

Insane, traumatised or entangled?



An attempt to explain and understand
the psyche of violent perpetrators



08.11.2011

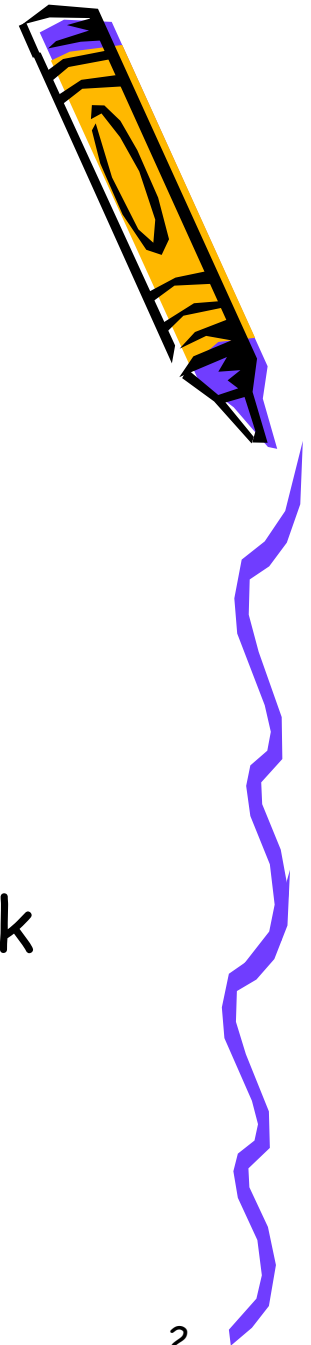
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Agenda

- The personality concept
- Data from research
- The influence of upbringing
- Safe and unsafe bonding
- The concept symbiotic trauma
- Adolf Hitler and Anders Behring Breivik
- conclusions



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Antisocial personality disorder

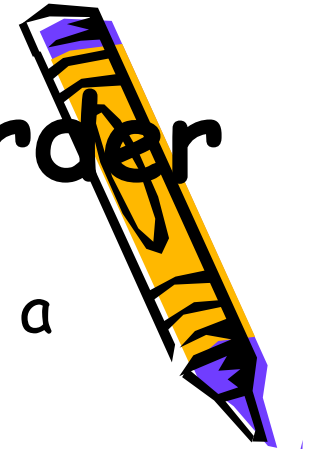
is characterised by at least 3 of the following:

- Callous unconcern for the feelings of others and lack of capacity for empathy.
- Gross and persistent attitude of irresponsibility and disregard for social norms, rules, and obligations.
- Inability to maintain enduring relations:



Antisocial personality disorder

- Very low tolerance of frustration and a low threshold for discharge of aggression, including violence.
- Inability to experience guilt and benefit from experience, particularly punishment.
- Markedly prone to blaming others or offer plausible rationalisations for their behavior bringing them into conflict.
- Persistent irritability. (ICD 10, F60.2)



Narcissistic personality disorder

A pervasive pattern of grandiosity (in fantasy or behavior), need for admiration, and lack of empathy, beginning in early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts, as indicated by five (or more) of the following:

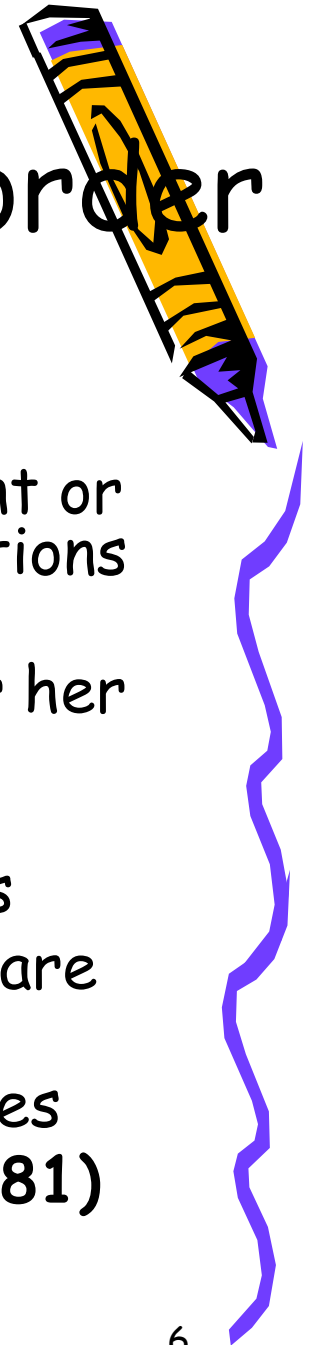
- Has a grandiose sense of self-importance (e.g., exaggerates achievements and talents, expects to be recognized as superior without commensurate achievements)
- Is preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love
- Believes that he or she is "special" and unique and can only be understood by, or should associate with, other special or high-status people (or institutions)



