Hitler’s Heart of Darkness
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In *Mein Kampf*, Adolf Hitler, the most infamous leader of Germany, concludes, “Hence today I believe that I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator: by defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord” (65, emphasis added). This brazen statement gives divine justification for the atrocities that Hitler orchestrated only a few years after his book’s publication in 1925. “The will of the Almighty Creator” was Hitler’s Final Solution, the mass genocide of the Jews. In a speech given on April 12, 1922, Hitler clearly states his definition of the Lord’s work: “My feelings as a Christian points me to my Lord and Savior as a fighter … I believe I would be no Christian, but a very devil … if I did not, as did our Lord two thousand years ago, turn against those by whom to-day [the German people are] plundered and exploited” (19). When Jesus saw that Jewish moneylenders were using the temple to take advantage of the average people, he overturned the tables and drove the moneylenders out of the temple, quoting Isaiah and Jeremiah, two Jewish prophets, for justification (Mark 11:17). Hitler uses this account from Mark, one of the 12 apostles, to create a biblical justification for eliminating the Jewish people.

From this perspective, the Holocaust was a purification, a sanctification, of the German race; it was not only beneficial, but necessary for the Germans’ salvation.

While Hitler’s atrocities are antithetical to pure Christian ideology, Hitler’s policies and actions still exude a strangely religious theme: not only did the German people deify their leader, but they also followed him into a mass ritualistic slaughter. Could the Holocaust simply be a reincarnation of the old form of religious sacrifice manifested in a technologically advanced society? Or, is the modern, secular call to sacrifice a departure from rather than an extension of old religious-based violence? Hitler’s regime was not solidly grounded in a deity or religion; he merely used them as cover for his own personal convictions. While Hitler used a biblical basis for his anti-Semitism, connecting his actions to ancient
religious violence, his particular word usage suggests a more personal reason: “My feelings” is a call to the individual, not to the spiritual. This narcissism separates Hitler’s deeds from conventional religious sacrifice. Yet, no previous dictators used such a systematic approach to accomplish such diabolical ends. Joseph Conrad in his novella *Heart of Darkness* addresses this modern form of catastrophe by addressing the problem of individual prerogative without the usual societal constraints. Through a comparison of Hitler’s actions to ancient forms of religious sacrifice and to Joseph Conrad’s startling description of the consequences of the individual will, the defining attributes of modern sacrifice become frighteningly clear.

Hitler intertwined individualistic narcissism with his ancient justification, so the motivation for his actions is difficult to comprehend. Since deification is the transcendence of an individual to a god-like state, the severity of this problem increases because of the inherent individualism of the justification itself. In Hitler’s case, the juxtaposition of the particular details of his deification with quintessential forms of ancient deification resolve this problem. Today, the most well-known instance of this ancient phenomenon is in Christianity, Hitler’s own religion of choice. Jesus hinted at his divine origins to the point that his followers believed he was God: near the beginning of his ministry, one of his disciples boldly claimed that Jesus was “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16). Due to Jesus’ words, ideas, and actions, his followers deified him. The entire Christian religion is based on the belief that Jesus is God. Billions of people find purpose in life because they believe that Jesus was their savior. Similarly, in a speech at the Nuremburg convention, one of Hitler’s henchmen said, “An entire people, an entire nation feels strong and happy today because you [Hitler] came to this people not only as the Führer, but also as a savior” (Dietrich 22). Even though historians debate the involvement of the German populace in Hitler’s actions, most scholars agree that the people truly loved their Führer: “Nowhere else in the world does one find such fanatic love on the part of millions of people for a person, a love that is not exaggerated or hasty, but rather grows from deep and great faith, the kind of lasting confidence children may have for a very good father” (Dietrich 54). Hitler not only welcomed hero-worship, he furthered it by propaganda. Since adoration stroked his ego and increased his personal power, Hitler utilized it as much as possible. While the naïve and easily influenced quickly idealized Hitler, even those who witnessed his terrible deeds esteemed him. The truth of Hitler’s goals was evident in 1937, yet Winston Churchill noted Hitler as “among the most remarkable [people] in the whole history of the world” (Waite 5). Today, the very word “Hitler” is synonymous with evil; however, people still admit their admiration for him: Arnold Schwarzenegger, when running for governor in California, publicly announced, “I admire him [Hitler] for being such a good public speaker and for his way of getting to the people and so on. But I didn’t admire him for what he did with it” (Nagourney and Kirkpatrick A20). Schwarzenegger, born in Austria in 1947, knew of the horrors of the Nazi regime, yet he still admired the murderous man for his methods and voice.

