

Why Her?
Adolf Hitler's Attraction to Eva Braun
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Adolf Hitler has been studied by a multitude of historians in hopes of understanding this charismatic figure who somehow seduced millions.¹ The German populace, of course, saw Hitler as restoring their nation to its former glory. German women, in particular, saw in Hitler a softer side, even though Hitler ensured his private life remained concealed from the public. Indeed, only his closest associates actually knew the Führer. As a result, a series of important questions come to the fore when trying to understand Adolf Hitler, especially as they touch upon his relationship with his mistress and later wife, Eva Braun. Their relationship has largely been a mystery because he kept her locked away from the public for his own personal benefit. Braun herself, left a very small historical footprint, with almost no primary source information.

Adolf Hitler's childhood experiences shaped his personality. Understanding his likely psychopathology, along with his beliefs about the character, appropriate roles, and innate identities of women, allows one to make informed inferences about the dynamic of his relationship with Braun. Hitler was drawn to Braun and continued their relationship because she assuaged his insecurities, serving as a surrogate mother figure, filling the void left after the death of Hitler's mother, Klara, and exhibiting unquestioning loyalty to him. Braun tolerated his unceasingly manipulative, conniving, and brutish behaviors, whether or not she actually recognized them as such. Her behavior and attitudes conformed almost entirely to his notions of what the ideal woman might be, and in return he gave her attention, but only when it suited him. He took, but only rarely gave. This behavior, over the course of their sixteen-year relationship, demonstrated the psychopathologies which can also be identified in other areas of his life.²

Understanding Hitler's Madness

Adolf Hitler was an intriguing and mysterious individual. Hitler's inability to form close personal relationships can be observed in his interactions with both men and women. Throughout his life, his behavior was characterized by hate, brutality, and narcissism, which functioned as social coping mechanisms as he interacted in interpersonal relationships. Norbert Bromberg, author of *Hitler's Psychopathology*, described these relationships as primitive, superficial, crude, and rudimentary.³ Bromberg suggests that Hitler lacked the ability to have interpersonal

¹ Sebastian Haffner, *The Meaning of Hitler* (London: Phoenix, 2011), 195.

² Ian Kershaw, *Hitler 1889-1936: Hubris* (New York: Pantheon, 2013), 45. Kershaw stated that Hitler described his ideal woman as being: cute, cuddly, naïve, tender, sweet, and stupid. In addition to these characteristics, Hitler maintained, politics should never be a topic of discussion with women.

³ Emphasis of Hitler's egocentrism is discussed throughout various sources and historians' works. A few examples of these references are: Norbert Bromberg and Verna Volz Small, *Hitler's Psychopathology* (International Universities Press: New York, 1983), 15; Cate Haste, *Nazi Women* (London: Channel 4, 2001), 71; and Joachim C. Fest, *Hitler* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974), 14.

connections that carried risk of rendering himself vulnerable to other people. Hitler survived by exercising impulse control, much like an immature child.⁴

Psychologists have diagnosed Adolf Hitler with narcissistic-borderline personality disorder. Norbert Bromberg, for example, has characterized Hitler as “. . . exhibiting narcissistic personality with paranoid features, functioning on a borderline personality level”⁵ Bromberg defines Hitler’s pathological syndrome when he describes Hitler as a man “who represents himself as an omniscient simplifier of complex issues, who ignores obvious realities to promise the clearly impossible, whose oratory brims with rage, who charges one single enemy with responsibility for all difficulties.”⁶ In short, Hitler was a megalomaniac who was controlled by a deeply rooted egocentrism. Most children grow out of this egocentric mindset at an early age, but those who have a narcissistic personality remain motivated by egocentrism for the entirety of their lives. In Hitler’s case, he could not cope with the psychological abnormalities he possessed and turned to an alternate reality, outbursts of rage, and a projection of hatred for the ‘enemy’; when the enemy was truly himself.⁷

Furthermore, Bromberg conveys that both narcissism and borderline personality disorder play significant roles within the formulation of any relationship.

[Hitler] complains of a feeling of emptiness. He had little if any sense of humor. He tends to lie. Even if very intelligent, he can be most literal in understanding of concepts. He often had neurotic symptoms. Most importantly, the narcissistic personality cannot make significant relationships, being at most times arrogant, contemptuous, and denigrating, as well as demanding and exploitative.⁸

⁴Bromberg, *Hitler's Psychopathology*, 10.

