

# Downfall of adolf hitler history essay



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The idea of original sin plays a large role in the psychoanalysis of Adolf Hitler. Original sin tells us that we, as human beings, are all innately predisposed to the ability to be evil (sinful) or to commit evil acts. However, we are also aware of our ability as rational beings, given to us by God through Natural Law, to overcome evil desires. Therefore, a person is not necessarily innately evil, but there can be situations in which a person's innate desires overpower their rational thinking.

The lines between innate and situational, or intentional and structural, seem to blur – forming a singular category in which both sides appear dependent on the other. Hitler is one such example of this ideology. It is my contention that he was not necessarily born an evil being, destined to commit evil acts; however, the compilation of stressful, unpleasant, and overwhelming situations – coupled with his innate ability to be evil – led him to become an evil being capable, and guilty, of committing some of the world's most evil atrocities.

The film *Downfall* highlights the end times of Hitler's Nazi regime. It provides a graphic and often overwhelming example of some of the most unsettling behavior and lingering images that the modern world has ever seen. One of the problems of this film, in terms of psychoanalyzing Hitler the man, is that the film narrowly focuses on the end of his days, not including the whole of the circumstances that led him to this place in time. The above mentioned assertion that Hitler was not innately evil, but rather a combination of both innate and situational evil tendencies, is hampered by the fact that at this point in his life – as displayed in the film – there is not much evidence in favor of this conclusion. Instead this film presents Hitler in a manner as to

suggest that he was in complete control of the situations occurring in his life – that he was the causal factor of the situations. Therefore, he must simply be innately evil since the situations were not impacting his decisions; rather his decisions impacted the situations. This is the crucial point where this film fails to fully explicate the significance of his demise.

Downfall portrays Hitler in both the public and private spheres in an effort to present an authentic version of the “real” him. There is an air about this film that seems to cast Hitler in the light of his greatness. It appears to grant him extraordinary human knowledge, impeccable organizational skills, charismatic powers over the German people and exemplary rhetorical skills that make him seem super-human. It has been said that to study Hitler is to make him human and to humanize is to forgive. Downfall not only attempts to humanize him, but actually borders on glorifying his existence.

If, in fact, this was how Hitler was viewed by the German people then it would be no stretch of the imagination as to why he tended to reside in a world of fantasy in which he had an inability to accept reality. Hitler often transformed fantasies from his personal life into his politics. For instance, his desire to unite Austria and Germany as one nation, to create a common “mother” country, exemplifies the constant pain he suffered because of his separation from his mother. His constant pain is evidenced through his chronic depression and rage which often manifested itself as outburst against the Jewish people and his own Nazi generals. Hitler then objectified Germany and Austria by turning them into his ultimate goal of reuniting with his mother. However, the possibility that his mother may have died because of neglect on the part of her Jewish doctor reinforces (from his perspective)

the idea that he had right and reason to hurt, not only the Jewish people, but really anyone who got in his way. Hitler's inner thoughts and aspirations became public policies and political action.

Furthermore, Hitler saw himself as so completely connected to Germany as if it was an extension of his being, that when he saw the imminent demise of his regime approaching he forced the whole of the German people to suffer defeat with him. He facilitated the total German defeat via his infamous *Nerobefehl* (Nero order) on March 19, 1945 in which he demanded the continuance of his "scorched earth" policy essentially leaving behind a wasteland. This act was viewed by many as a will to perish rather than a military strategy. The idea of reaction formation also comes into play here because although Germany was his most prized possession, it was also a frustrating object for Hitler that he ultimately damaged and destroyed rather than protecting and preserving which were his original intentions.

Another theory brought up by this film is the idea of *Sonderweg* (separate path). *Sonderweg* is the concept that Germany's character was so different from that of its Western counterparts that its "separate path" resulted from this innate character flaw. As if the behavior of all Germans could be classified into a single category because of the horrible outcomes that resulted because of Hitler and the Nazi party. This film has a quality about it that gets under your skin and sort of festers there. It takes a while to put your finger on it, but when it hits you it feels like a ton of bricks. The dialogue, the acting, and the cinematography all function as a cohesive blueprint to lead the viewer into accepting this theory of *Sonderweg*. It

appears as though it might be easier to psychoanalyze the writer of Downfall's screenplay rather than Adolf Hitler.

Because this film leaves much of the story undeveloped regarding how Hitler arrived at this point in his life, one can only imagine the situations he must have faced in order to allow his innate desire to be evil to completely take over his life. It is because of this lack of holistic view that makes it impossible to assume that Hitler was simply innately evil, as the film might otherwise have you believe. There is no single answer as to why Hitler was the way he was. It is for this reason that my assertion remains the same. Hitler was not simply innately evil, but rather a combination of innate and situational desires that overwhelmed his entire existence.