Beyond the deification of a savior figure, another commonality between ancient forms of religion and Nazi Germany is ritualistic sacrifice. Boria Sax, a German scholar of intellectual history, defines sacrifice as “a religious act which, through the consecration of a victim, modifies the condition of the moral person who accomplishes it or that of certain objects with which he is concerned” (22). Thus, any act of sacrifice whose detailed method of procedure is faithfully or regularly followed is a
pristine example of ancient ritualistic sacrifice (Sax 23). In some ancient South American cultures, for example, the world would supposedly end if human children were not sacrificed at the beginning of the year (Stevenson). Ancient Judaism mandated a strict schedule of animal sacrifice in order to absolve the Israelites from their sins. In this context, Hitler’s massacre of the Jews seems apropos. Since Hitler convinced the Germans that the purification of their race was dependent on the elimination of Jews, the Germans viewed the genocide of Jews as a consecrating duty. The inhumane treatment of Jews at the concentration camps illustrates this perspective: soldiers were brainwashed into thinking that the murder of Jews was saving their people, so they committed terrible atrocities with a joyful, passionate zeal. The genocide of the Holocaust—the solemn marches to the gas chambers, the frequent inhumane torture, and the commonplace mass shootings—has immense sacrificial and ritualistic tones. Even the term “holocaust” comes from ancient religious sacrifice: οἶλος, meaning “whole” and καύστος “burnt.” Thus, a Holocaust is literally a burnt offering in which the entire sacrifice is destroyed. Clearly, the Nazis’ slaughter of Jews was a form of ritual sacrifice.

Yet, why would the Germans choose to persecute Jews over all other ethnic groups? While Hitler attacked other groups—Gypsies, homosexuals, and any opponents to his regime—the Jews were the most severely hunted and punished. What caused this group to receive the brunt of Hitler’s wrath? Historically, the Jews have suffered almost continual persecution. Since Jews define themselves first and foremost as Jews and only afterwards consider their nationality, they traditionally stand out as an easily defined group. One reason Hitler picked Jews is because their religious identity makes them more independent than other groups, but that still does not explain why he pursued them with such a passionate hatred. His anti-Semitism was rooted in his various personal vendettas against Jews. Hitler blamed them, for example, for his twice-rejected application to the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts since four out of seven professors on his admissions committee were Jewish. He described this event as the turning point in his life (Mein Kampf 122). With the Jews’ self-imposed social isolation and his own personal hatred, Hitler’s scapegoat was an obvious choice. As his own individual grievances drove his sadistic desires, Hitler defined his anti-Semitic actions as a purification of the Aryan race: “Blood sin and desecration of the race are the original sin in this world and the end of a humanity which surrenders to it” (Mein Kampf 339). German Jews, with their international networks and non-German ties, had fared better than the rest of the German populace as a whole during the post-World War I depression. Claiming Jews had “sold out the national freedom and betrayed our father land to international high finance,” Hitler authored one of the largest genocides in all of history (Mein Kampf 826). Like animals, the victims of the Holocaust were led en masse to concentration camps, where they were beaten, tortured, raped, maimed, and killed. Hitler’s grudge against a group of innocent people led an entire nation to massacre its Jews.

While Hitler’s deification and ritualistic sacrifices seem to hint that Hitler’s Nazism was a modern incarnation of ancient ritualistic violence, the narcissistic edge of Hitler’s policies alienate this phenomenon from its older counterparts. Though Hitler used a large amount of Christian rhetoric, he did not claim that the murders appeased God; he merely asserted that they would protect the German people. His claim was obviously preposterous. Misusing religious references and drawing invalid conclusions from the Bible and the then-current German political climate, Hitler
engineered the situation so that he himself would be able to manipulate the emotions and, therefore, the actions of the general populace. But, if he was acting as a deity, what religion was he heading? Without a religious mandate to satisfy with slaughter, how can Hitler’s actions be interpreted as a form of sacrifice? In ancient times, ritual slaughter was not so methodical, not perfectly orchestrated by the personal convictions of one man. Without ever explaining the full extent of his goals, Hitler climbed the political ladder, assumed control, gained momentum, and then ultimately brought about atrocities. The method he adopted to eliminate Jews was organized and orchestrated with a cruel fineness. Ancient forms of ritualistic slaughter, while having a detailed method that is regularly followed, are marked by a different, less destructive, agenda. While the leader does instigate the violence that the mob actualizes, the passionate murderous moment is usually short-lived. Hitler perpetuated his regime with terror. Usually, in ancient times, a single person or small group of people was chosen for elimination; Hitler chose an entire race. What allowed him to be so far reaching? He began his genocide unrestrained by his society. Where were society’s usual boundaries that normally hinder such a personal manifestation of hatred and violence?