According to Bromberg Hitler’s, “. . .emotional life is shallow and his feelings are undifferentiated in quality; he may find these aspects of himself to be a deprivation, something to complain about. His inability to form “healthy” relationships impacted the entirety of the relationship Braun and Hitler shared. Common behaviors that Hitler exhibited with Braun and other colleagues could be a result from narcissistic-borderline personality disorder.

⁵ Bromberg, *Hitler's Psychopathology*, 8.

⁶ Bromberg, *Hitler's Psychopathology*, 3.

⁷ Bromberg, *Hitler's Psychopathology*; Cate Haste, *Nazi Women* (London: Channel 4, 2001), 71. Bromberg identified Hitler’s psychopathic projection as a means for hatred of Jews. Hitler found attributes within himself that represented the Jewish population, whom he deemed inferior and placed the blame for his inferiorities upon these individuals. Other historians describe similar aggressive and angry behavior. A great example can be found in Cate Haste’s *Nazi Women*; “In his private life, Hitler’s core of destructiveness, rage and egotism cast a shadow over his personal relationship with women. He romanticized women, deifying them as sacred mothers. Or he denigrated them as pretty, irrational beings who gave him some comfort, entertained him and were therefore useful to him. Ultimately, he needed to control them. But he also needed their political support. He needed them to sacrifice themselves to his mission, and to the Nazi state. And it was essential to his self-image, and to his messianic task, that they idolized him personally, and surrendered everything to their political faith in him.”

⁸ Bromberg, *Hitler's Psychopathology*, 10.

Hitler often denied reality as a means of coping with his discomfort with the truth.⁹ If Hitler had to face the truth, he would have had to process the death of both of his parents, his lack of basic necessities, and the atrocities of war during his late adolescent life.¹⁰ Hitler never grieved in a healthy way to overcome adversities; rather, he used other people to maintain his emotional stability. His rage would spew out onto almost everyone he came in contact with, acting paranoid and enraged throughout the majority of his life, fighting to control and manipulate both his acquaintances and his closest colleagues. Healthy individuals can compartmentalize their own insecurities in some kind of context by not allowing these inferiorities to be the driving factor of their behavior. However, Hitler was apparently incapable of this compartmentalization, denying his inadequacies and hiding them behind the punishment and manipulation of others, his form of authority. He blamed his sense of inferiority on others, and allowed no one to get close enough to him to get to know his authentic self – no one, that is, except, perhaps, Eva Braun.

At least some of the narcissistic borderline-personality disorder stemmed from paternal abuse and maternal overcompensation. Hitler's father, Alois Hitler, was domineering and crude: he drank excessively; he mistreated his wife; he beat his children. Ian Kershaw described Alois as, “. . . an archetypal provincial civil servant—pompous, status-proud, strict, humourless, frugal, pedantically punctual, and devoted to duty.”¹¹ This very strict and impersonal man inflicted significant emotional baggage on his young son. Witnessing and experiencing firsthand his father's abuse shaped young Adolf's expectations of gender roles in a traumatic way. Klara, meanwhile, overcompensated for Alois's abuse by coddling Adolf.

A peculiar thing happened though when Adolf spoke about his father; “. . . In *Mein Kampf*, he wrote about his father in reverent and respectful phrases, mentioning only one, rather natural, disagreement between father and son.”¹² He said, “I had honored my father, but my mother I had loved.”¹³ One can argue that Hitler's lack of forwardness about his father's abuse and neglect was for three reasons: denial of reality, the sheer inability of becoming vulnerable with anyone to expose this inferior aspect of himself, and the cultural expectation for men to avoid discussing their feelings during the early 1900s.

⁹ Sereny, Gitta. *Albert Speer: His Battle With Truth*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), 102 and 288.

Albert Speer was a German architect who was, for most of World War II, Reich Minister of Armaments and War Production for Nazi Germany. Speer was Adolf Hitler's chief architect before assuming ministerial office. He became a part of Hitler's inner circle. He believed that Hitler exhibited similar behavior, stating that he was “fascinated by Hitler's lack of affection.” Speer also mentioned Hitler not needing to manipulate individuals because he simply ordered them around in a fabled reality.

¹⁰ Bromberg, *Hitler's Psychopathology* 65. According to Bromberg, as a young adult, age 20, he was a homeless beggar: pale, unshaved, sunken cheeks, and frail. He lived in a hostel and had not created truly any brotherhood-like relationships. Norbert Bromberg noted that some individuals made fun of him while others considered him fantastic. He served in the World War I army and truly enjoyed being a soldier. He finally had food and shelter, and enjoyed the war as a whole. This connection has been made previously about his fascination with war in early development.

