

# Nature VS Nurture



(Good Vs Evil)

*Module: Research in Context ((ADAD5003)*

*Pathway: Imagined Worlds*

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**“As we approach the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz , it seems an appropriate time to reflect upon the events of the 2nd world war. With that in mind, critically discuss and respond to the idea that evil can be explored through the practice of semiology?”**

## **Introduction**

*“What is evil to one at one time, becomes good at another time to somebody else”  
Menicus*

What actually defines the word ‘Evil’. Does the line between good and evil vary between different people, gender, race and religion? people are either born evil, brought up knowing nothing more than the evil cast on them by others or brainwashed into committing evil acts. Hitler is known to be one of the cruellest men in history, but what made him that way? Was he a truly evil man or was there a point in history that plays a part into what made him the way he was? So, is what is evil to you and me, different to what Nazi Germany and Hitler believed?

Can you truly distinguish between good and evil? Evil for you and me could be different too the person sitting next to you or across from you. Someone’s biggest sin could be as small as picking a flower but to you doing a truly evil deed could be causing someone fatal harm. There could be people out there that may think that even that isn’t evil, these people can have a serious untreated Psychological problem due to post traumatic stress from war, violent upbringing and possible loneliness but not all who experience those things turn out to be mass murders, some grow to be regular people you would call family and friends. So, what makes a person who they are today?

## **Is it nature or Nurture?**



(Jeffrey Dahmer and Adolf Hitler)

*“The line between good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being” Alexandre Solzhenitsyn*

Everyone’s brain is wired differently, some are born creative, some are born confident, some are born funny. Everyone is different, so can you be born evil? The morality of a child could be the same for everyone at birth, every human could start with a blank slate. The age-old question where does morality come from? Genetics or is it instilled in us. Babies aren’t born bad or good, so where does the moral inclinations of babies come from? Babies rely on interaction from birth and their actions are dictated by the interaction from mother and baby. Scientists studied children by putting on a puppet show where they would have two different colour puppet like a green and an orange bunny, the orange bunny would always be the mean one and the child would have the choice to choose their favourite bunny and they would always choose the green nice bunny. They develop a morality from experience and witnessing from their surroundings. (Tucker, 2019)

Psychological problems can affect a person's morality, having parents being hostile and neglecting or a child who is picked on by friends and family day in day out for long periods of time. being raised in different environments can have a major impact on children's lives. People who are born into high class families and are raised strictly and with love, compared to families who neglect their children or whom are on the wrong path themselves can have an impact on their children. So, a child who is raised in a violent atmosphere are more likely to commit a crime than a child that's in a happy, loved home. Those children who are badly treated and disconnected are vulnerable to depression and loneliness which can seriously affect their mental health, these factors can have a major effect on a persons morality later in life, which can lead them to do evil deeds. (Association for Psychological Science - APS, 2019) (Dangling on the Edge of Insanity, 2019)

There are many people throughout history who were classed as evil, murderers, Serial killers, Terrorists, Dictators of war etc. all of these people have different upbringings, live in different countries and were born at different years. The only thing they really have in common is the desire to commit evil acts whether its due to their own disturbed mind or psychological reasons. Jeffrey Dahmer was "one of USA's most notorious serial killers." (IMDb, 2019) Jeffrey was "described as an energetic and happy child until the age of 4" which he developed a "double hernia." Having something physically damage your brain as a child can mentally change a person like Jeffrey where he became "withdrawn, disengaged and friendless" after his surgery. His parents relationship broke down during his early teens. He became an out of control alcoholic during the time he killed his first person, he killed "17 men between 1978 and 1991" he chose his victims carefully before "he lured them to his home with promises of money or sex which he then strangles them to death. He engaged in sexual acts with their bodies and kept body parts and photos as souvenirs." (Biography.com, 2019) Jeffrey Dahmer committed many acts of evil before he was arrested. Adolf Hitler was also one of the worst men alive. "He was the leader of Nazi Germany. His fascist agenda led to World War II and the deaths of at least 11 million people, including some six million Jews." (Biography.com, 2019)

## **Who was Hitler?**



(Baby Hitler)

Hitler was also classed as one of the most evil and sadistic people in the world but was that because of the way he was born or was he brought up to become the dictator the world knows and loathes. Adolf Hitler was one of six children and "clashed frequently with his emotionally harsh father who didn't

approve of his interest in fine art as a career” (Biography.com, 2019) Hitler was as aggressive as his father and “slapped his younger sister Paula around” (the Guardian, 2019) after the death of both of his parents, his younger brother, Edmund and his art career was failing he bounced from shelter to shelter, which made him “detached and introverted.” He was also rejected from art school, where he then applied to join the German army for World War 1.

