Enabling Hitler: an able body for a dangerous mind

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An Able Body for a Dangerous Mind

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ENABLING HITLER: AN ABLE BODY FOR A DANGEROUS MIND

I. INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt today in the minds of the world’s population that Adolf Hitler, the leader, the Führer of Nazi Germany was responsible for horrendous acts and possessed of insane intentions. However, what was is that enabled him to see his goals through to the extent that he was able? In truth, there exist hundreds of insane and sadistic people in today’s world, however a “Fourth Reich” has not yet emerged. In other words, how was it that Adolf Hitler was able to be the demi-god of a country and movement which branded the continent of Europe for all eternity and not just another angry German looking for an end to post-World War I and Versailles injustice and inflation? The answer is this: Hitler’s success was linked to those powerful men who followed him. These devotees became the combined incarnated body-vessel for the deranged and dangerous yet intoxicating mind of Adolf Hitler. Three such “architects” of this infamous dictator were Hermann Göring, Heinrich Himmler, and Joseph Goebbels. Powerful, skilled, and fanatic, these men had a direct impact upon the success of Hitler’s rise to power, maintenance of control, and implementation of his leadership. The intense and somewhat dysfunctional relationships these men had with their Führer suggests a deeper concept at work as well. That concept is a broadened form of codependency and its subset topic of enabling. Therefore, it is my argument, that
without men such as these and the codependent relationships they experienced, 
Hitler would simply have been one more embittered Germanic madman.
II. GÖRING: MONEY AND GOVERNMENT

Known as Hitler’s “first paladin,” Hermann Göring first met his future Führer in Munich in 1922. After interviewing him for a possible party position, Hitler offered the former WWI ace the leadership of the SA, the infamous brown-shirted terror troops of the early Nazi Party. Hitler needed a distinguished soldier in his ranks at the time, and, although Göring pledged his loyalty to him, their relationship was only later to become close. The failed revolution of the Beer Hall Putsch in November of 1923 found Göring drifting away from the Party and floundering in the underworld of Weimar resistance. After a few years in exile in Sweden and Italy, Göring returned to Germany in 1927 and spent the years from then until Hitler’s ascension to power reestablishing economic, political, and Party power in ways such as becoming one of Hitler’s deputies in 1928, being elected to the Reichstag in the same year, and eventually rising to become President of that body in 1932. It was in this last position that Göring began to aid Hitler politically in any great measure and become indispensable to his maintenance of power. As Overy states in his book:

It was from this position that he [Göring] was able unscrupulously to conduct negotiations with other parties, ostensibly from a disinterested desire to form a stable government that could command a parliamentary majority: in

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practice to find an avenue whereby Hitler might complete the 'legal revolution and gain the chancellorship.'

Thus began Göring's enabling of Hitler.

As Hitler ascended to the power position of Chancellor, he was "inordinately grateful to Göring," because of the part Göring had played in the 'legal revolution'. Therefore, he was rewarded with a post in Hitler's new cabinet and the important position as Prussian Minister of the Interior. As a member of Hitler's "kitchen cabinet", Göring served as one of a small group of top leaders with whom the Führer conferred when making important decisions. Göring (along with Goebbels) often helped to dissuade dissenting arguments to Hitler's plans from other cabinet members, stemming from his intense loyalty. In this manner, Göring served as an immediate and unwavering assistant in the daily decision-making of the Third Reich, helping Hitler to realize and implement many of his heinous acts. However, lacking any real Party position, Göring depended on Hitler's favor to keep him in power secured as it was by his overt loyalty to the Nazi leader. Eventually, Hitler commissioned Göring as his economic overlord in 1938, on behalf of the "all-out war effort" (after the reclaiming of the Ruhr and the successful Anschluss with Austria) which Hitler was insistent upon.

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3 Overy, 10.
4 Overy, 11.
It is important to note that Göring was also the major proponent of Anschluss with Austria. However, Göring was more interested in the practical reasons for annexation rather than the ideological reasons Hitler stressed and spoke of in Mein Kampf. As the non-violent diplomatic and political solution to the Austrian problem drew closer to feasibility, Hitler remained “full of doubt and hesitation.” However, Göring had his sights set upon the natural resources and foreign exchange reserves of Austria which would greatly boost the German economy and, subsequently, pressured Hitler into immediate action. Therefore, even in conjunction with one of Hitler’s main ideological goals, Göring proved to be the influence he needed to succeed.