¹¹ Kershaw, *Hitler 1889-1936: Hubris*, 11.

¹² John Lukacs, *The Hitler of History* (Random House, Inc.: New York, 1997), 55.

¹³ Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 18.

In addition, there is speculation that Hitler watched his father rape his mother. Children who witness a rape, experience abuse and neglect, and suffer child molestation are prone to life-long emotional trauma. Such trauma can lead to a set of negative behaviors within children, including a constant yearning for power and control, and a high risk for exhibiting behaviors similar to those which they have experienced. Emily Bazelon, an intern for the New Haven Advocate, described such children with these experiences as being “more likely to develop a raft of emotional and health problems including depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and suicidal thoughts.”¹⁴ This would explain why Adolf Hitler was said to have anxiety and depression. Children experiencing these adversities need stability in their lives and actively seek people or material objects out in order to fill the void they experience. Hitler’s possible witnessing of his mother’s rape solidified the hate for his father and created lasting effects on his feelings towards women and sexual relations in general.¹⁵

As a result, paternal abuse and witnessing sexual assault, coupled with his mother’s personal attributes, hindered Hitler developmentally. Klara Hitler coddled him throughout her lifetime and sought to protect him from the anger of his father, rather than helping him to develop as an independent person. Because Hitler was the only male she had left in their family line, she clung to him and fixated over his health and well-being.¹⁶ Psychiatrists from Waite’s studies within *The Psychopathic God* noted that, “by loving Adolf so thoroughly, Klara could combat resentments she may have unconsciously felt toward a child imposed by her brutish husband who ‘enslaved her, sucked her dry, and crippled her with never-ending demands.’”¹⁷ Klara’s enslavement to Hitler’s every whim was one of the reasons that she suffered from life-long depression. Hitler, too, was handicapped by his mother’s overbearing love. He sought this maternal comfort from the female sex until his death. His yearning for control and deeming individuals “good” as long as they catered to needs, while punishing them when they did not, has been compared by psychologists to a narcissistic child punishing his mother for not fulfilling his every need.

The Oedipus Complex

One could argue that the relationship with his mother stemmed from an Oedipus complex. Oedipus complexes normally develop during childhood and are shown through an unconscious sexual desire for their parent. Historians like Robert Waite, Norbert Bromberg, Verna Small, and William Carr claimed Hitler’s attraction for Klara Hitler resulted in extreme hatred for his father.

¹⁴ Emily Bazelon, “A Question of Resilience,” *The New York Times*, 30 April 2006, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/30/magazine/a-question-of-resilience.html?_r=0 (accessed 2 Nov. 2017).

¹⁵ Robert G.L. Waite, *The Psychopathic God: Adolf Hitler* (Basic Books, Inc.: New York, 1977), 162. Waite refers to rape and sexual interactions between parents potentially unlocking incestual desires and fears.

¹⁶ Waite, *The Psychopathic God*, 172. Hitler is said to have had survivor’s guilt for being one of the few children to live. Waite in *The Psychopathic God* claimed that psychologists, Lawrence Climo and Peter Loewenberg, believed Hitler was terrified of death, therefore never maturing and remaining childlike for his entire life.

¹⁷ Waite, *The Psychopathic God*, 141.

Robert Waite observed, “We speculate that the closer little Adolf felt toward his mother, the more anxiety he felt about his father; the more he feared his father, the more he clung to his mother—and the circular anxiety of the Oedipal conflict was intensified.”¹⁸ Hitler clinging to Klara created a perpetual cycle of coddling, using her for protection against his father’s rage. These types of infantile behaviors can result from shirking the responsibilities of maturity.

These oedipal characteristics resulted in a life-long search for a woman just like his mother. Hitler’s childhood experiences and Oedipus conflict created a strong sense of companionship, protection, and love for his mother; thus, shaping his attitudes, expectations, and treatment of women. For this reason, his one true love was his mother. The search for a woman like his mother ended when he met Eva Braun.