Narcissistic personality disorder

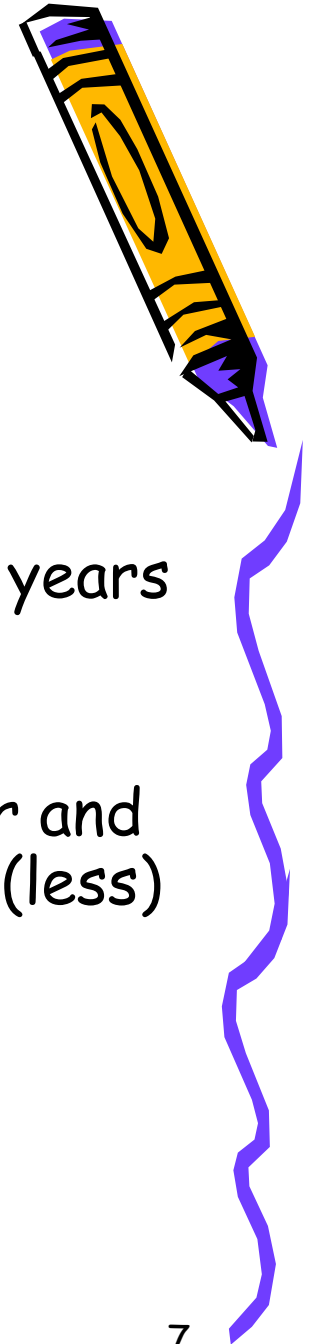
- Requires excessive admiration
- Has a sense of entitlement, i.e., unreasonable expectations of especially favorable treatment or automatic compliance with his or her expectations
- Is interpersonally exploitative, i.e., takes advantage of others in order to achieve his or her own ends
- Lacks empathy: is unwilling to recognize or identify with the feelings and needs of others
- Is often envious of others or believes others are envious of him or her
- Shows arrogant, haughty behaviors or attitudes

(DSM IV, 301.81)



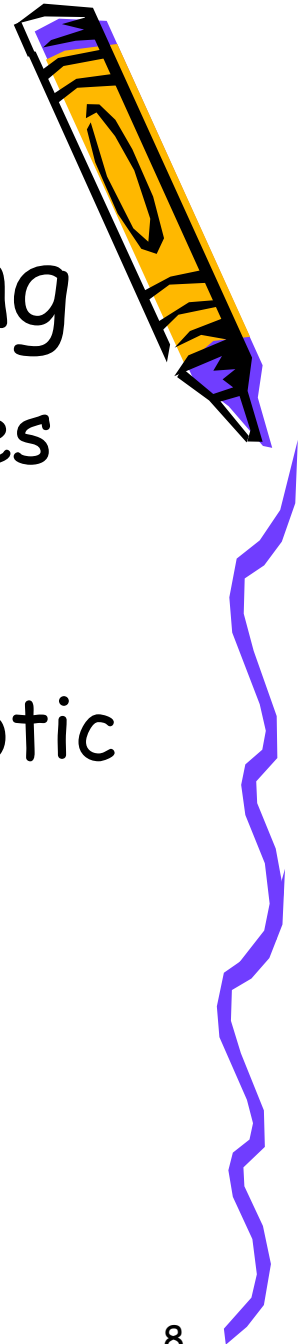
Evidence from research

- Only 3% of those imprisoned for violence are females
- Peak of violent acts: males between 18 and 21 years
- Violent perpetrators come from lower social classes and have fewer school qualifications
- Violent perpetrators' attitudes: "to gain power and influence" (more) "to respect laws and order" (less)



The influence of upbringing

- Those who are violent in most cases were beaten as children
- The child experiences parents' behaviour as veering between chaotic negligence and strictness
- Parents don't provide a role model for solving conflicts

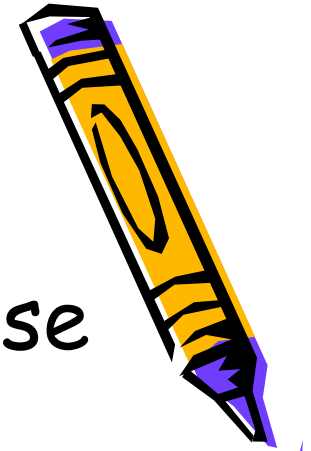


Types of Bonding

Bowlby, Ainsworth, Maine and Hesse



- Secure bonding
- Insecure and ambivalent bonding
- Insecure and avoidant bonding
- Disorganised bonding