The answers to these questions are muddled amid historical debates and differing perspectives. To this day, scholars and the general populace argue about the true nature of the Holocaust, the depth of Hitler’s influence, and even the reality of the massacre itself. Luckily, Joseph Conrad wrote about this very phenomenon in his book Heart of Darkness. Although this novella was written over thirty years before Hitler’s time and addressed the governmental policy of African colonialism while ignoring the actual government in power, this book clearly describes both the pragmatic and social side of ritualistic violence, connecting the two intricately. The key lies with the narrator Marlow’s main focus: Kurtz, a multi-talented man who could write, paint, and wield political power. Initially against Belgium imperialism, Kurtz desired to bring the light of civilization to the natives. Although Kurtz entered the jungle with idealistic dreams, he, like ordinary Germans, gave in to the passions of his heart. Mercilessly killing the natives and setting himself up as a god, Kurtz degenerated into a monster—a monster who “had something to say” (Conrad 132).

Using the primitive setting of the Congo to contrast with the modern man Kurtz, Conrad describes the connection between ancient and modern forms of violence. He predicts Hitler’s actions almost forty years before they occur and defines them with an eerily prophetic accuracy. Although Conrad does not specifically discuss the causes, he does illustrate the new facet of society that transformed ritualistic religion into its monstrous modern form: the modern obsession with individual fulfillment connects directly to ancient forms of sacrifice, but differs in that, while ancient forms of violence are socially controlled via restraints, this modern form is highly voluntary, relying on the individual’s inner strength for its power. This major difference—the dependence on self rather than an outside figure or deity for identity—creates the modern form of ritualistic violence. Hitler and Kurtz’s deeds are very similar to ancient forms of violence, but the old forms do not focus on the inner being of the individual; they are based on an outside deity that mandates certain rules to be followed. Lacking fear of God, Hitler and Kurtz are free from such constraint. Since the only forms of restraint now are mediated through and by the individual himself, a strangely ordered, logical progression of events occurs, because the individual controls the circumstances. In the modern context, the individual’s prerogative becomes the defining factor of society, leading
inevitably to violence and destruction.

Since Kurtz “came to them with thunder and lightning, you know—and they had never seen anything like it—and very terrible,” the natives were easy prey to Kurtz’s superior technology, and Kurtz took full advantage of it (Conrad 104). Playing into their divine fantasy, he set himself up as a god, commanding their obedience. However, the natives are not the only ones to deify Kurtz: the Europeans also worship the man. The harlequin, a Russian tradesman who stumbles upon Kurtz’s camp before Marlow arrives, is Kurtz’s most ardent disciple. Marlow confronts this man with Kurtz’s heinous deeds, but the harlequin still defends his god: “You don’t know how such a life tries a man like Kurtz….I am a simple man. I have no great thoughts….he was shamefully abandoned. A man like this, with such ideas” (Conrad 109). Although he witnessed all Kurtz had done, Marlow still admires him: “Nevertheless, I think Mr. Kurtz is a remarkable man” (116). The natives’ and Europeans’ awe and admiration for Kurtz stem from his superior technology and his ideas.

