sound of music – I could not help but think of the Pied Piper of the legend” (84).

Following the initial SS selections, prisoners were stripped of their goods, their clothes and their dignity. Both men and women had their heads shorn (Steiner, 137) and were made to parade naked before the guards before being allotted old, mismatched clothing. Levi describes the demeaning process:

A naked and barefoot man feels that all his nerves and tendons are severed: he is helpless prey...Anyone who does not have them [clothes] no longer perceives himself as a human being but rather as a worm: naked, slow, ignoble, prone on the ground. He knows he can be crushed at any moment (*The Drowned*, 113-4).

The “helpless prey” had been reduced to something less than human – now stripped of even the simplest defense of clothing and made completely vulnerable. However, the replacement clothing distributed by the soldiers did little to restore the inmates’ sense of dignity and humanity. Clothing that had once been an expression of individual personality was replaced and “had found a common denominator of color” (Steiner, 137). Men and women had become “grey and identical, small as ants...sometimes melting into a single substance” (Levi, *If This is a Man*, 68); “within a few seconds, we had ceased to be men” (Wiesel, 45). Numbers were branded upon the prisoners’ arms and became one of the main ways the guards used to differentiate between individuals. Tedeschi and Levi provide further insight into the significance of this depersonalization:

But we had lost our names... Together with that name our dangerous and absurd individuality was supposed to disappear. The clothes we wore had disguised us and standardized us, and hunger, tiredness, and a kind of madness had given our already transformed faces the same absent or crazed expression (Tedeschi, 113).

He who loses all often easily loses himself. He will be a man whose life or death can be lightly decided with no sense of human affinity, in the most fortunate of cases, on the basis of a pure judgment of utility (Levi, *If This is a Man*, 33).

Even the prisoners were aware that their depersonalization and subsequent dehumanization devalued them and standardized them as non-humans that could be easily discarded with “no sense of human affinity” (Ibid.). The German soldiers placed this ideal of being human far beyond Jewish reach and then did everything within their power to destroy their captives.

Itzak Wittenburg, a young leader of the ghetto resistance in Vilna, Lithuania, alleged that “before they killed us with hatred and without method; today they are exterminating us without hatred but with method, and this is serious. It is no longer men we are up against, it is machines” (Steiner, 42). The commandant of Auschwitz, Hoess, described himself as “a cog in the wheel of the great extermination machine created by the Third Reich” (205). Even as a prisoner, Levi chose to describe his fellow inmates in terms of mechanization: “they are ten thousand and they are a single grey machine; they are exactly determined; they do not think and they do not desire, they walk” (*If This is a Man*, 57). He recalls a time when the prisoners found a young, female survivor among the corpses they were forced to haul from the gas chambers and were momentarily jolted out of their mechanization: “These slaves debased by alcohol and the daily slaughter are transformed; they no longer have before them the anonymous mass, the flood of frightened, stunned people coming off the boxcars: they have a person” (*The Drowned*, 56). The Nazi system had become so depersonalized and efficient that even its

victims perceived themselves as part of a great mechanized system until confronted with the humanity of single female face looking back at them.

The ‘subhumans’ had become part of the machinery and the machinery of the Nazi genocidal program became an increasingly efficient death trap. In his examination of the development of industrial slaughterhouse in modernity, Jonathan Burt observed the pervasive effects of the slaughterhouses upon everyday life:

The extension of railway networks to carry cattle; the development of refrigerated cars; ecological changes in the landscapes; new connections between grain farmers, stock raisers, and butchers; the need to manage pollution through the tons of waste produced...A combination of industrialization and the circumstances of history had a powerful influence (Burt, “Conflicts”, 122).

Indeed, industrialization and slaughterhouse technologies were incredibly lethal when combined with Nazi racial and genocidal agendas. Mary Finelli and Jim Mason write that the “animal factory” drags society “one long, dark step backward” from any “sane, ethical relationship with the natural world and our fellow inhabitants” (159). Factory methods are based on principles, such as minimal costs and high productivity, that ensure animals or, in this case, humans are “crowded in barren environments, restricted, stressed and maintained on...unnatural diets (160). When coupled with Nazi ideology, industrialization had a devastating effect upon human relationships; it was now humans whose lives were being restricted, whose individual moments of death were erased or swallowed up in the Nazi ‘slaughterhouse’ mentality. With the expansion of their territory, the Germans had transported 280,000 cattle, 250,000 pigs and 420,000 sheep from Kursk alone; the constant traffic of cattle cars now provided a cover for the transportation of human victims to the concentration camps (Sax, 147). Human lives were processed, exploited and terminated with cold efficiency and a strong focus on continual betterment of that efficiency.