Hitler’s View Towards Women

Hitler’s views on a woman’s place were similar to views within traditional, nationalist German culture: “He regarded women as inferior beings and yet at the same time dangerous entrappers of men and thought wives to be impediments to warriors.”¹⁹ His opinions about women were often inconsistent, yet he was certain about their duties. “Whereas he usually speaks of them in derogatory and contemptuous terms, he often poses as the defender of motherhood and the sanctity of womanhood because he wants to appear wise, heroic, benign, or commanding.”²⁰ Their place was to uphold domestic life and their calling was marriage. Others noted Hitler’s views and engagement with women. For example, one of his colleagues, Reich Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels, described Hitler’s isolation of women from politics as evidence of his respect for them.²¹ Another noteworthy account on Hitler’s views about women occurred in a post-1945 interview. Getraud “Traudl” Junge, who served as one of Hitler’s secretaries, recounted, “He had an old-fashioned opinion of a woman’s place. Not especially Austrian, you understand, but more due to the feelings he had about himself. For instance, he thought it was his right to possess any women he wanted. . . . He was very charming, Hitler. As a man to a woman, that is. He had a nice way of flirting. So it was a contradiction in his personality, in a way.”²² Junge recalled that Hitler assumed the paternal role in his relationships with women, including his romantic relationship with Braun.

¹⁸ Waite, *The Psychopathic God*, 162.

¹⁹ Bromberg and Small, *Hitler’s Psychopathology*, 236.

²⁰ Bromberg and Small, *Hitler’s Psychopathology* 20.

²¹ Abrams and Harvey, *Gender Relations in German History*, 190. The National Socialist Movement is by nature a masculine movement. According to Abrams and Harvey, Joseph Goebbels believed that, “Instead, German women should identify and pursue a new complementary feminine ideal, and win back the respect that was due to them and that had been lost by trying to compete in masculine world. Women’s political duty was defined in terms of their activity in the private sphere (and by extension to those activities in the public sphere of waged labor deemed to be expressions of feminine, maternal attributes).”

²² Gerald McKnight, *The Strange Loves of Adolf Hitler* (Gary’s Inn Road, London: Sphere Books Limited, 1978), 17.

Thou Shall Not Marry

Although he vigorously sought to promote marriage and reproduction among the “Aryan” population, Hitler did not follow his own protocol in this regard. He characterized his leadership of Germany as a sort of devout marriage, claiming that his love was Germany and that he was married to all of the women of Germany.²³ Further, as the “husband” to all German women, he encouraged each of his “brides” to preserve the Aryan race. Marriage brings rights and claims to attention. Hitler did not desire to marry because his concerns were in, “. . . social mobility, better housing for workers, modernizing industry, erecting a welfare system, sweeping away the reactionary privileges from the past; in sum, building a better, more up-to-date, less class-ridden, Germany society . . .”²⁴ Hitler saw his vocation as rebuilding Germany, transforming Europe, and dominating the world; he did not have energy to spend time on something so mundane as marriage, in which the common folk engaged. Hitler stated, “If I were to marry, I could have a genuine marriage. But it would be a link to another direction than the one in which my mission lies. One or the other would have to suffer—yes, one would even have to be put in second place.”²⁵ “Marriage makes sense only if one wishes to establish a family. The family *is* the meaning of marriage.”²⁶

Although Hitler deeply admired Braun, he long refused to marry her. “As long as Hitler had a future, he ruled out marriage. There was no room for a wife. It had also been politically inconvenient.”²⁷ Braun had been forced to accept that she was no more than a plaything for Hitler. Why, then, did he marry Eva Braun in April 1945? The answers have been speculative. Kershaw claimed, “The marriage now cost him nothing. He did it simply to please Eva Braun, to give her what she had wanted more than anything at a moment when marrying him was the least enviable fate in the world.”²⁸ A portion of Kershaw’s theory was true, for the marriage cost him nothing; however, Hitler did not simply give her what she wanted. Indeed, he was able to marry Braun because he no longer had to be concerned about the stress of marriage interfering with politics or the war. Judging by his defiant personality not only towards his father, colleagues, and political involvements, but towards women in general, Hitler would never have married merely to please Eva. Therefore, the idea that Hitler had become a widower in April 1945 is more persuasive. Germany was dead and his marriage to German women was over. For the man who blamed Germany’s military losses and every other setback on others, his marriage to Eva was a way to concede to everyone that the war was over without actually admitting that his leadership had failed and thus “the Third Reich is no more.” Hitler was no longer the Führer and was free from the need to live a staged life. Since he had resumed the life of a common man once more,

²³ Sayer and Botting, *The Women Who Knew Hitler*, preface.

²⁴ Kershaw, *Hitler 1889-1936: Hubris*, xxiii.

²⁵ Otto Wagener and Henry Ashby Turner, *Hitler: Memoirs of a Confidant* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 223.

²⁶ Wagener and Turner, *Hitler*, 33.

²⁷ Joachim C. Fest, *Hitler* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974), 820.