During Hitlers dictatorship he managed to control the whole of Germany and convinced them that he would be their saviour. But what kind of man was he in front of the “camera” compared to in his own home with his wife? How did he treat her? Hitler became Chancellor of Germany, which helped to weasel his way up to power. Not only did he gain his power by being dictator, he extended his power to local government, Trade unions, A Concordat and People’s courts. “By the Autumn of 1934 Hitler was in complete control of Germany.” (BBC Bitesize, 2019) Eva Braun was Hitlers long-time companion and lover then later his husband for 40 hours. At the age of 17 and him at 40. When hitler first met Eva, he was living with “Geli Raubal, who, incidentally, was his niece” and so was considered the other woman. After that relationship ended by her leaving him for another man and then committing suicide, he continued to see Eva which is “where their relationship really started, while she consoled the heartbroken Hitler” He continued to see 8 other women, and “every single one of them attempted suicide at least once.” And Eva who suffered as she truly loved him, and hitler cheated on her with 7 of the women. Eva couldn’t stand the heartbreak and so she took “her father’s pistol, turned it to her own heart and fired.” (Listverse, 2019) Which she missed, and they both continued to cause each other heartbreak and harm.

Nazi Propaganda was one of the main sources of influences he had on the whole of Germany, he made himself out to be the saviour of the world. Hitler had a hold of the whole of Germany by many ways. “He used three main organisations to control the German people though spying, intimidation and imprisonment.” He used “propaganda and censorship to brainwash people into obeying the Nazis and idolising Hitler.” The Nazis would arrange “mass rallies to show public support for Nazism” within these events they have “music, speeches and they demonstration of German military strength.” They also hosted sporting events which the public are allowed to either participate or just spectate. They also hosted the 1936 Olympic games. Hitler thought modern art like abstract art as “‘Degenerate’ and removed 6,500 works of art” and replaced it with ‘Aryan art’(BBC Bitesize, 2019) which shows the physical and military power of Germany and the Aryan race. He also showed propaganda though the use of architecture, literature, film and music.



(Terrorist Extremists)

Being a good person and being convinced to commit an evil act is possible. Is that what happened in Nazi Germany? Brainwashing is more common than expected. “Brainwashing is a process by which a person uses underhand methods to persuade others to the will of the person who is manipulating

them” (Davies and Davies, 2019) politics is a very good example and an easy way of persuading a mass amount of people. Isolation from friends and family is normally the first tactic. Hitler did this a numerous amount of times, he arrested people without justification which isolated them, but not only did it affect the isolated person but their friends and family. Next you attack on their self-esteem and mentally abuse them. This is one of the main ways Hitler seduced Germany. He would feed his victims lies through his propaganda and bully the unsubordinated ones by arresting them and isolating them, which then goes to physical abuse. Depriving one of sleep or keeping a person cold or hungry but also through violent behaviour. Hitler mass brainwashing was during his prison camps, where he embarrassed, lied to and deprived them of all basic necessities until he created ‘zombie like people’ who were brainwashed until they felt like they were nothing.

Brainwashing strips a person of their identity to where they don’t even know who they really are or believe, which the “replaces it with another set of behaviours, attitudes and beliefs” (Garden et al., 2019) that creates a new mindset and environment. Terrorists are another good example of mass brainwashing; they would convince children even adults to commit atrocities. They would be “programmed” and “primed for death.” They would be kidnapped abused physically and sexually. “They were kept awake for days on end. They were forced to recite the Qur’an over and over” (Grant, 2019) until they rocked back and forth in trance. These children were abused until the point that they don’t have any humanity left which would leave anyone institutionalised. Psychiatrists met with these extremist children to study what made them tick, but these boys were so far gone their sense of right or wrong was non-existent. These people weren’t born evil of such but made so by other extremists.