The Rome-Berlin Axis treaty with Mussolini’s fascist Italy was completed in November 1936. This new turn of events called for “a re-orientation of foreign policy which did not correspond with the Mein Kampf strategy which Hitler is commonly supposed to have adhered to.” Therefore, Göring was able to step in and influence Hitler in the redefining of this policy, thereby increasing Hitler’s dependence upon him.

Once in power, Göring, at Hitler’s behest, had almost successfully completed the transformation of the German economy into a state-controlled entity. This process included the formation of state-run industry such as “Mining
Enterprises Hermann Göring and the slow takeover of private industrialist empires. Most of this was completed by 1939. It is in this manner that Göring enabled Hitler to increase his power even further by securing the financial means to do so. Göring's actions allowed Hitler, who already had the ultimate political authority at the time, to gain access to the industrial and economic framework of his growing Third Reich. This power would eventually lead him to finance his great war machine and, in turn, execute the calamities of World War II and the atrocities of the Holocaust.

Hitler also leaned on Göring for his credibility and trustworthiness. The nature of much of Hitler's early planning and goal implementation after his appointment to Chancellor was radical enough to receive weighty opposition at times from other government officials. Göring was able to assist in the "greasing of the axles" to help these ideas do through at the time and this area of assistance for the Führer merely broadened as the Reich grew in power. When explaining his motives concerning economic and foreign policy to his commanding generals on August 22, 1939, Hitler cited Göring as being able to confirm the waning economic strength of the Reich without the securing of more national resources from areas such as the Sudetenland and Poland. This confidence in Göring's testimony is important because of the general view the majority of high Party and governmental leaders had of Göring and his lack of official Party status.

10 Kater. 105
11 Carr. 58.
Göring’s experience with air force strategies also made him a leaning post for Hitler in those areas. More often than not, Hitler did not interfere with Göring’s military plans for the air force especially during the war, even if it meant defeat for the Luftwaffe as in the Battle of Britain. Hitler retained confidence in his paladin even in dark times such as that until the evidence of Göring’s failure was clear.\textsuperscript{12} Although Göring fell out of favor for this unsuccessful attack on the British, Hitler kept a close place for him in Reich and war affairs exemplified by the acceptance of Göring’s air lift plan to aid the failing Stalingrad campaign in the fall of 1942.

Göring is linked to another one of these “enabling men”, Heinrich Himmler, in that he helped to found the Gestapo and the concentration camp system.\textsuperscript{13} These two elements would later prove to be instrumental to the reign of terror which kept order throughout the Party and the Reich\textsuperscript{14} thereby solidifying Himmler’s enabling of Hitler.

\textsuperscript{12} Carr, 91
III. HIMMLER: TERROR AND CONTROL

Heinrich Himmler joined the Nazi Party in August of 1923. Although young and inexperienced at the time, he was to become one of the most feared and influential people in all of the Third Reich. An early devotee of Ernst Röhm, the original commander of the SA, Himmler joined the paramilitary group and became a participant in the November 1923 Beer Hall Putsch as he carried the imperial German ensign banner with Rohm’s unit towards the War Ministry buildings at the center of Munich. However, the failure of this revolution marked a pause in his political and aspiring military career. During the years of Hitler’s imprisonment, Himmler continued his Party membership and activities and eventually was appointed secretary to Gregor Strasser, the former Nazi Party and SA leader for Lower Bavaria in June of 1924. In early 1925, the ban on Nazism was lifted in Bavaria and Himmler restored his membership, this time with an official post as Deputy Gauleiter (Gau leader) of Lower Bavaria. It was from this position that Himmler was spring-boarded into the security sector of Nazi control in 1926.

The Schutzstaffel, or SS, was a security force responsible for the protection of Party staff and officials which emerged in 1925. Set up as an elite group of men in the various districts of Nazi control, these black-clad troops became rivals of the brown-shirted SA. Himmler was soon made deputy leader of this elite force in Lower Bavaria and his efficiency and success here soon found him advanced to

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the position of deputy Reichsführer in September of 1927. Here Himmler began to exert his ideas and ideals of what he thought the SS should be: “a secret police and a warrior elite, an instrument of internal conformity and a breeding ground for the purification of the race.” Finally, on January 20, 1929, Himmler ascended to his most infamous post as Reichsführer-SS.