²⁸ Ian Kershaw, *Hitler: A Biography* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2008), 947.

the façade of success was no longer needed. One can go as far as to speculate that, for the first time in his life, he had become an adult.²⁹

His actions imply that he may have denied marriage because he was too afraid to become attached and never found the true connection with anyone until late in his relationship with Braun, or that he believed his duty to his country was far more important than that of marriage. Based upon patterns in relationships and his previous traumatic childhood experiences, Hitler's rationale for resisting marriage was a conglomeration of things. Hitler had a megalomaniacal dream of creating a perfect nation. In addition, he had not found any woman that he saw as anything more than a pastime. Finally, one can conclude he had wrestled with the idea of marriage to Braun for quite some time. She continuously brought up marriage, while he shut it down. Not until he believed that his duties with Germany were coming to end did he grant her wish.³⁰ The most rational explanation seems to be that Hitler waited until his time commitment to the war effort was complete, or at least a lost cause, before he married Braun. This marriage, however, would have no possibility of a happy ending, for the newly-weds were condemned to a bitter end, a joint suicide.

Eva Braun

The obvious question is, what made Eva Braun so special to Hitler? She had been born in 1912, making her 23 years old when she first met Adolf Hitler. Braun came from a devout Catholic family. Her parents described Eva as a fun-loving, mischievous child who brought joy to their family during the war. Braun would never back down from a dare. She was the trouble maker of the three siblings (Eva, Gretl, and Ilse) and was also regarded as a problematic student throughout her formal education. "She has a graceful figure, holds herself well, and has a fine disposition," her mother once observed, "but she's too frivolous to study hard. She will only learn as long as she's being amused."³¹ Because of Eva's boisterous behaviors – sneaking out, chasing boys, and violating the "typical" Catholic lifestyle prescribed for young girls – her

²⁹ Robin Cohen, and Paul M. Kennedy. *Global Sociology* (New York: New York University Press, 2013). According to Cohen, life is characterized by both front and back stage life. Front stage is where the individual is always "on". They maintain a professional presence and provide a façade or a demonstrate their best qualities during life in the front stage. Back stage is where the individual can be their true selves. It is a casual relationship where they can joke and show a different part of themselves that they may not in a professional setting. Hitler continuously lived a front stage focused life. Even in his home, he continuously had someone watching him and writing down everything he said. Hitler was notoriously a performer within his lifetime. After the death of Germany, he finally had the ability to relax and express his authenticity.

³⁰ John Toland, *Adolf Hitler* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1976), 237 and 375. In reference to Toland's work, during the beginning of their relationship he became very fond of her and would bring her flowers and candy. Early in their relationship she spread a rumor that she was Hitler's mistress and he was going to marry her. She almost got fired from her job at Hoffman's photography shop for spreading this rumor. He also never entertained talk about marriage. On her twenty-first birthday, he bought her matching earrings and ring and bracelet. Toland stated that they would never stay together for appearance sake. Eva was losing hope he would ever marry her. "As the head of the Third Reich, he told her, he must devote himself to the nation with no family distractions"

³¹ Glenn B. Infield, *The Private Lives of Eva and Adolf* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1978), 5.

parents imposed strict restrictions on her in an unsuccessful effort to reform her. Her mother's goal for her was to become a well-known dressmaker or marry a wealthy man so that her social status would rise above theirs. Eva did in fact rise in social status, but not by the means which her parents had envisioned. Why did such a seemingly "normal" girl become the mistress of one of the most atypical men known to history?³²

Eva Braun and Klara Hitler were quite similar. Hitler's attraction to Braun stemmed from the attributes shared by both women. Albert Speer described Braun as, a "very feminine . . . a man's woman, incredibly undemanding of herself, helpful to many people behind the scenes—nobody ever knew that—and infinitely thoughtful of Hitler. She was a restful sort of girl. And her love for Hitler was beyond question."³³ Klara fell in the same category as Eva; she was suited for Hitler. These two were among the very few women to whom he ever spoke kind regards. Each woman was at his disposal, catering to his every need, remaining loyal through every fit of rage and absence, and loving him unconditionally. Hitler loathed his father for treating Klara abusively and neglectfully. Ironically, though, he also failed to address his mother with respect, and his treatment of Braun, too, was insensitive, apathetic, and manipulative.