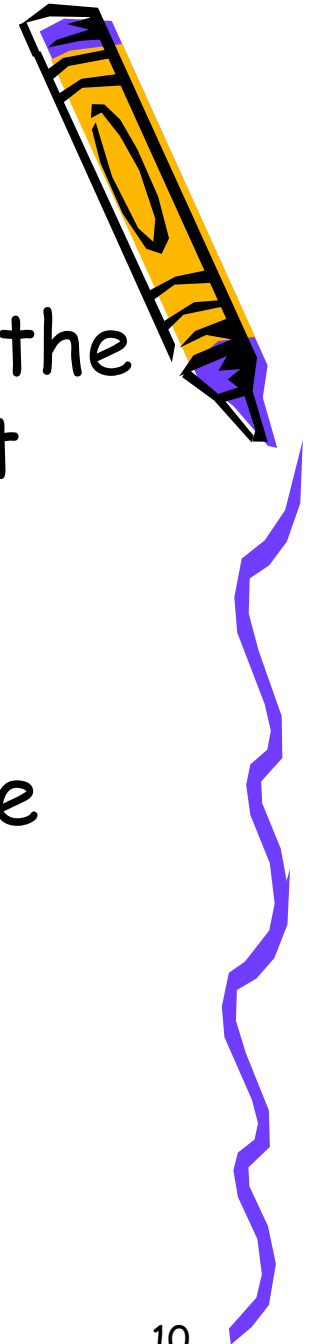
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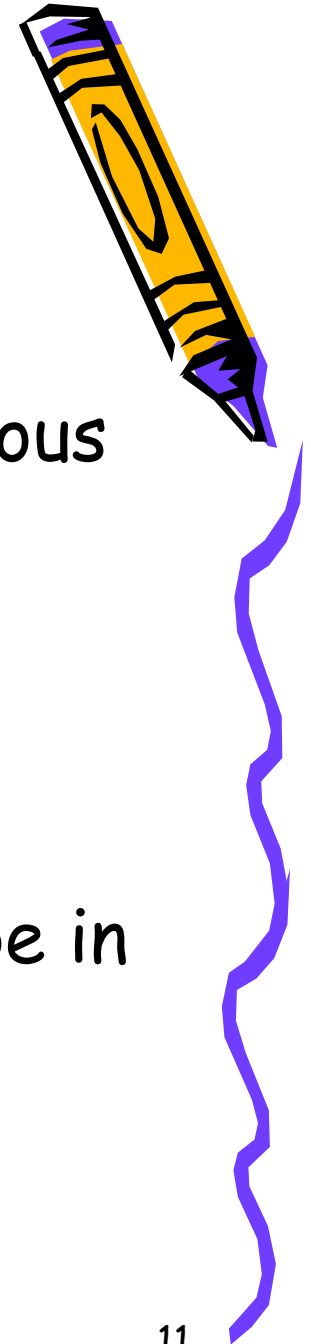
Secure bonding

- Mother is emotionally available if the child is anxious and needs comfort
- Mother reacts promptly and appropriately to the child's needs
- Mother leaves the child alone if he doesn't want contact with her



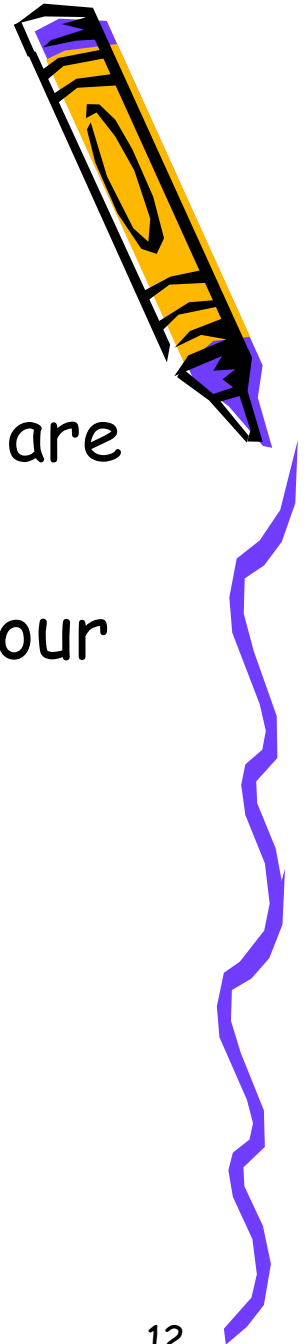
Insecure ambivalent bonding

- Mothers behaviour is insecure and anxious
- Children are highly stressed by separations
- It takes a long time for child to regain emotional stability
- Children cannot be alone nor can they be in good contact with their mother.