While the natives were astounded at the European repertoire of weapons and machinery, the Europeans were impressed by the technology of Kurtz’s words, his ideas: “Of all his gifts the one that stood out preeminently, that carried with it a sense of real presence, was his ability to talk, his words—the gift of expression, the bewildering, the illuminating, the most exalted and the most contemptible, the pulsating stream of light, or the deceitful flow from the heart of an impenetrable darkness” (Conrad 112). Dynamic in nature, his words were charged with some sort of ethereal energy that allowed them to be a positive or negative force. Persuasive and arrogant, Kurtz spoke with such conviction and prowess as to change the minds of those around him. His personal charisma was so contagious that it altered the perceptions of the masses; he was able to instigate the deification response from the natives. “Every one of his words comes out charged with a powerful current of energy; at times it seems as if they are torn from the very heart of the man, causing him indescribable anguish” (Waite 23). Though these words could easily describe Kurtz, they are, in fact, praise for Hitler’s violent rhetoric. Just like Kurtz, Hitler could inspire admiration and deification with his verbiage. By utilizing strong rhetoric that translates into action, individuals in power can do almost anything they can mediate through their own conscience.

Yet, as marvelous as rhetoric is, it does not differentiate Hitler or Kurtz from any well-spoken politician. Something greater than just rhetoric, something more profound than just ideas, must be utilized in order to instigate deification. In Heart of Darkness, Conrad uses Kurtz’s eloquence to maintain the potency of ideas when they acquire the physicality of action. The harlequin admires Kurtz for his rhetoric, but also for his willingness to act: “Now—just to give you an idea—I don’t mind telling you, he wanted to shoot me, too, one day—but I don’t judge him….He declared he would shoot me…because he could do so, and had a fancy for it, and there was nothing on earth to prevent him killing whom he jolly well pleased. And it was true, too” (Conrad 114). Kurtz’s words themselves did not inspire adoration, but their potential for action did. His talk was not empty; Kurtz had every intention of following through with his threat, and his follower could see that and was amazed by it. Marlow explains this phenomenon: “That man presented himself as a voice. Not of course that I did not connect him with some sort of action. Hadn’t I been told in all the tones of jealousy and admiration that he had collected, bartered, swindled, or stolen more ivory than all the other agents together?” (Conrad 112).

The sheer physicality of Kurtz’s rhetoric mediates between the individual’s willpower
and symbolic violence. Kurtz had violent ideas that became actions. Initially, one would assume that his actions were to ward off those who might attack his authority, but several aspects of the novella prove otherwise. For instance, the “decorations” outside Kurtz’s hut maintain the opposite of the natural assumption: “These round knobs were not ornamental but symbolic … they would have been more impressive, those heads on the stakes, if their faces had not been turned to the house” (Conrad 107). First, these formerly living human heads illustrate Kurtz’s sacrificial impulse. He has obviously gone to great trouble to ceremoniously display them on stakes. However, the most important aspect of the display is their arrangement: they face toward the hut. If they were meant to serve as a warning to others, he would have faced the heads toward the tribe. Instead, the natives were killed for Kurtz. Their orientation is toward the murderer himself. These heads illustrate the internal nature of Kurtz’s violence. Instead of discouraging outsiders, he is encouraging his own inner self to murder. The heads serve as a reminder of what Kurtz himself can do and the power that he has to transform words into actions. The display is a narcissistic reflection on himself, which he uses to ward off his own weakness and inhibitions.

According to Hitler’s rhetoric, the Jews were dirty and polluted. Murdering them would purify the German race; thus, it is not only justifiable, but also imperative that they be exterminated. While this logic seems absurd, Hitler’s pollution fears, like Kurtz’s own fears about bodily contagion, were so eloquently and strongly voiced, that the general populace could not risk contradicting him; his “anti-Semitism turned the merely prejudiced into fanatics, capable of any course of action, however irrational and cruel” (Johnson 437). His voice and tone gave Hitler the initial power to be heard, and he became a master of cleansing rhetoric: “What we must fight for is to safeguard the existence and reproduction of our race and our people, the sustenance of our children and the purity of our blood” (Mein Kampf 401). This propaganda allowed Nazi extremists to absorb “Hitler’s sub-scientific phraseology and [come] to regard Jews as bacilli or a particularly dangerous type of vermin” (Johnson 473). Like Kurtz, Hitler had a powerful, influential voice and the will to transfer his personal ideas into actual deeds.