Himmler’s personal ideology of the acquisition of Nordic racial superiority was overshadowed and tempered at first by his duty to guard the Führer and the Party from both external and internal threats. As such, he established a secret service agency to monitor the actions of Party members and to keep him informed as to the intentions of possible dissenters. As Padfield states: “Himmler was Hitler’s man inside the Party.” As such, Himmler was on the way to forging one of the more effective police states in history, almost guaranteeing the success, safety, and security of his Führer.

As Himmler’s power and influence grew, he eventually began to dominate and control the various police organizations of the German states, replacing top officials with his own SS men, until he finally took over the Bavarian Gestapo in April of 1934, much to Göring’s dismay and annoyance. This last acquisition allowed Himmler to obtain complete internal control of the security of the Third Reich. His power and position, then, would provide the stability and control

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16 Padfield, 90.
17 Padfield, 105
hatred of lawyers and public officials, not to mention the Jews. These like hatreds enabled Hitler to develop outlandish and heinous plans and ideas which were embraced by his paladins, especially Goebbels, who, in turn, processed them into socially acceptable messages and desires for the masses.
IV. **GOEBBELS: IMAGE AND CONFIDENCE**

Joseph Goebbels, the man who was to be one of Hitler’s closest confidants, experienced an abnormal childhood due to the malformity of his clubfoot.\(^{20}\) Restricted from the playful life of most children, Goebbels immersed himself in books, studies, and playing the piano. This pattern of early intellectualism would eventually lead to his achievement of a Ph.D. in 1921 at Heidelberg. Goebbels parents raised him in the Catholic faith, however, early doubts reinforced by a difficult developmental life caused him to abandon his faith and his God in favor of a faith in his own abilities. A man slight of frame and dark of features, Goebbels endured the ridicule of his peers throughout his life. Therefore, his aim was to become successful through his intellectual abilities rather than physical prowess or courage in battle. According to Frölich in Smelser and Zitelmann’s *The Nazi Elite*, “his [Goebbels’] paramount ambition... was above all else to make himself important and have a successful career.”\(^{21}\)

In the summer of 1924, Goebbels attended a NSDAP (Nazi Party) conference and was so inspired by the political agenda that he formed a local branch of the Party when he returned to his town of residence. It was at this time that “he discovered his gift for public speaking.”\(^{22}\) This rhetorical ability then grew and richened to the point that Goebbels quickly rose to be one of the


\(^{21}\) Smelser and Zitelmann, 49.

\(^{22}\) Smelser and Zitelmann, 50.
prominent Party members in his region. However, his infamy for his shrewdness, arrogance, and scheming nature was also soon known. From this very early point in his political life, Goebbels began the pattern of being at odds with rival Party notables befriending few of them excepting those with similar judgments about other Party members. One of such comrades was Gregor Strasser, the powerful leader of the North German NSDAP. Falling in with the radical left wing of the Party, Goebbels soon became its most outspoken member and talented speaker. However, this was all to change the day he met his future god, Adolf Hitler.

In February of 1926, Goebbels first heard Hitler speak and was immediately drawn to the intense charisma of the fiery Austrian. Although once contemptuous of the rising demagogue, Goebbels' first meeting with Hitler was powerful enough to sway him away from the Strasser contingent and to set his sights on getting close to the future "savior" of the Nazi Party and the German people. Hitler recognized Goebbels' brilliance and flair for public speaking and realized that he would be a good addition to the already numerous ranks of his supporters. Future courting and flattering of the "little doctor"\(^23\) spellbound Goebbels who wrote in his diary at the time: "I bow to the greater man, the political genius...Adolf Hitler, I love you because you are both great and simple."\(^24\) Hitler, in turn, rewarded Goebbels' devotion by assigning him the post of Gauleiter of Berlin thereby cementing the close relationship of savior and disciple until the end.