## **Nazi Propaganda**



(Nazi Recruitment Propaganda)

Hitler's rise of power was during an economical crisis which sent Germany into widespread worry which gave him the perfect opportunity to seduce the community. He created choreographed speeches about the kind of leader he was aspiring to become “an inadvertent sort of cartoon.” He wanted to be “Germany’s saviour-in-waiting” (Smithsonian, 2019)

and so, wrote a small autobiography which was released with a selection of speeches. As a child he enjoyed politics which helped with his rise of power over Germany. Hitler painted himself as a false hope for all of the country to sway them to support his campaign. It was argued that the book should become “the new bible” due to the format it was written in. Nazi propaganda art is another way Hitler

fed lies into the German communities, the Nazi Recruitment Propaganda above contains a German family being protected by the wings of eagle which is one of the symbols of the Nazi party. This poster represents that Hitler and the Nazis want to protect the communities, but was that a lie due to all the horrible things they committed? (All That's Interesting, 2019)



(Nazi Propaganda)

“some Nazi propaganda used positive images to glorify the government’s leaders” but it could also be used as a negative force to create hate and fear making “enemies” like the way Nazis portrayed the British and Americans but also the Jews like they were there to ruin the lives of the Germans. The sole aim of propaganda was to “exploit people” and most were aimed at the working class as they feared unemployment. Propaganda contained a lot about Jews and communists as they were believed to be “enemies of the German people” the poster above is just one of many that tried to portray the “Hitler myth” which made Hitler out to be “a strong and patriotic leader who would save Germany.” (Facing History and Ourselves, 2019)

These kinds of posters preyed on the fear and the hope of the communities and so people would begin to believe the “Hitler myth” due to the false reality he created. Which means that he didn’t really give the people a choice or the truth as the Nazis showed them what they wanted to see, which is how most Germans knew nothing of the Jewish encampments but also believe that they were the source of all their problems. These kinds of posters were there to subtly brainwash people into believing the lies and to hide the real atrocities that were taking place behind closed doors. They played Hitler out to be a heroic figure when really, he was just a major manipulator who got thousands of others to his ‘dirty work.’ (Theholocaustexplained.org, 2019)

## **Conclusion**

So, was it 'Nature or Nurture' that makes a person evil or commit an evil act? Are people born narcissistic and homicidal or is there parts if their lives that lead them into that dark road? The morality of a person isn't something your born with its something you witness from a young age, having a bad upbringing is one of the major problems that can cause an evil person and I believe that without that there would be less suffering in the world. Obviously, there is the psychological and genetic factors that affect the humanity of a person. I also believe that Nazi Germany would have been differently if Adolf Hitler was brought up in a different family and had different circumstances. His upbringing and the way his father treated him had a large effect on his behaviour and so created the dictator we know and loathe today.

Brainwashing was another major connection to the sense of 'good and evil.' It's one of the most successful and vindictive was to strip and happy, loving and good child or person into a soldier without remorse and humanity or any care for their own lives let alone anyone else's. Were the Nazi party any different to the extremist terrorists that brain washed their own children to carry out evil deeds? I truly don't think so, the Nazis may not have strapped bombs to their chest, but they did slaughter their own people by the masses after slow induced torture. Hitler was a liar and a powerful one as such, but he isn't classed as the worst person in the world, but when your asked 'who is the most evil person you can think of?' 95% of the time a person will say Hitler, but he didn't quite commit all these murders himself like some.

Hitler was a very persuasive man, and if his rule was during this day and age, he would have been more lethal. His art influences made people believe in hope of a better Germany which I fully understand! His minor seduction to the crowd gave the lowest of esteem a new hope whereas he took every last hope from the Jewish communities. Overall, I believe evil is nurtured more than it is nature to a person. Our actions are our own and how we choose to use them is our decision alone.

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## **Image list**

<https://nulltx.com/ai-good-vs-evil/>

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