Insecure avoidant bonding

- Attempts by the child to make contact are rejected by the parents
- Child learns not to show bonding behaviour and to suppress his feelings
- Child stays distant from his mother

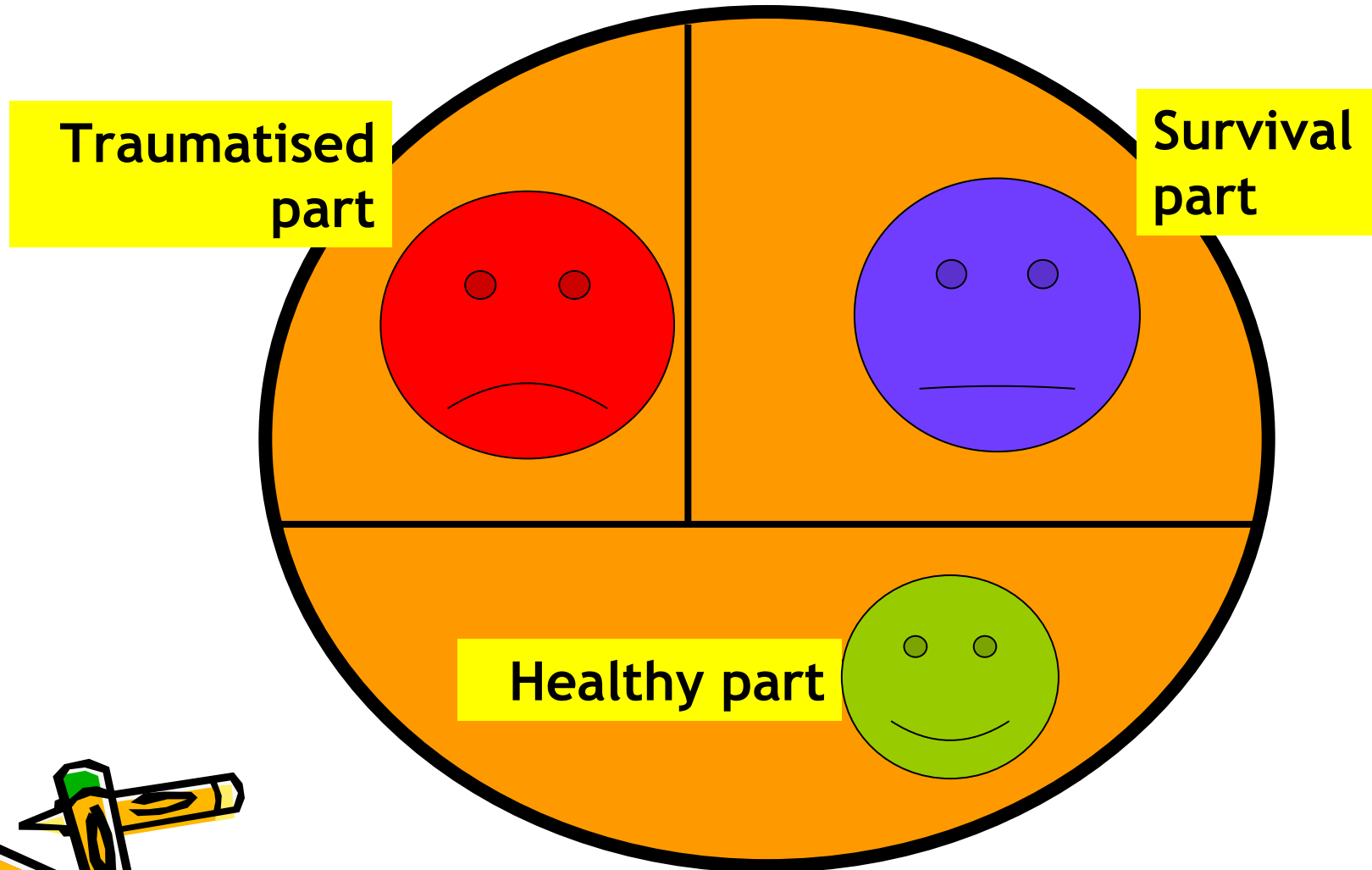


Traumatized parents produce a psychic field in which their children suffer from a **"Symbiotic trauma"**.

The child is helpless and incapable of getting a stable and safe emotional contact with his parents. The more he tries the more he brings the mother into contact with her trauma and the bigger then is the rejection. This causes a split in the psyche of the child.



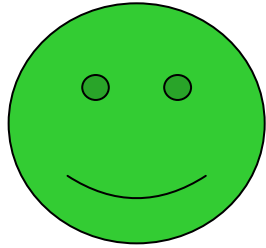
Split of the Identity after an Experience of trauma



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Healthy structures within a child



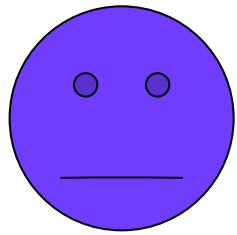
- Own lifepower and energy
- Own strong will to live
- Healthy basic needs
- Joy of movement and exercising the body
- Joy of playing
- Joy of learning and solving problems



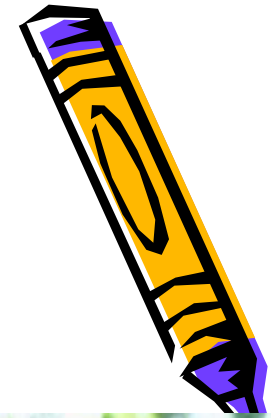
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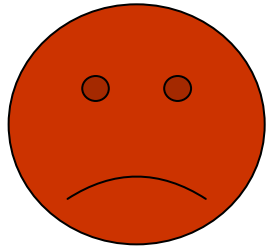