In a book of tribute written during the later part of Hitler’s reign, two of his ardent followers lauded his ability to act on what he said: “We loved him, not because he was a ‘great dictator’, but because he was a great teacher, a living example of the order he preached. Without order, nothing can exist...He taught us this all-important truth of Race. Hitler's inspiration kindled our racial potential for construction and creativity. His order was not imposed upon us. It came from within” (Friedrich and Thompson 5). Since Hitler and Kurtz both had the power to woo the masses with their keen rhetoric, they were able to further their own personal agendas. Each man emanated violence and hatred, and in channeling the admiration of the general populace through himself, each caused violence more viral than the ancient forms allowed.

However, the source of expression and oratory about violence is where the true discrepancy lies between the modern examples and Jesus. Jesus had his basis in a religious authority: Yahweh. This omnipotent God had previously laid out a morality that every Jew must follow. If any prophet preached something antithetical to what the head deity had previously commanded, he was not a true prophet. Thus, Jesus was limited by what God had previously said. If he contradicted God’s laws, he obviously would not have been from God. Hitler, however, did not have this relig-
ious restraint. As Christof Friedrich and Eric Thompson maintain above, Hitler’s power came “from within,” from his own self (Friedrich and Thompson 5).

This idea brings us back to the original question: if Hitler’s actions are to be interpreted as a new form of religious violence, what is the religion to which he was dedicated? If he was going within himself to find the answers, how can he be defined as a religious leader? The atrocities of Nazi Germany were supposedly done by a secular authority. How can religious sacrifice appear in a society in which there is no religion demanding sacrifice?

The key to answering that question relies on the definition of religion. While religions are typically thought to be spiritual relationships to a god or gods, the word comprises much more than that narrow, normative description allows. Most scholars believe that word “religion” comes from the Latin word religare, which means to reconnect. Thus, religion is merely a relationship of human beings to whatever they consider sacred. With that broad definition, a different form of “religion” can replace ancient deity-based religions. But, the question remains: what religion did Hitler have? Without a religion, the entire framework of deification and ritualistic slaughter crumbles. How can one reconcile this seeming dearth of modern religious impetus with the ancient forms’ dependence on sacrificial religion?

Since religion is merely a man’s connection to the sacred, this relationship can be filled by any defining medium. For Benito Mussolini, fascism filled this role: “Fascism is a religious conception in which man is seen in his immanent relationship with a superior law and with an objective Will that transcends the particular individual and raises him to conscious membership in a spiritual society” (Mussolini). Mussolini, the father of fascism, defines his governmental institution as a religion. Under fascism, one must give everything to the state.

French colonial administrator in the Congo, circa 1905
Only “through the denial of himself, through the sacrifice of his own private interests, through death itself” can one “realize that completely spiritual existence in which his value as a man lies” (Mussolini). Through complete and utter devotion to the state, humanity transcends to a higher realm of existence. This form of zealotry is practiced via military conquest, with a strong emphasis on murdering ruthlessly for one’s nation. Thus, fascism is a religious institution that could command the same type of religious sacrifice as Judaism or Islam.

In Germany, fascism filled the role of religion and mandated religious sacrifice. Since the state and government are considered supreme in fascism, any action that the state requires—paying taxes, murdering, or sacrificing oneself—must be done willingly. Thus, if the state mandates, as Hitler did, that Jews are causing the state to be destroyed, then murdering them for the state is more than just a simple purification issue; it has become a spiritual one. The stakes have been raised: an individual’s defining relationship, their relationship to the state, is being threatened, and thus a passionate response is expected. Thus, Hitler’s regime seems to fit inside the definition of ancient religious violence. However, fascism is a modern manifestation that differs from ancient religions. Instead of relating to God, it relates solely to man.

Conrad directly addresses this inward orientation. In the form of a rhetorical question coupled with a hint of an answer, the author ponders this disturbingly restraint-free world:

How can you imagine what particular region...a man’s untrammelled feet may take him into by the way of solitude—utter solitude without a policeman—by the way of silence—utter silence, where no warning voice of a kind neighbor can be heard whispering of public opinion? ... When they are gone you must fall back upon your own innate strength, upon your own capacity for faithfulness. (90)

With the policemen and neighbor observing, people do not commit atrocious deeds for fear of retribution from the law, symbolized by the policeman, or from their peers, the neighbor. However, when these fears are removed, all one has is personal strength, an internalized set of morals, to safeguard one’s actions. Conrad obviously does not trust these morals to hamper genocide, for his unrestrained Kurtz committed every atrocity thinkable.

