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Engl 400-17

Journal on Rhetoric of Hitler’s Battle

1. Burke views the analysis of Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* as somewhat of a touchy subject in society today. So many people are quick to look past the underlying messages of the book and simply critique it as a book that promotes the views and attitudes that brought Hitler to power in Germany. Burke states that “if the reviewer but knocks off a few adverse attitudinizing and calls it a day, with a guaranty in advance that his article will have a favorable reception among the decent members of our population, he is contributing more to our gratification than to our enlightenment” (Burke p. 191). What Burke means here is that in society, people are so quick to simply accept the fact that Adolf Hitler was a terrible person and if they agree with that statement then they are viewed as being a good person. However, this blind allegiance to the idea of placing blame and hate on everything the man did is blinding everyone to the good that he actually did for people.
2. Burke believes that Hitler was extremely effective when it came to influencing the country and bringing them together to create a common enemy to face; in this case the Jewish community. Burke discusses how Adolf Hitler used religion as a propaganda tool to rally the country behind his cause and allow for the Jewish community to take the blame for all of the suffering the German people had experienced.
3. The first important feature of Hitler’s unification device is inborn dignity. This refers to the idea that all men have an innate sense of dignity but they must first come to the realization of that dignity through right thinking and right living. The second feature is the idea of projection. This allowed for the people following Hitler’s philosophy to simply choose a group as a scapegoat for all of their woes and problems; the Jewish community. The third feature is the sense of a symbolic rebirth. When the people who were following Hitler began to blame the Jewish community and project a sense of racial superiority over others, they were seen as being reborn into a new life and/or group who had all gone through the same transformation. The fourth feature is the idea of commercial use. Throughout the book, Hitler would describe the use of finances by the Jewish community as destructive and the Aryan race as constructive and never deviated from that wording which would allow for people to accept those facts.
4. He discusses how Hitler’s four features for a unification device are completely disingenuous and they inspire hatred in the eyes of the beholder. He does stress that unification is something that is attainable and not something to be feared by those who look for it. However, the process by which leaders inform the public on how to unify cannot be through disingenuous blame and hate.