Characteristics of the survival parts in a symbiotic trauma



- Fighting to get into contact with the parents
- Idealising the mother or the father
- Identifying with the surviving mechanisms of the mother/father
- Feeling responsible for the parents
- Repressing and denying one's own trauma
- Identifying and resonating with the traumatised parts of the mother/father





Characteristics of the traumatised part in a symbiotic trauma

- Despair that there is no love from mother and father
- Deep loneliness
- Fear of dying
- Suppressed anger
- Suppressed sadness



Consequences of symbiotic trauma for the child

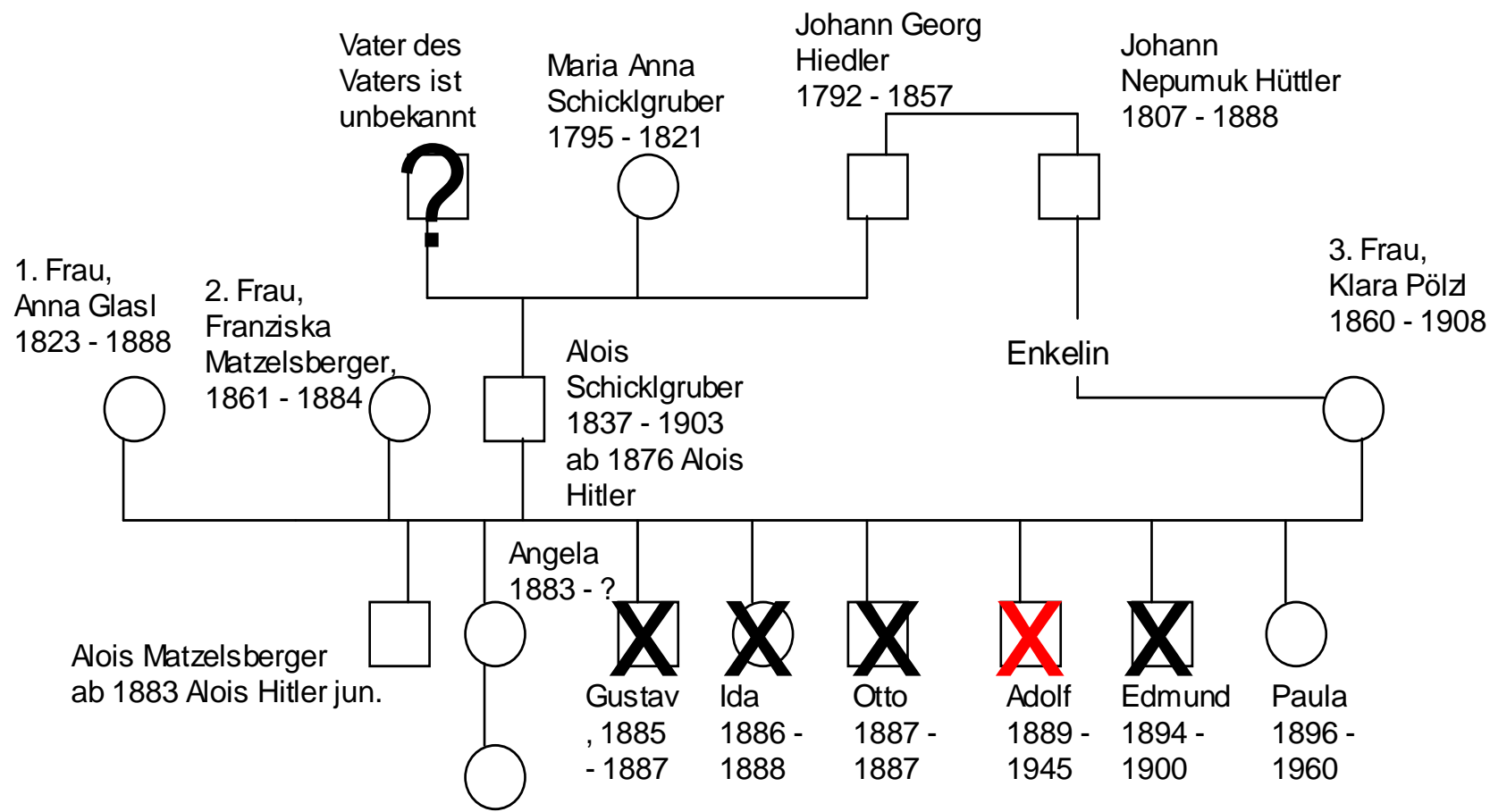
- No ability to distinguish between own feelings and those of the mother
- Being haunted by the trauma feelings of the mother
- No being able to live one's own identity
- Lifelong symbiotic entanglement in relationships and incapacity to have warm and loving relationships
- Mental illnesses like hyperactivity, depression, psychotic states



