Journal Entry #2

Burke analyzes Hitler’s “Battle,” describing it to be “exasperating, even nauseating” (191). I believe the reasoning behind his analysis is to show his readers what exactly to guard themselves against. He shows us what to look for in Hitler’s writing and states “let us try also to discover what kind of “medicine” this medicine-man has concocted, that we may know, with greater accuracy, exactly what to guard against” (191). Hitler was known to be very convincing, but Burke reveals the symbolism that runs through Hitler’s writings.

Burke argued that when “religion is misused, it does lead to a fascist state” (219). Burke relates this back to the “corrupters of religion; the corruption of the best is the worst.” (219). Hitler corrupted religion and used it against the people. Burke exploits the ways Hitler did this and warns his readers what to look for so nobody like Hitler can take a stand again.

The four unification devices are inborn dignity, projection device, symbolic rebirth, and commercial use. Burke describes these devices as “an extremely astute piece of work” (202). Burke describes inborn dignity as both religious and humanistic patterns of thought, a natural born, dignity of man is stressed” (202). He goes on to explain projection device as the “curative process that comes with the ability to hand over one’s ills to a scapegoat, thereby getting purification by dissociation” (202). Symbolic rebirth was described by Burke as the “projective device of the scapegoat, coupled with the Hitlerite doctrine of inborn racial superiority, provides its followers with a positive view of life” (202). The fourth device, commercial use, it provides “a noneconomic interpretation of economic ills” (202). All these devices were used by Hitler repeatedly. Burke states that Hitler “never once, throughout his book, does Hitler deviate from the above formula” (202).

Burke states that Hitler “to a disturbing degree, showed the power of endless repetition” (217). He goes on to state that “we must make it apparent that Hitler appeals by relying upon a bastardization of fundamentally religious patterns of thought” (219). He makes it apparent that we need to understand Hitler’s appeals and how he used these tricks against the people. He goes on to explain our job and what we are to learn from what happened. Burke states “our job, is to find all available ways of making the Hitlerite distortions of religion apparent, in order that politicians of his kind in America be unable to perform a similar swindle” (219). Burke also states that we need “genuine and admirable unity” (220). By this statement, we can see that Burke’s definition of unity is much different than Hitler’s. It should not be based off “emotional trickeries that shift our criticism from the accurate locus of our trouble” (220).