The industrialization of the Nazi treatment of the Jews allowed a further dehumanization, whereby Jewish bodies could be regarded as units of labour or even as raw material. In 1940, Himmler remarked to prominent businessmen that “his concentration camps” were fulfilling important economic functions (Breitman, 113). The foundation of Dachau was greeted by the local press as bringing new “hope for the Dachau business world” (Gellately, 2). Over the entrance to Auschwitz, an ironic slogan read “Arbeit Macht Frei”: “Labor makes me feel free” (Breitman, 236). Private companies exploited concentration camp prisoners and they were used mainly in construction work (Gellately, 213). Amongst the companies that profited from the ‘free’ labor of the Jewish workers was the state-owned Hermann Göring Works, the industrial empire of Hermann Göring who held the position of head of the National Defense Council (Breitman, 98). Otto Ambros, one of Himmler’s former schoolmates, was an executive of I. G. Farben Industries, a large chemical company, and selected Auschwitz as the best site for a new factory (157). In 1941, I. G. Farben Industries agreed to pay the Auschwitz SS three Reichsmarks for each unskilled concentration-camp inmate, four Reichsmarks for skilled inmates and one and a half for children (Lifton, 187).

Himmler instructed Hoess that “Auschwitz must expand, work must be increased, prisoners who could not labor must be killed” (Manvell and Fraenknel, 142). Lengyel noted the “murderous efficiency” that had been achieved at Auschwitz; the mechanization of the ‘great extermination machine’ made for staggering figures. Rounding the figure, Lengyel recorded the handling of 24,000 corpses per day – “an admirable production record- one that speaks well for German industry” (82). The industrialization of the Nazi dehumanization process was completed by the production of human products. Debasement and desensitization had led to acceptance, although somewhat limited, of an industry for which the bodies of human beings supplied the raw material (Pawelczyńska, 21).

The brain which governed those blue eyes and those manicured hands said: ‘This something in front of me belongs to a species which it is obviously opportune to suppress. In this particular case, one has to first make sure that it does not contain some utilizable element. (Levi, *If This is a Man*, 112).

The Jewish prisoners were reduced to

a consumable raw material, a human ore from which the mineral of life was systematically extracted. When no usable energy remained, the living dross was shipped to the gas chambers...where SS recycled it into the war economy – gold teeth for the Reichsbank, hair for mattresses... (Borkin, 126).

Humans were shorn and skinned on a commercial scale in efforts to utilize this newly available ‘resource’. Franz excitedly noted that the Germans had “at our disposal an extraordinary material, perfect sub-humans” (Steiner, 122). “The Nordic Supermen knew how to profit from everything...even the ashes of the corpses were utilized – as fertilizer on the farms and gardens in the surrounding areas” (Lengyel, 88). In his autobiography, Levi reveals his feelings of being depersonalized and objectified right from the moment when he was forced onto the “goods wagons” that were closed and bolted shut from the outside, “with men, women and children pressed together without pity, like cheap merchandise, for a journey towards nothingness” (*If This is a Man*, 23). Faced with certain death, prisoners also became aware of what happened to many corpses and sadly joked with each other: “Come on, cheer up, old man, we’ll meet again some day in a better world – in a shop window, as soap” (Steiner, 204). Ironically, the Jewish ‘germ-carriers’ now became the soap with which Germans cleans themselves. Jewish skin was made into strips of leather as if it were cattle hide (Pearlman, 395); bodies of prisoners with interesting tattoos were skinned and the skin was then sent to the pathology sections of camp hospitals and exhibited to SS visitors as particular treasures (Kogon, 217).

Alternatively, tattooed skin or plain 'human leather' was into penknife cases (Ibid.), satchels, book covers and gloves (Le Chêne, 88). "Artistic" table lamps were created from human bones with a shade of human skin – a business which became quite popular among the SS (Kogon, 217). Dr. Wladislaw Dering, a Polish doctor in Auschwitz who became increasingly brutal in his work, made a tobacco pouch out of the scrotum he had removed from a Jewish inmate and was known to display it to other prisoners (Lifton, 247). Even the ashes from the crematoriums were sold as fertilizer or used instead of gravel to pave the paths of the SS village – "whether out of pure callousness or because, due to their origins, they were regarded as material to be trampled on, I could not say" (Levi, *The Drowned*, 125). Whether the production, ownership and use of human products was considered a kind of trophy indicative of ultimate mastery over a race or species remains unclear; however, it is clearly the ultimate realization of theories that dehumanize human beings and regard them as non-human animals or sub-humans. Serres writes that the only way to become free of parasites is to parasitize them in turn (207). Many Nazi soldiers were intent on the complete parasitism of the Jews – right down to the very skin and bones.