This theory initially does not seem applicable to Nazi Germany. The Germans were not alone in a jungle. A population of 65 million people, they seemingly had a plethora of neighbors and a government to act as policemen. But upon close analysis of this time period, Germany’s restraints are not present.

In Conrad’s society, the neighbor restrains because he or she has a socially ordained moral standard that he or she can use to judge others. The fear of judgment instigates conformity. It is important to note that the mere presence of the neighbor is not enough to hinder another individual; the neighbor must also have a moral standard by which to judge. In most scenarios, morality comes from some type of God instituting a somewhat stable moral standard. However, Germany, at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, had killed God. In one of the most famous philosophical works of all time, a German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche tells a story in which a madman pronounces God is dead. In the climatic scene, the madman screams at the crowd:

Do we not hear the noise of the grave-diggers who are burying God? Do we not smell the divine putrefaction?—for even Gods putrefy! God is dead! God remains dead! And we have killed him! How shall we console ourselves, the most murderous of all murderers? The holiest and the
Nietzsche subtly reveals one of the reasons fascism was so widely accepted. While the people kill God, they also wonder what type of water can cleanse their sin. After killing their savior, they cry because they cannot be saved. Fascism clearly gave them a savior without God. Yet, without God, no absolute morality exists. In a relationship with God, standards—certain rules or regulations—are established by a power greater than the individual.

Moral rules do more than just mandate ambiguously good deeds; they offer a model for limited violence. Philosopher Rene Girard describes a model for limited violence and analyzes its place in society. Asserting that all human cultures share an inherent need for violence, Girard warns that “violence is not to be denied, but it can be diverted to another object, something that it can sink its teeth into” (74).

In Judaic culture, this release came in the form of animal sacrifice; its violence was directed: “society is seeking to deflect upon a relatively indifferent victim, a ‘sacrificeable’ victim” (Girard 73). Gods that require animal sacrifice and other more acceptable forms of violence divert humanity’s need for violence against others.

As group morality was effectively dismantled with no God authorizing limited violence, the policeman became Hitler; thus, the policeman’s restraint lost its power. Although Hitler’s role in the Nazi regime is vastly overplayed by most modern historians, his role was substantial. His fierce anti-Semitism and pure devotion to the state created a dangerous transformation: instead of restraining violence, the policeman instigated it.

Thus, Germany had lost both its neighbor and its policemen. It was completely unrestrained. The only remaining constraint was its own inner strength. In reality, this individualism is the true cause of the atrocities. Without restraint, the individual is forced to turn inward to find an outlet for his or her need for violence. However, this orientation is not helpful, for it is the inner being from which man’s violent nature arises. For Kurtz, being alone in the wilderness eliminated the restraints. His soul “had looked within itself, and, by heavens! I tell you, it had gone mad… [it was] the inconceivable mystery of a soul that knew no restraint, no faith, and no fear, yet struggling blindly with itself” (Conrad 125). Conrad understands that the inner nature of mankind from which the violence emanates needs restraint. For without it, that violence is free to release itself in its most passionate form. However, Conrad does not end Kurtz’s existence with his unrestrained soul. As Kurtz is dying, he pronounces judgment on his own inner self with his last words: “The horror! The horror!” (130). In his last moments, Kurtz is able to see his soul for what it is. For Conrad, this realization is the “moral victory” that vindicates humanity (133).

Nazi Germany followed a godless morality and looked inward for strength. However, all it found was the violent depravity that it was trying to divert. Instead of being constrained, violence was unleashed in a way that shocked the rest of the world. Although Nazism has most of the symbols of religious violence, it is much worse, because, like religion, it offers an outlet for man’s violence, but instead of limiting violence via obedience and sacrifice, it amplifies it not only by releasing man’s inner violence, but by making that depravity the focus of life. In this modern form of ritual sacrifice, with its focus on inner strength and individuality, the modern human is forced to rely on himself for his morality. Without an outward orientation, morality can be perverted and twisted, hindered only by what the individual finds appeasing. Thus, any atrocities—the
massacre of millions of Jews or the gruesome display of human heads on stakes—are permissible forms of violence. This phenomenon is the modern form of ritual violence, more terrible than its earlier counterparts because it is unconstrained by society, is religious in nature, and is amplified by man’s inherent violence.

Works Cited

Myers, “Hitler’s Heart of Darkness”