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**THE EVOLUTION OF  
ADOLF HITLER'S  
*WELTANSCHAUUNG*:  
A CRITICAL STUDY OF  
HIS RHETORIC,  
1920 - 1926**

A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts at Massey University

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*For Max*

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## ABSTRACT

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This thesis tests the "orthodox perception" that Adolf Hitler was driven by a *Weltanschauung* which remained fundamentally constant from the outset of his political career. It argues that his theories and concepts underwent continual change and development. The evolution of the Nazi leader's world view is traced by examining his thoughts and reactions as expressed in his rhetoric during the period from 1920 to 1926, the era of his so-called "political apprenticeship".

In order to demonstrate how Hitler's *Weltanschauung* evolved eight facets of his ideology are examined. These themes: the emphasis the Nazi leader placed on current event topics, the parliamentary system, the use of propaganda, the principle of leadership, the Nazi leader's equation of Jews with Marxism, his theory of *Lebensraum*, his belief in Aryan supremacy, and the role of faith, were selected either because of the prominence given to them in Hitler's own rhetoric, or because historians repeatedly identify them as central facets of his world view.

This thesis establishes that acceptance of the received wisdom is an oversimplified means of explaining the genesis of Hitler's world view. The Nazi leader's ideology developed according to his own personal experiences as well as the political, economic, and social climate of the era. Hitler's *Weltanschauung* was far from complete at the outset of his political career and, in fact, some aspects first developed with the writing of his political autobiography, *Mein Kampf*.

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