\(^{23}\) Smelser and Zitelmann. 51.
\(^{24}\) Smelser and Zitelmann. 51.
However, the admiration between these two men was by no means one way. Hitler found in Goebbels a willing confidant, “one who could listen for days to his long-winded speeches,” and a strong ally in the Party. “The man burns like a flame,” Hitler said. Others could denounce Goebbels as “the Mephisto of the Party” or “the scheming dwarf,” but Hitler remained satisfied with Goebbels and trusted him more and more as their relationship developed. Hitler also confided in Goebbels about his private life more than any other member of his entourage. For instance, Hitler often used him as a sounding board for ideas in private conversations and confessed to Goebbels his physical pain, thereby showing unadulterated sides of his humanity, a dangerous thing for an omnipotent god-head to do. Goebbels reveled in this “fraternal love” shown to him by his Führer and maintained this posture until the very end.

Hitler’s long road to the Chancellorship was considerably smoothed by the intense efforts of Joseph Goebbels. From huge and harried speech campaigns to large protest marches and shows of NSDAP force to ingenious tricks of propaganda, Goebbels spread the good word of the promises of his Führer to the German people who were ripe for a strong leader. These people, swayed by the

26 Snyder, 103.
27 Snyder, 103.
28 Glassman and Swatos, 150.
29 Glassman and Swatos, 158.
30 Robert O. Paxton, Europe in the Twentieth Century (Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1997), 348.
retained a love for his disciple. In the face of bestowed nicknames such as “Wotan’s Mickey Mouse,” “Mahatma Propaganda,” and “the he-goat of Babelsberg,” Goebbels persevered in his duties and with his cold and calculated mind remained a decided asset to Hitler. Through his ministry, Goebbels became “the dictator over German cultural life” and thereby gained the sufficient amount of influence over the minds of the German people to maintain the image of Hitler as their hero more or less until the Russian bombs quit falling on the Reich Chancellery in 1945.

37 Snyder, 99.
38 Snyder, 99.
V. CODEPENDENCY

The Concept

Codependency is an issue and phenomenon which has gained greater significance in the past ten or so years. This concept has evolved over much of the twentieth century with Horney providing a description of dependency that comes very close to contemporary formulations of codependency in 1950.\(^{39}\) The specific term "codependency" was derived from such concepts as "co-alcoholic, nonalcoholic, [and] para-alcoholic" and appeared on the treatment scene in the late 1970s.\(^{40}\) Throughout this process, the term has been most widely used in conjunction with alcoholism or other substance abuse. Addictions like these set up the original framework for the idea of codependency which relates to the behavioral patterns of those persons closely or directly involved with an alcoholic or drug addict.\(^{41}\)

In the case of Hitler, Göring, Himmler, and Goebbels, the concept of codependency has to be a bit more widely applied simply because of the addiction involved. Hitler was an ambitious, power-hungry individual who exploited every avenue that he was able to rise to greatness in post-WWI Germany. Coupling this with his bitter hatred for all things not related to the German cause or, more importantly, to his own ambitious desires, one sees the pattern forming of a man

\(^{41}\) Beattie. 28-31.
inseparably linked to these aspects of his person. According to Schaef, codependency is "a disease that has many forms and expressions and that grows out of a disease process that is inherent in the system in which we live." Here, Schaef refers to this disease process as the "addictive process" defining addiction broadly as "any substance or process we feel we have to lie about." Therefore, in the light of his public statements to the contrary, I make the claim that Hitler was addicted to power and hate, two things on which he thrived and which provided the bulk of his motivation throughout his despotic reign as Reich Chancellor of the Third Reich. As Reimann states: "Hitler always had to have victory, be it over individuals, masses, parties, or peoples. He was insatiable for victories." The direct statement "hatred intoxicated Hitler" also lends credence to a type of hate addiction. This, then, is the basis of the framework for my study of the relationship of Hitler and the three of his immediate subordinates as codependent.