Hitler had a strong relationship with both women and saw them as inherently dainty and innocent. Therefore, he sought to shelter them from the world. Klara died before the young Hitler could provide any actual shelter and comfort, but in his imagination, he was her protector. He built a home specifically for Braun, and she was to never go out in public without his permission.³⁴ Hitler also came to the realization that he had not been supportive of Braun after she attempted suicide in August of 1932. Following the incident, he briefly made more of an effort to be present and bask in her loyalty. Only after he faced the prospect of losing her, did he make some attempt to consider her feelings and desires, abandoning his monovision of what the relationship could do for him. It is noteworthy, however, that he relapsed on his attentiveness to Braun and her needs. It took a second suicide attempt and his move to the Berghof to prompt him to make her a priority for the remainder of their lives. His relocation to the Berghof was significant because he now interacted with Braun on a daily basis as a result of their living arrangements.

Braun was loyal to Hitler even before their relationship had fully begun. In the beginning stages, she grew enamored of him and wanted his complete attention. Braun had always been a bit of a wild child – testing boundaries, exuding extreme sex-appeal, and aggravating her father. However, she kept their affair a secret for over a year. She was emotionally captivated by him. "Hitler paid Eva compliments, thus arousing her interest."³⁵ She abandoned her family, moved in

³² Infield, *The Private Lives of Eva and Adolf*.

³³ Cate Haste, *Nazi Women*, 55.

³⁴ A question to address is, why would this "trouble maker," outgoing girl be submissive to Hitler? I infer that it seems as though both Eva's age and the fatherly like relationship Eva and Hitler shared was a large contribution to her submissive behavior. She was treating Hitler like a substitute father in terms of loyalty and obedience, and was still rebelling against her biological father by being with Hitler.

³⁵ Guido Knopp, *Hitler's Women* (Routledge: New York, 2003), 9.

with the Führer of Germany, and thereafter had limited contact with any of her family members except for her sister Ilse.

Dissecting the Attraction

Perhaps Hitler was so attracted to Braun and vice versa because they were archetypes of each other. Carl Jung describes archetypes as the origin, and the self as the presence.³⁶ “Because ‘the world exists not merely in and for itself, but also as it appears to me’, and because ‘no two people see the same object in the same way’, their interaction involves both objective and subjective factors. Thus, on the intersubjective level,” one of his biographers noted, “Jung develops a theory of gender relations based on the premise that one partner offers a form of unconscious compensation for the attitude of the consciousness of the other.”³⁷ According to Jung, archetypes are universal. They are what form our motivational structure. Archetypes are, ‘customary or habitual ways of dealing with critical situations’, and so ‘in any crisis in life, this archetype or another is constellated’, since it is ‘a sort of typical mechanism, or typical attitude, by which one settles typical problems.’³⁸ They manifest themselves in relationships through what individuals wish to see within others. When looking for a romantic partner, we try to complete ourselves. Thus *anima* fulfills the feminine side of men, tenderness and vulnerability, while *animus* satisfies the masculine side of women. As Paul Bishop summarizes Jung’s theory, “[W]hen the heterosexual man looks at the woman, he engages with her on a conscious and on an unconscious level: consciously he sees a woman, but unconsciously he is becoming aware of another aspect of himself; his (gendered) (unconscious) ‘other’, his animus, and her own anima.”³⁹

The attributes that Hitler lacked within himself he found in Braun. Cate Haste has characterized them as opposites, “Eva smiling and laughing, excited and lively; Hitler never smiled, was stiff, awkward, and preoccupied.”⁴⁰ Her outgoing, charismatic personality made up for his negative, desolate personality. Bromberg stated, “Eva’s very triviality (lack of seriousness or importance) seems part of what made Hitler comfortable with her. . . . He often described her as the ideal woman, as an adoring and undemanding doll.”⁴¹ His compulsive behavior was compensated by her ability to ground him and see the bright in every situation. Nerin Gun described Braun as fulfilling her essential role of “comforting Hitler by her physical presence, by the constant assurance of her devotion, by the simple fact that she was the one person in whom he felt he could put complete trust.”⁴² Braun’s dedication served as a source of emotional fulfillment for him.

³⁶ Ann Casement, *Carl Gustav Jung* (SAGE Publications, 2001), 211.

³⁷ Paul Bishop, *Carl Jung* (London: Reaktion Books, Limited, 2014), 139.

³⁸ Bishop, *Carl Jung* 140.

³⁹ Casement, *Carl Gustav Jung*, 146.

⁴⁰ Haste, *Nazi Women*, 59.

⁴¹ Bromberg and Small, *Hitler’s Psychopathology*, 116.

⁴² Nerin E. Gun, *Eva Braun: Hitler’s Mistress* (New York: Meredith Press, 1968), 166.