Under Hitler, Jews were attributed with gradually diminishing levels of humanity until they were no longer recognizable to the Nazi soldiers as human beings. This blurring of the human-animal boundaries was integral to the actions and efficiency of the Nazi regime. The harsh conditions of life for Jews under the Nazi regime saw the embodiment of Hitler's animal imagery. The transporting, stripping, branding and shearing of Jewish prisoners were part of the perverted realization of Hitler's dehumanizing representations as prisoners "lived for months and years at an animal level" (Levi, *The Drowned*, 75). The 'herding' of Jews by German soldiers was seen as appropriate treatment for the non-human and seemed to confirm to the soldiers the Jews' true 'animal' identity. Jewish prisoners recognized some Nazi methods as those traditionally carried out by 'man' towards animals; animal

language and imagery became a way for inmates to describe and come to terms with their dehumanizing experiences. The Nazi treatment of Jews was so horrific that many Jews began to think of themselves as animals, stripped of all human dignity and status. The dehumanizing representations manifested with devastating results that culminated in the processing and extermination of millions of Jewish lives.

## Conclusion

The blurring and subsequent ambiguity of boundaries between humans and other animals was crucial in the devaluation and dehumanization of the Jewish race during the Holocaust. Jews were not simply reduced to animals that should be regarded as less than human but portrayed as non-human animals or subhuman creatures that *deserved* to be removed from society and needed to be exterminated to ensure the safety of worthy human lives that might otherwise be endangered. The representation of the Jews as Germany's 'other' was preceded and aided by a legacy of anti-Semitic literature and tradition.

In the early 1850s, the Comte Joseph Arthur de Gobineau wrote *The Inequality of Human Races*, declaring that every civilization and everything noble derives from the Germanic Aryans (xv).

Gobineau divides humanity "unlike and equal parts" – races which are ranked hierarchically according to differences of intellect (181). The "lower strata of our populations" (93) corrupts the Aryan races through miscegenation, which would inevitably lead to complete biological degeneration. Hitler reinforces the tradition that "it was the Aryan alone who founded a superior type of humanity; therefore he represents the archetype of what we understand by the term: MAN" (Hitler, 164). Hitler utilized many references to scientific proof, evidence or theory in an effort to lend an air of rationality and credibility to Nazi propaganda literature. He applied Darwin's theory of evolution to Germany's social environment, depicting life as a constant struggle for survival and thus strengthening traditional fears of racial miscegenation and degeneration. The haphazard application of social Darwinism also served to justify Hitler's genocidal actions, since it was natural law for the stronger races to overcome the weaker ones in the evolutionary struggle for survival.

Ernst Haeckel's *The Riddle of the Universe* was adopted by Hitler to reinforce 'scientific' theories of the animal ancestry of human being; the mention of Haeckel's name gave an impression of authority and validity to the Nazis' version of evolutionary development. Houston Stewart Chamberlain was an influential writer who considered racial differences to be more significant and substantial than the differences between animal species yet he also believed that the concepts and practices of animal breeding should be applied to human beings. The Jewish "mongrels" needed to be removed from amongst the Germanic race in order to ensure the purity of the Germans: "A mongrel is frequently very clever, but never reliable; morally he is always a weed" (Chamberlain, 260-1; vol. 1).

From America, Madison Grant emphasizes a need to assist 'natural selection' by implementing two methods to ensure race improvement: breeding from the best blood and eliminating the lowest types by segregation and sterilization (51-2; revised ed.). Grant believes that the laws of nature necessitate "the obliteration of the unfit and human life is valuable only when it is of use to the community" (49).

Hitler applauded Grant's strong and unwavering stance on eugenics. However, it was Henry Ford whose assembly-line ideas were implemented with devastating effect in Hitler's Nazi Germany.

publication, *The International Jew: the World's Foremost Problem*, denounces the Jews as the cause of degeneration with a particular focus on their alleged corruptive influence on morality, society, sexuality and racial integrity. There is a definite call to action:

When a nation is bathed in sights, sounds and ideas of a certain character, drenched in them and drowned in them, by systematic, deliberate, organized intent, the point of attack should be the *cause*, not the effect (170; abridged).