Several definitions for codependency have arisen as clinical study of the phenomenon has increased because of the ever-changing analysis of alcoholism and other substance abuse diseases. Robert Subby defines codependency as: "An emotional, psychological, and behavioral condition that develops as a result of and

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43 Schaef, 21.
45 Reimann, 60.
46 The Hartwick Humanities in Management Institute, Classic Leadership Cases: Adolf Hitler (Oneonta, NY, 1993), 8.
individual's prolonged exposure to, and practice of, a set of oppressive rules. 47 Professionals in the field continued their study of codependency and found that more groups of people appeared to possess the behavioral disorder: adult children of alcoholics, people in relationships with emotionally or mentally disturbed people, people in relationships with chronically ill people, parents of children with behavior problems, and people in relationships with irresponsible people. 48 This broader understanding of the concept leads to the application of the term to those who are involved with people with any sort of behavioral or personality disorder from substance addiction to abusive behavior. This is important for, even if Hitler was not a power and hatred addict as I have suggested, he was still a behaviorally disturbed individual cited as being “the ultimate criminal psychopathic murderer of modern times.” 49 It is also important to note that the addict or disturbed individual can be a codependent as well and, therefore, be involved in both sides of the process. 50

Beattie’s definition of codependency is much more succinct: “A codependent is one who has let another person’s behavior affect him or her, and who is obsessed with controlling that persons’ behavior.” 51 This control of behavior took many forms in the inner circle of the Führer. First and foremost,

48 Beattie, 30.
50 Beattie, 30.
51 Beattie, 31.
Hitler was obsessed with controlling the behavior of those around him. His most effective way of accomplishing this was the encouragement of rivalry and competition for his favor among the high leadership of the Nazi Party and the Nazi government. He was also concerned with the private lives of his paladins often inquiring into them as with Göring or expressing an interest in Goebbels’ wife, Magda. Hitler’s followers also attempted to control their Führer in many ways as well, although these were not as successful as his controlling overtures over them. The most obvious of these were their individual efforts to please Hitler and, in return, gain more power or influence the decision-making process of the governing of the Reich.

It is suggested as well that “codependents want and need sick people around them to be happy in an unhealthy way.” In this light, Hitler is definitely not an exception. Just from reading the profiles of these three men (and others like them) it is plain to see that Hitler did, indeed, surround himself with other sick people. There is good evidence to suggest that Göring was addicted to morphine for many years after being wounded in the Putsch of 1923 in addition to his compulsive appreciation for fine art. Himmler was a quiet man who, although he could not

53 Kater, 230; Carr, 25; Bullock, 312.
54 Overy, 231-232.
55 Reimann, 123-126.
56 Bullock, 312.
57 Beattie, 32.
59 Mosley, 166, 181.
stand the sight of blood, was a cold and calculated killer, orchestrating the actions of his terror-squads of Gestapo and SS.\textsuperscript{60} He has been accused of being completely amoral on more than one occasion. Finally, Hitler had gathered an assortment of “freaks” around him in his personal circle. According to Hillman, “Hitler’s entourage... was most unusual for its collection of freaks in high places, even as others physically like them were systematically expunged in the death camps.”\textsuperscript{61} The most prominent of these was Goebbels who had a clubfoot and was very short in stature. His dark complexion, hair, and eyes also gave rise to much suspicion as to his Aryan background among other high Party officials. These personal “defects” caused Goebbels much discomfort and paranoia thereby increasing his efforts to rise above the rest and please his Führer to dizzying heights (see aforementioned).

Beattie also proposes that codependents are reactionaries who overreact and underreact, “but rarely do they act.”\textsuperscript{62} They react to the problems, pains, lives, and behaviors of others as well as those of their own.\textsuperscript{63} Hitler was notorious for his rage which he unleashed readily and often.\textsuperscript{64} This would fall under the overreaction category. He was also known for periods of great procrastination, listlessness, and indifference to affairs which did not directly concern him.\textsuperscript{65} For

\textsuperscript{61} Hillman, 221.
\textsuperscript{62} Beattie, 33.
\textsuperscript{63} Beattie, 33.
\textsuperscript{64} Carr, 13.
\textsuperscript{65} Carr, 13; Bullock, 35, 536; Langer, 72-73, 127, 129-130, 201-202.
example, Hitler’s inaction due to procrastination was “not so much a matter of laziness as it [was] a fear of coming to grips with a difficult problem.” He would then postpone action until the very last moment when the situation had become crucially urgent or dangerous. According to Beattie’s model, then, Hitler would be exemplifying codependent behavior.