Intellectually, Hitler needed a woman to counterbalance his intellect, manipulative tendencies, outbursts of rage, and obsession with politics and the war. Kershaw observed that Hitler believed Braun ‘was just an attractive little thing, in whom, in spite of her inconsequential and feather-brained outlook—or perhaps just because of it—he found the type of relaxation and repose he sought.’⁴³ Braun was a very relaxed individual who never seemed to be focused on any stressors in life. She sought zest and distraction. Joachim Fest stated, “She was a simple, moderately attractive girl with unpretentious dreams and thoughts that were dominated by love, fashion, movies, and gossip . . .”⁴⁴ Braun had no interest in politics whatsoever, which proved helpful in their relationship since this enabled Hitler to step away from the role of the chancellor for small moments in time and simply enjoy her company. However, their separate drives to be the center of attention and frequent descents into depressive states created tensions within the relationship. Some of these can be directly explained through the attributes that Alois and Adolf Hitler shared as father and son.

The Happy Couple

The Hitler-Braun relationship from start to finish had a distinct timeline of four phases. During the first phase (1929- August 1932), Braun was nothing more than a plaything. This portion of their relationship was very one-sided. This phase culminated in Braun’s depression and her first suicide attempt. The second phase of their relationship lasted from August 1932 until her second suicide attempt in May 1935. During this phase, Hitler showered her with care and affection so as to prevent her from additional self-harm. Her second suicide attempt in May 1935 marks the beginning of the third phase of their relationship, which lasted until the day they married, April 29, 1945. During this period their relationship had a dynamic rarely, if ever, witnessed by any of his colleagues, in which the pair openly teased each other.⁴⁵ She would playfully criticize him for his actions, and he, in turn, would reciprocate. Hitler and Braun each knew their roles within their relationship, yet somehow it worked. The fourth and final stage of their relationship lasted from the moment Hitler and Braun said their vows until the second they both perished, a total of thirty-six hours.

Mention of their relationship began in 1929. The multiple stages within the Braun-Hitler bond renders its longevity fascinating. Here the repeated cycles of Braun being the apple of Hitler’s eye and then being neglected are noteworthy. Hitler’s neglect lasted for long spans of time, such as a three-month window when Braun became quite certain his absence was for the interest of other women. She recorded her distraught feelings in her diary. On February 18, 1935, she wrote that she was, “racking [her] brains to find out why he left without saying good-bye to [her].”⁴⁶ She believed his absences were characterized by his lack of interest in her due to political involvement and new “replacements,” or other women. Unfortunately, it is not clear as

⁴³ Kershaw, *Hitler 1889-1936: Hubris*, 352.

⁴⁴ Fest, *Hitler*, 524.

⁴⁵ Fest, *Hitler*, 153.

⁴⁶ “Eva Braun - The Diary,” <http://www.evabrain.dk/evabrain6.htm> (accessed 19 Oct. 2017).

to how intensely the situation was influenced by her feelings of insecurity as opposed to his philandering. Hitler's time was spent mostly in Berlin, campaigning for the chancellorship. During this time, and even when Hitler did visit, he typically ignored her. His time at home was preoccupied with dinners with cabinet members and party officials, and filled with talk of politics. There was little evidence found for Hitler ever devoting much time to Braun away from his work during the first phase of their relationship.

Throughout all phases of their relationship, including the time they did spend together and even during his leaves of absence, Eva had few boundaries. Hitler, as noted above, maintained a strictly traditional attitude towards women's behavior. Nonetheless, Braun was allowed to do more than even he believed a typical woman should do.

Cate Haste mentioned in her text that, 'She was allowed to sing, to dance, to paint her nails with red paint, and she was even allowed to smoke a cigarette outside. Meanwhile, we had to go to the loo to smoke. (said Reinhard Spitzzy) 'And there I met Generals and Ministers and with a towel we pushed out by the window the smoke, because Hitler had a very good nose, and it was forbidden to smoke. But Eva Braun was allowed everything'.⁴⁷

Still, it was difficult for Braun to deal with the lack of attention from Hitler, and thus she searched for ways to make him notice her.⁴⁸ Her efforts were unsuccessful and led her to attempt suicide for the first time; Braun used her father's First World War pistol to shoot herself in the chest. She missed her jugular vein and was found by her younger sister.⁴⁹ Their relationship changed briefly, but sadly Braun was once again left feeling unimportant. Therefore, in 1935 Braun designed her second suicide attempt. She wrote a letter explaining her extreme dissatisfaction with her life and pleading for attention from him. She took twenty Valium and was found yet again by her sister Ilse.⁵⁰ The second suicide attempt served as another a wake-up call for Hitler. The impact of this event was far more lasting than previous suicide attempts by Braun. Hitler immediately began putting Braun's needs in the forefront of his mind and making an effort to show her how important she was to him by trying to find a balance between his private life and politics.