This dehumanization of the Jews, having been prepared for intellectually by Hitler's fusion of the

theories discussed above, was effectively mobilized through diverse modes of discourse. The power of Ford's propaganda was significant in itself, and it became lethal when combined with the introduction of increasingly stringent anti-Semitic laws and policies which further lent a sense of legitimacy to the Nazis' anti-Semitism. The legalization of anti-Semitic practices further heightened any sense of ethical and moral rightness; the law must be obeyed, and once something is legalized, it becomes seen as acceptable and even morally correct. To a lesser degree, traditional anti-Jewish church teaching was also utilized to appease many German consciences. Hitler was adamant that the purity of racial "stock" must be safeguarded and preserved so that "our people may be enabled to fulfill the mission assigned to it by the Creator" (125). Some Germans wrestled with their consciences over anti-Jewish actions, but, as respectable German citizens, they could not bring themselves to break the law. Legalization also served to represent the "Jewish Question" as a real and pressing dilemma that required urgent action if Germany was to be saved from the inevitable degeneration.

Hitler skillfully employed different strategies in his appeal to Germany's heart, mind and conscience. Integral to his success was the use of animal imagery and its respective connotations, associations and evocations. With the removal of the traditionally concrete distinction between human beings and the animal kingdom, the subsequent ambiguity of the 'animal' enabled the human-animal boundary to be shifted to suit different modes and ideas of survival. Throughout Hitler's regime, the term "animal" remained without an exact or precise definition; the ambiguous definition of "animal" allowed for multiple applications – both destructive and constructive. Many different concepts of animalism were employed by both the Germans and the Jews. To Hitler, the Jew was a "parasite", a "pernicious bacillus" (172), "the most striking contrast to the Aryans" (170), an "international serpent" (364), "cold-blooded, thick-skinned and shameless" (43), and "a real leech who clings to the body of his unfortunate victims and cannot be removed" (176). Hitler knew that representation has the power of

transformation and causes the object being misrepresented to become synonymous with the image to which it is likened; Emotional connotations were particularly important because an appeal to the heart often overrides logical and rational objections. Consequently, the Jews were likened to creatures and organisms loaded with emotional, economic and ethical connotations. Different aspects of these representations were more pertinent and more threatening to different classes of society; the German nationalists were apprehensive about the representation of the Jews as rats and the implied health threats, whilst those citizens feeling the full effects of economic depression were more alarmed by the image of a parasitic Jewry feeding off an already struggling nation. The representation of the Jews as despicable and disgusting rats, lice and diseases saw the transference of German attitudes towards those certain kinds of animals onto Jews. Jews became increasingly regarded with attitudes of disgust, abhorrence, frustration and resentment. The evaluation of Jews as both subhuman and non-human animals provided a 'justification' for inhumane treatment and genocide; these Jews were animals that needed to be exterminated rather than human beings whose lives were valued. The transformation of the Jews into subhuman or non-human animals demonstrates "the extent to which evil has to deny the humanity of others, has to pretend that they are not human, has to shut them out of the wider community in which they live" (Kamenka, 2).

The dehumanization process was further advanced by the consideration of the Jews as a body or herd rather than as a racial grouping of individuals. When a group of human beings is regarded as a herd of animals, different individuals within that group become unrecognizable and indistinguishable, enabling a depersonalized system to efficiently process the homogeneous mass of bodies. The consideration of the Jews *en masse* enabled the German processes of desensitization and dehumanization whilst preventing any regard of the individual, the person. It increased the efficiency of the Nazi killing methods by allowing people to be processed speedily with little interaction with the soldiers. The less

familiar the public is with an individual, the more likely it is to treat them in terms of their ascribed group membership; a mass of nameless faces is much easier to dismiss and demonize than a brother, father, daughter, or wife. A swarm of bodies loses individual identity as it moves and acts as one body, whereas a single individual confronts the public with his or her humanity. This marginalization helped transform men and women into rats, and the removal of such demonic nuisances as rats is acceptable and highly desirable, especially as a large body of rodents is frightening in its unpredictability and sheer strength of numbers.

On the other hand, the blurring of the human-animal divide meant that some animal species could be considered of higher value and evolutionary development than some human races; the Germans upheld certain animals as examples of strength, courage and a noble predation – namely, the wolf and the dog. Strengthened by an “elitist sense of mission” (Koonz, 252), the Nazi “wolves” were equipped with a conscience trained for predation and prowess. The predatory nature of the wild wolf or dog was upheld as the instinctive nature of such ‘noble’ animals, and this example of prowess and strength was often emulated to extremes. The Jews also adopted concepts of animalism but as survival mechanisms, coping strategies and a way of trying to understand what was happening to them individually and as a race. The dehumanizing environment successfully transformed many Jewish prisoners into crazed, animal-like creatures as the horror of their experience forced them to revert to an instinctive animal survival mode. Inside the concentration camps, Jews also began to refer to themselves as animals in order to attempt an understanding or expression of the complete degradation and disregard they experienced. Yet a concept of ‘noble’ animalism was also evident as Jews strived for ‘animal’ courage and strength in their fight for survival.