66 Langer, 201
In their works on the subject, Beattie and Subby provide characteristics of codependent individuals in addition to their definitions. Beattie’s list very long and extensive containing various actions that codependents tend to do or not to do or feelings that they feel or do not feel. Having surveyed the list, I have taken the pertinent characteristics which apply to Hitler directly. These are listed as such:

Codependents tend to:

- get angry, defensive, self-righteous, and indignant when others blame and criticize them
- look to their relationships to provide all of their good feelings
- don’t see or deal with their fear of loss of control
- get frustrated and angry
- get depressed or sick
- look for happiness outside themselves
- latch onto whoever or whatever they think they can provide happiness
- feel terribly threatened by the loss of any thing or person they think provides their happiness
- threaten
- coerce
- not trust other people
- think about suicide

Simply working down the list, I will provide examples of these behaviors in Hitler’s life. Hitler seldom took criticism well; more often than not he became violently defensive and attacked those who criticized him. Hitler also had a very
self-righteous nature in that he was possessed of an intense Messianic complex. In his younger years after WWI, he often referred to himself as the Messiah and claimed that God spoke to him. Later on he cultivated this idea and even propagated among the masses. Hitler looked outside of himself at all times for positive reinforcement. As stated in Hartwick: Hitler had a “constant need of praise. His vanity was inappeasable, and the most fulsome flattery was received as no more than his due.” It is logical to say that Hitler feared his loss of control because of his association and reliance upon such men as Heinrich Himmler and his terror-tactics to keep the Führer in power. Hitler also frequently became angry and frustrated. One way in which he alleviated his frustrations that he had experienced for the six years prior to WWII was to begin the conflict. The war itself became an escape for him from the tension and dissatisfaction with himself and his actions. Hitler was often depressed and sick with his sleeping patterns being the most illustrative factor. The worse off he was the more he was prone to sleep all day and not arise until the late afternoon or early evening. So far as his happiness was concerned, Hitler desperately looked to the women in his life to bring him joy. Only two were ever very successful: Geli Raubal, his niece, and Eva Braun, his eventual wife. The intimate relationships he experienced with these women were perverse at best often involving abnormal sexual conduct.

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69 Langer, 34-35
70 Langer, 54.
71 Hartwick, 8.
72 Bullock, 50.
among other things.\footnote{Hillman, 219-220; Langer, 133-134, 170-171} When Geli Raubal mysteriously died (either by suicide or shot by Hitler), Hitler became incredibly depressed and even threatened suicide.\footnote{Langer, 90.} Threats and coercion were the mainstay of Hitler’s power maintenance and even in his Nazi state policy. Such reliance upon these would suggest codependent tendencies. Hitler’s “golden rule” in politics was: trust no one. This general mistrust or people also spilled into his private life a great deal with very few exceptions (i.e. Goebbels).\footnote{Bullock, 630,} Hitler also had a long record of suicide threats stemming from inability to deal with reality: after the failed Putsch of 1923, after the death of Geli in 1930, and in April of 1945 when the loss of the war seemed imminent.\footnote{Langer, 79-80, 90, 237-238; Carr, 109-111.} Therefore, the sum of all these characteristics adds support to the claim of Hitler’s codependency.
VI. THE CONCEPT OF ENABLING

Enabling is a concept directly linked to codependency in that it is a part of the process. In the arena of alcoholism and its treatment, enabling is defined as: "those influences of an individual, family, organization, or institution that may serve to facilitate or sustain the alcohol use of one or more drinkers." Applying it to the subject group at hand, the definition would be modified to replace "alcohol use" with immorality, disturbed behavior patterns, and hate crimes and the "drinkers" would be replaced by Hitler and his followers. Ager, Thomas, and Yoshioka break enabling down into two different classes: direct and indirect enabling, with direct applying to some aspect of the abuser's drinking behavior and indirect applying to some aspect of the abuser's nondrinking behavior. In the case of Hitler and his followers, I will be dealing with direct enabling which is comprised of two types:

Type I enabling pertains to those behaviors (or events) that serve to accelerate potential increasers of the abuser's drinking, such as indicating to the drinker that it is okay to drink, suggesting attending activities and social events where alcoholic beverages are served, and offering alcoholic beverages to the drinker. Type II enabling consists of those behaviors (or events) that decelerate potential decreases of abuser drinking. Examples of

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78 Ager, Thomas, and Yoshioka, 63.
is an example of a way in which they all, both collectively and individually enabled Hitler in his hatred addiction.