The shift resulted in the relationship most know: allowing Braun public involvement (established member of his household), Hitler speaking highly of her, and behaving like a young couple cooing over each other. He lavished her with expensive gifts, and together they entered the final stage of their relationship, which lasted until the moment they both took their final breaths. "By 1944 Eva and Hitler had matured and so had their relationship. She had become a

⁴⁷ Haste, *Nazi Women*, 56.

⁴⁸ Sereny, *Albert Speer*, 109. 'He hid her from everybody except his most intimate circle but at that point, even there, denied her any social standing and constantly humiliated her. It was a painful thing to see. She was really a very nice girl, young, shy and modest.' It was not just Eva who witnessed Hitler's lack of affection. Speer easily picked up on Hitler's neglectful tendencies, thus resulting in her continual search for attention.

⁴⁹ Lambert, *The Lost Life of Eva Braun*, 134.

⁵⁰ Lambert, *The Lost Life of Eva Braun*, 142-143.

wise if sometimes melancholy woman, lacking the exuberance of a young girl but kinder and more thoughtful, with a real concern for others.”⁵¹ Their relationship transitioned into a level of comfort and admiration. Hitler completely trusted her and relied upon her as a comforting mechanism. The relationship had a solid foundation of mutual respect, allowing it to flourish. Having moved beyond mere physical attraction, Hitler came to value Braun. As a result, she was willing to make the ultimate sacrifice in a demonstration of her love and loyalty to her long-time lover and now husband, Adolf Hitler.

Braun's submission should perhaps come as no surprise. Her diaries continuously mention her need to be noticed and cared for by Hitler, and her willingness to submit to whatever was asked of her so that she would receive attention. Submission was likely also a product of the clear imbalance of power within the relationship. It was a very father–daughter-like type of relationship. Although she possessed a bold personality, Germany was still a male-dominated society in which females were unequal. It seems that she was the first person he grew attached to and reliant on since his mother died. “Little by little Hitler was becoming dependent upon her- at least in that tiny enclave of his life that could be called private life.”⁵² In reinforcing their claim about Hitler's dependency upon Braun, Sayer and Botting have observed, “Her physical presence was a comfort to him, her devotion and trust a constant reassurance in an unsure world. She was the perfect opposite that complemented the other partner.”⁵³ This shows a softer, more humane side of Hitler. His relationship with Braun cracked the façade of Hitler's opaque slate.

Conditional suicide was central to the last phase of their relationship. Their planned suicide was a grotesque way of sealing their love for one another. Just thirty-six hours before their deaths in April 1945, Hitler and Braun married, and Hitler kissed her on the mouth in front of his colleagues after she had pledged her loyalty to him.⁵⁴ Braun was the only woman with whom he had ever displayed affection publicly. This act was shockingly ordinary and yet revolutionary for his character; he became the gentle, loving, and “human” Adolf.

Das Ende

Hitler and Braun had an extremely multi-faceted relationship, outlined by a broad array of emotions. Initially, Braun seemed to be a toy or a diversion, but gradually the relationship shifted to something characterized by mutual gratification. This fulfillment could be analyzed through Carl Jung's archetypal perspectives; Braun was able to fill Hitler's voids and vice versa. Both background knowledge and an understanding of Hitler's psychopathology, past experiences, and childhood, allows one to draw conclusions as to why their relationship was the way it was, and to determine the reason for a shift in the relationship following Braun's suicide attempts. After Braun demonstrated her desperation for Hitler's affections with her two suicide attempts, the dynamic of their relationship changed from one-sided to mutually fulfilling, with both lovers

⁵¹ Lambert, *The Lost Life of Eva Braun* 374.

⁵² Sayer and Botting, *The Women Who Knew Hitler* 133.

⁵³ Sayer and Botting, *The Women Who Knew Hitler* 133.

⁵⁴ Toland, John. *Adolf Hitler*. (Garden City: Doubleday, 1976), 869.

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ending their lives in a joint suicide. “‘Death matters little to me,’ she [Eva] said. ‘I know the end that is in store for me. . . . My place is with *him!*’”⁵⁵ Although Hitler did not record his perspective on these last days, his actions suggest that, in those last hours, he might have also said, “My place is with her.”

⁵⁵ Sayer and Botting, *The Women Who Knew Hitler*, 166.

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