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Genogramm of Adolf Hitlers family (reference: Der Spiegel 28/2001)



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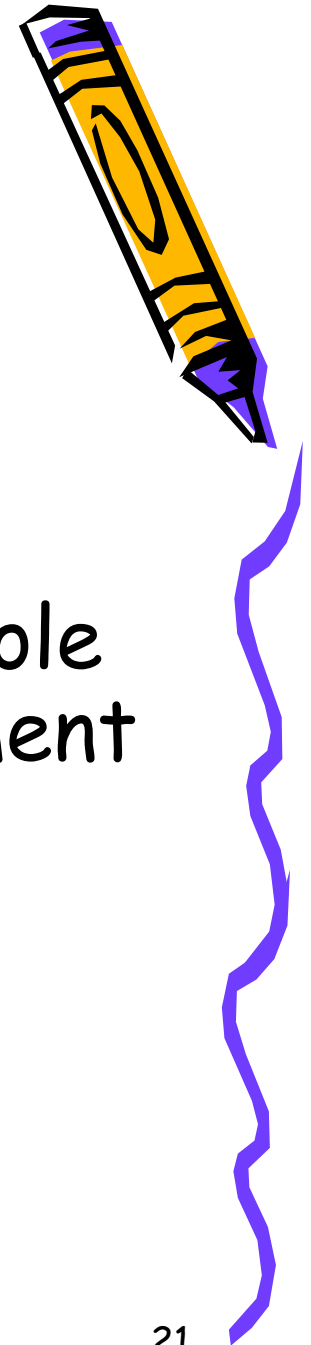
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Hitler's Identity

- Hitler's mother was traumatised by the death of three children within 14 days
- Hitler was conceived and born into the trauma of his mother
- He was full of panic and depression and developed his surviving strategy: "only the strongest survive".
- He was attracted to death and reproduced it systematically.



- Hitler suffered from a symbiotic trauma and
- he succeeded in entangling the whole world into his symbiotic entanglement with his mother.
- Germany became his substitute mother.



What is known about Anders Behring Breivik's family of origin

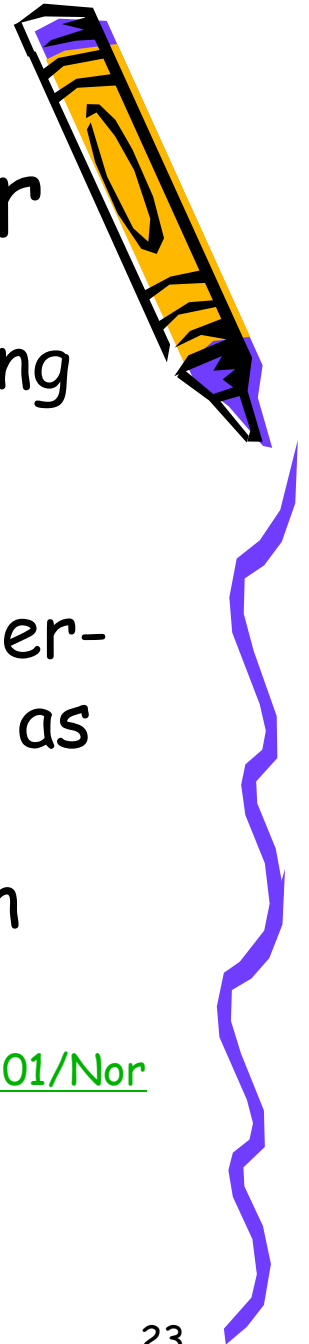
- Both parents had already had children with other partners before her marriage
- Anders' Father left his mother when Anders was one year old. He also left his second wife with three children
- Mother married again and divorced after a short time from an unfaithful partner
- Anders was taken into foster care during weekends and holidays when he was 2 years old
- 2 psychologist suggested take take the boy permanently out of his family.



Relationship with his mother

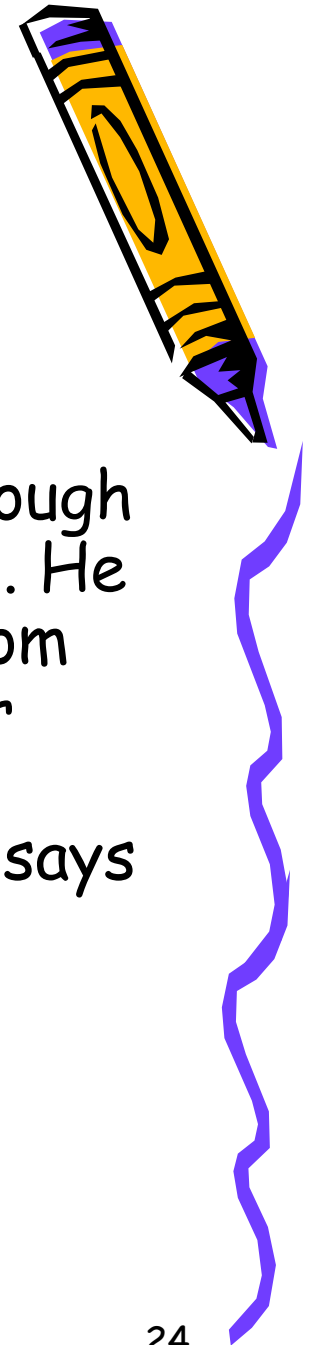
- "I feel I have had a privileged upbringing with responsible and intelligent people around me," Breivik wrote of his early childhood. "I do not approve of the super-liberal, matriarchal upbringing, though, as it completely lacked discipline and has contributed to feminise me to a certain degree."