Göring’s great efforts in governmental and economic strides for him provided Hitler with the right amount of legitimate power to fulfill his desires and the means to keep it. In this sense, his efforts were like unto a person giving their alcoholic spouse a drink or, more correctly, giving them money for alcohol, directions to the nearest liquor store, and the keys to the family car. This example covers both types of direct enabling in that Göring directly influenced Hitler politically by backing his campaigns and indirectly by persuading potential business supporters and concerned politicians away from Hitler’s true agenda. Covering for the alcoholic merely enables him/her to be able to drink without facing as many of the consequences. Therefore, Göring eliminated many of the obstacles in Hitler’s path to power.

Himmler, with his tightly-reined police state, was the only person Hitler could rely upon to maintain control in the Hinterland (homeland). As Combs delineates: “Hitler became dependent upon Himmler’s Schutzstaffel (SS). He had no other armed force with which to enforce his rule and, as with every despotism, force is both the measure and the source of power.”

This control enabled Hitler’s hatred for the Jews and irrational behavior soar to new heights without the

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83 George Hamilton Combs, Jr., Himmler...Nazi Spider-Man (Philadelphia: David McKay Co., 1942), 29.
general populace objecting to his increasingly errant behavior.\textsuperscript{84} The willingness with which Himmler carried out his duties also enabled Hitler to grow even more perverse in his desires for genetic cleansing and Aryan dominance as well as other atrocities. Himmler also enabled Hitler by helping him to keep up some of the pretense that the Führer might just be a virtuous man after all. For example, Himmler never protested at his exclusion in the majority of Hitler’s social affairs. He also supported derogatory statements about himself when they came from the mouth of the Führer. For example, Hitler is quoted once as saying: “I need such policemen [Himmler]... but I don’t like them.”\textsuperscript{85} Himmler was also quick to shield Hitler from less than desirable press and publicity, especially that associated with “Final Solution”. As he gave detailed reports about the exterminations, Himmler declared to political and military leaders that “the Führer’s name must never be linked with these deeds” and assumed personal responsible for the massacres perpetrated by the SS.\textsuperscript{86}

Goebbels’ ingenious propaganda efforts forever immortalized Hitler in the eyes of the German people, helping to grant them the Messiah for which they had longed ever since Versailles. These efforts and Goebbels’ undying faith in his Führer and devotion to the Nazi nationalist causes enabled Hitler to become the omnipotent god-head of Germany he had been striving to be.

\textsuperscript{84} Langer, 204.
\textsuperscript{86} Glassman and Swatos, 161.
VII. CONCLUSION

Therefore, in conclusion, I believe the codependent nature of the relationship between Adolf Hitler and his three chief subordinates, Hermann Göring, Heinrich Himmler, and Joseph Goebbels to be extremely important in the study of the “how” and “why” questions surrounding the leadership enigma of Hitler. In this extreme case study, the behavioral problems of the four men are very easy to see; from drug addiction to intense hatreds to emotional disorders, they are all characterized by some of those factors which make them prone to a codependent relationship. My critique of my study would have to be the applicability of the concept of codependency to these non-familial, non-substance related interpersonal relationships. Only very recently have professionals been broadening the idea of codependency to cover a more diverse set of variables in dysfunctional relationships. It is my hope that in my proving of my hypothesis, that Hitler’s success in his nightmarish reign as Chancellor of Nazi Germany was directly dependent upon the codependent nature of him and his followers and their enabling nature in regards to supporting his aberrant behavior. There are several benefits of broadening the concept of codependency especially in terms of leadership. This is because of the large number of potential codependent people in this country. According to Goff and Goff, “by conservative figures there are 10 million alcoholics in this country, and if each [one] affects four other people, then
the illness is at epidemic proportions," and these figures are dealing only with the alcoholic "version" of codependency. Therefore, as young minds poised on the leadership roles of tomorrow, I feel it is important to understand the breakdown and dysfunction of more or less regular people when dealing with them in a leadership role or as a subordinate. The extreme case of Hitler and his three paladins illustrates a severe instance of such personality disorder and interpersonal dysfunction which can subsequently serve as a learning backdrop for the observation and application such aberrant behaviors in one's peers, employees, family, or any other acquaintance.