The ambiguity and versatility of the animal imagery employed by the Nazis further enabled the

marginalization of the Jews as it was constantly adapted to best suit Nazi needs at the time. The treatment of the Jews as non-human animals allowed for their commodification; they became mere bodies to be processed and utilized even after death. The Nazi's commodification and dehumanization of Jews enabled the soldiers to process Jews as if they were animals destined for the slaughterhouse. Industrialization was hugely significant in the Nazi genocidal program. Assembly-line technologies were applied to concentration camp facilities, allowing for a faster and more efficient processing of human lives and, subsequently, corpses. Mechanized slaughter provided a greater sense of detachment for German perpetrators as they perceived themselves simply as a "cog in the wheel"; this detachment also allowed many soldiers to believe that they were not individually responsible for murder because that was someone else's role in the machinated process. The slaughterhouse mentality transformed attitudes towards animals, and animals became increasingly regarded as commodities valued for what could be harvested from them. Within the concentration camps, particularly in the death camps, this attitude was transferred to the Jewish nonhuman animals; brutality and slaughter became "routine, cold-blooded, bureaucratized and – let us never forget - cynical" (Kamenka, 2). Death became such an efficient process that daily extermination duties became focused on numbers and productivity whilst the Jewish victims were simply another number to be recorded on the daily tally.

Whilst Hitler consciously worked to transform the image of Jews into a picture of despicable and repulsive subhuman and non-human animals, the Germans were not left unscathed by the dehumanization of a 'lesser' race; the dehumanization of the Jews – "this would be the crime of Eichmann, of Hess, and the others" (Boschert-Kimming and Schuster, 79) - resulted in the dehumanization of many German citizens, especially those assigned to political or martial positions:

The Heydrichs and the Eichmanns were human beings. They dehumanized themselves; they lost their humanity...the punishment lives within the crime itself ...perhaps they were good

husbands and fathers; but they were no longer human beings” (Ibid.).

The removal of a distinct human/animal divide ultimately affected both the perpetrators and the victims; many Germans lost their humanity as they became brutish and detached in their elimination of the Jews whilst the Jews endeavored to cling to any remnant of human dignity despite the horrific events unfolding around them.

A legacy of racial, evolutionary and eugenicist theories paved the way for Hitler's genocidal regime. Ideals of Aryan supremacy and destructive miscegenation enforced concepts of racial inequality while theories of humanity's animal ancestry provided an evolutionary explanation for the natural hierarchy of races. Concern for the health and future of the 'superior' human races became a predominate issue for racial theorists. Eugenicists determined that selective breeding and the elimination of the weak or 'inferior' human races were effective means of safeguarding the 'superior' Aryan races. The 'degenerate', 'subhuman' Jews were identified as the greatest threat to the evolutionary advancement and success of the Aryans and Hitler's *Mein Kampf* expounds this 'fact', urging Germany to take action in order to protect themselves from Jewish 'corruption'. Anti-Semitic and more generalized racial theories were powerfully and effectively mobilized under Hitler. The Nazi regime was built upon the principles outlined in *Mein Kampf* and those principles were put into practice with devastating results. Jews were portrayed as parasites, germ-carriers, leeches, vampires, subhumans and degenerate predators. Hitler drew upon racial literature and pseudo-scientific 'proof' to reinforce his depictions. By representing Jews as non-human animals or subhuman creatures, Hitler degraded and dehumanized Jews in the eyes of the German public. This dehumanization was strengthened through diverse modes of discourse such as anti-Semitic legislation, racist education, degrading propaganda and cinematography. Hitler's politics, propaganda and prison camps had “a tremendous effect on the recognition of limits and the absence of limits in regard to persons” ( Boschert-Kimming and Schuster,

72); Jews were no longer regarded as human beings and the Nazi regime utilized industrial agricultural processes to transport, herd, brand, and slaughter these degenerate creatures. Slaughterhouse techniques were applied within Nazi prison camps and the soldiers processed Jewish bodies with astounding speed and efficiency. The dehumanization of Jews through animal imagery and representation was integral to the realization of Hitler's genocidal program. By decrying Jews as destructive and inferior animals, Hitler made it possible and 'appropriate' for Jews to be treated as non-human animals. His animalistic language may have initially appeared harmless or ridiculous but, mobilized by the Nazi regime. Hitler's words had devastating consequences when the dehumanizing representations manifested in practice.

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