- <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/norway/8672801/Norway-massacre-the-real-Anders-Behring-Breivik.html>



Relationship with his father

- Contact with his father was broken off completely, Breivik says, after he got into trouble for graffiti during his teens -- although he remained in contact with his stepmother. He said his father had also isolated himself from his other four children "so it is pretty clear whose fault that was." Breivik talks of his occasional desire for a rapprochement, but says it never happened.
- <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/08/02/us-norway-breivik-idUSTRE77139120110802>



Feeling a victim

- Breivik says his closest friend was a boy called Arsalan, but the pair fell out when they were 16. He accuses Arsalan and other Pakistani youths of being violent and claims to have been beaten up eight times, once suffering a broken nose; it is the moment Breivik claims he railed against multiculturalism. "At the time, I couldn't understand why he [Arsalan] loathed Norway and my culture so much," wrote Breivik. "I was completely ignorant at the time and apolitical, but his total lack of respect for my culture... actually sparked my interest and passion for it."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/norway/8672801/Norway-massacre-the-real-Anders-Behring-Breivik.html>



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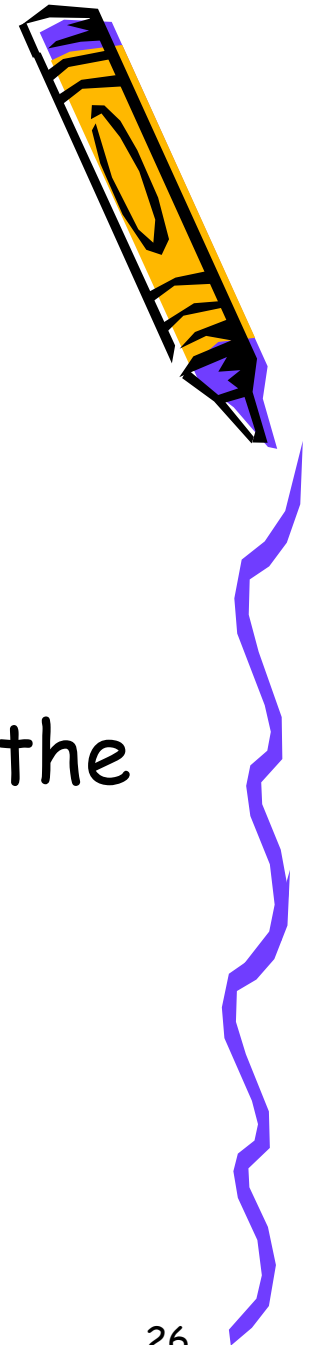
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Anders Behring Breivik's conclusion

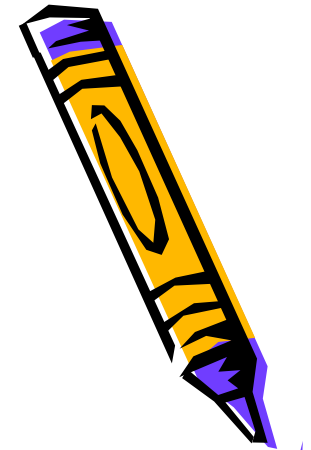
- "The absence of fatherhood has created a society full of social pathologies, and the lack of male self-confidence has made us easy prey to our enemies," he said. "If the West is to survive, we need to reassert a healthy dose of male authority."

- <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/08/02/us-norway-breivik-idUSTRE77139120110802>



Boys who suffer from a symbiotic trauma with a traumatised mother develop a split image of women

- The ideal mother: pure and clean, caring only for her own children; projected onto culture, state, religion
- The bad mother: weak, whore, victim of sexually abusive men (Breivik about his stepfather: "a primitive sexual beast")
- The good mother is admired but not available, the bad mother is not wanted and will be despised
- Same with the picture of the father: hero or despised weak person



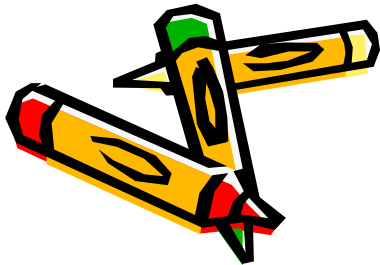
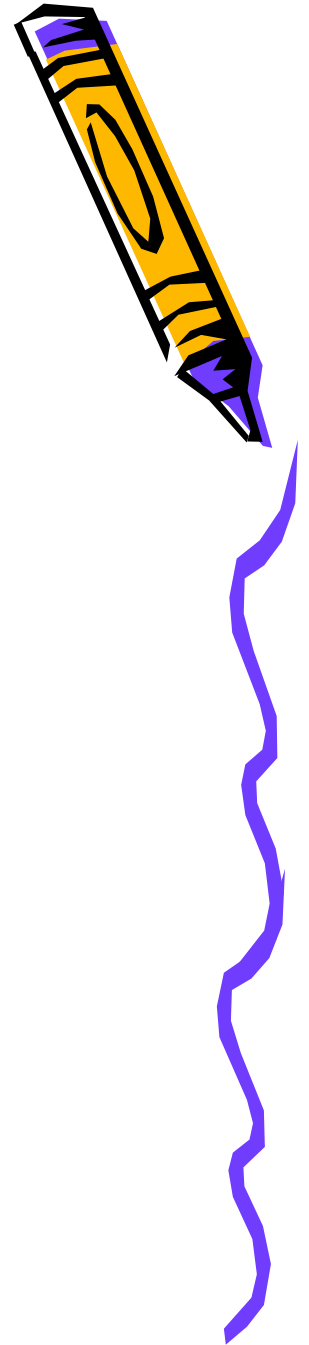
Why hate and killing?

- The hate against the parents is projected against others declared as enemies (on a social level e.g. scapegoats like the Jews and the Labour Party of Norway).
- The hate against others is a distraction from the perpetrator's own emotional pain.
- Attempts to get rid of their own pain and suffering by projecting it onto others.
- Killing another person is as if killing one's own inner traumatised child.



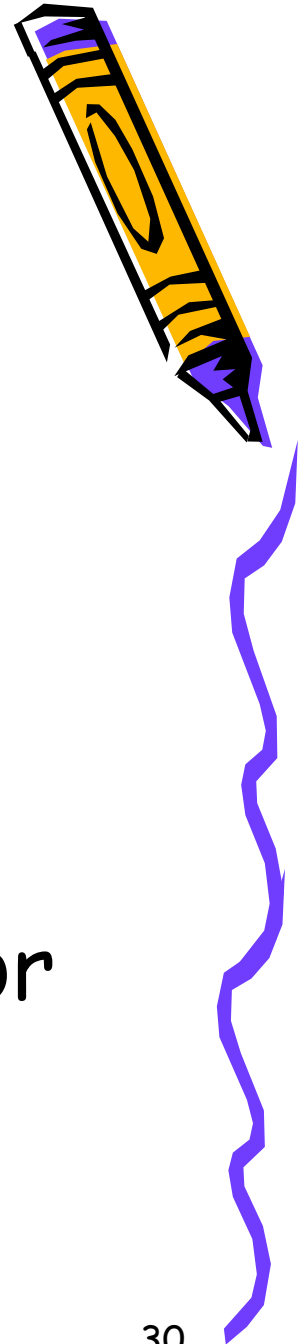
Why do women love violent perpetrators?

- Seeking protection
- Feeling the victim part in the perpetrator
- Delegating own aggressions to the perpetrator



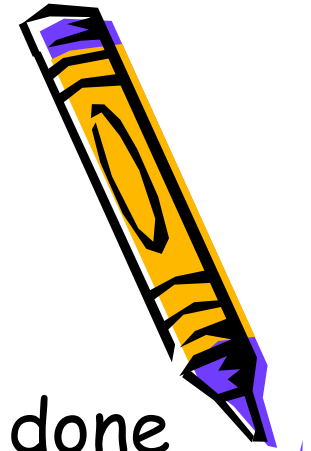
What can help the victims of crimes?

- Understanding the process of traumatisation
- Not focusing on the perpetrator but on their own process
- Solving potential symbiotic entanglements with a perpetrator
- Mourning the loss



What can help violent perpetrators?

- Accepting the truth of what they have done
- Seeing their deeds as traumatising others and the consequences of their own traumatisation
- Learning to deal with guilt, blame and shame
- Disentangle with their parents
- Learning to regulate overexcitment
- Accessing their own victim part



What can we learn in general

- Not being distracted by depressed and angry men's/boy's rationalisations and their weird arguments in their "manifestos"
- Not getting involved in a vicious cycle of anxiety-rage-murder-anxiety
- Pointing to the real causes of mental craziness: the emotional suffering of children from having no safe bonding with their parents





- If we want children with clear minds, we must care for the hearts of babies.
- If we want to have sane parents, men and women must not be traumatised
- The traumatised must recognize their own trauma and look for help to resolve it.



Economic welfare is not enough. Good emotions and relations count

A person that can truly
love himself and has
empathy for himself
doesn't become a violent
perpetrator.

