

STRUWWELHITLER: A NAZI STORY BOOK

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A casestudy of *Struwwelhitler* with a brief digression through *The Egyptian Struwwelpeter* soon makes us see that 'classic' of our childhood in another light. The book about childish bad habits and their punishment, the guide to pedagogic intervention with three-to-six-years-old children, has been through some thousand editions in the 150 years of its existence. That critique of contemporary events in 1941, *Struwwelhitler*, has, of course, been nowhere near so widely circulated and the reason is clear: the possibilities in the form of a children's book stretch from repression through terrorization, shock and potential traumatization to quite a different interpretation, to the process of learning what is and what is not allowed, to vicarious experience of mischief, indeed, to recommending an attitude of tolerance. When parents admonish and indeed smack and hurt children, they rarely understand why the child has such difficulties in being obedient. The punishment syndrome may not so much teach the lesson of what is right and what is wrong; it may teach the lesson of what urges need to be hidden, controlled, suppressed. All these possibilities are denied the imaginative political parody. Here the interaction of pedagogic and political meaning is less ambiguous; everything is painted black or white, in bold contrasts; the political bully or tyrant is unambiguously bad.

Whether we consider the *Struwwelpeter* derivatives were successful in their effect depends, of course, on our definition of success. In their case we are not dealing with didactic aids to bringing up children but with propaganda stereotypes intended to influence through ridicule. A book for children, whatever we mean by that, with its 'anti-hero'¹ could be transposed easily from the children's nursery to the nursery for grown-ups, the politicians, who were, like the children, silly people in need of a rod of iron. Thus, in 1941, Robert and Philip Spence succeeded in making out of *Struwwelpeter* a *Struwwelhitler* in the same rhyming couplets, contradicting the famous dictum of Karl Kraus: 'Zu Hitler fällt mir nichts ein!' ('I can't think of anything to say about Hitler').

¹ Robert und Philip Spence (alias Doktor Schrecklichkeit), *Struwwelhitler. Eine englische Struwwelpeter-Parodie aus dem Jahre 1941*, aus dem Englischen in freier Übertragung von Wolf Dieter Bach und mit einer Übersetzung von Dieter H. Stündel, mit einem Vorwort herausgegeben von Karl Riha (Köln: Informationspresse – c.w. leske verlag, 1984), 7.

The function of literature for children and funny pictures ranges from entertainment to education. In the eighteenth and nineteenth century there were *Sittengemälde für Kinder* (*Moral pictures for children*, e.g. by Johann Melchior Armbruster, Vienna, 1820), that is, literature as a mirror of virtuous behaviour, as an aid to right-living, as a warning of dangers, moral failings and wrong behaviour; there was literature as warning, such as *Wanderungen auf des Lebens Irrewegen* (*Rambles on the wrong track*, by Theodor Berghs, Augsburg, 1846) pointing to the inevitable consequences of an immoral life, or *Die gequälten Tiere, oder: bestrafte Grausamkeit* (the English original was *Dumb animals: or cruelty punished*, London, William Darton, n.d., c. 1823–25) by Mary Elliot, Berlin, 1836) or *Der junge Negersklav und die geraubten Kinder* (*The young black slave and the stolen children*, by Christoph Hildebrandt, Magdeburg, 1834). There were little instructive booklets such as *Kleine Völker-Gallerie für Kinder in unterhaltenden Erzählungen von den Sitten, Meinungen, Gebräuchen und Kleidungen fremder Nationen* (*A little gallery of the nations for children with entertaining stories of the customs, beliefs, manners and dress of foreign people*; no author, Nuremberg, 1810), which aspired to be handbooks ‘for awakening moral behaviour’ (‘zur Erweckung eines sittlichen Verhaltens’) as the *Spiegelbilder für kleine Mädchen* (*Mirror for little girls*; no author, Guben, 1845) makes clear in its subtitle. Moreover and significantly there was also an edition of *Struwwelpeter* with the subtitle *ABC Buch oder Zucker und Ruthe für artige und unartige Kinder* (*ABC book: or sweets and rod for good and bad children*; no author, Nuremberg, no year but about 1850), explicitly placed on the axis between bread and play, cakes and whip, affection and the denial of affection, praise and blame, i.e. the old and ever current, Manichean, dualistic formula of good and evil.

A contemporary of *Struwwelpeter* in Britain was Edward Lear’s *Book of nonsense* (no date, about 1846). However, Lear wrote grotesque and absurd poems, such as *The owl and the pussycat*, while Hoffmann wrote with an admonishing index finger, as it were, but achieved something unusual for a German writer: he wrote with a light touch a genre for which, significantly, there is no designation in German; he produced a didactic tour de force of drawing and narrative, as if transforming a torture chamber into humour, into funny stories which you can only laugh about.

The first translation into English, *The English Struwwelpeter, or Pretty stories and funny pictures*, already appeared in 1848, a version which kept closely to the original. It apparently was so popular that, as Darton remarked, it became *a semi-proverbial jest in English* and a *freak of acclimatization* transposed into an English setting, with English names for all the characters.²

² F.J. Harvey Darton, *Children’s books in England: five centuries of social life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), 250.

But books for children are still meant in the first place to be enjoyed and not only to be instructive or elevating. However, a didactic literary form with a pious tone is pre-eminently suited to political satire. The extensive literature from classical times onwards on emblematic devices in the visual field, with their stereotypical images for the expression of feelings, stories and symbols, provided a model for pedagogical literature. The process of adaptation to the world of adults, of growing into the adult world, becomes a process of learning to know and understand patterns of conduct and expectations of what is allowed on the political level.

Amongst the malefactors with *Struwwelpeter* traits are *Der Militär-Struwwelpeter* (Berlin, 1878), *The political Struwwelpeter* by Harold Begbie (London: Grant Richards, 1899) and *Swollen-headed William* by E.V. Lucas (text) and G. Morrow (pictures) (London: Methuen & Co., 1914). In the latter the German Emperor, William II, stands, 'with hydrocephalic head, hands dripping with blood, spurs, sabre and the insignia of military domination – cannons and warships equivalent to the scissors and comb in Heinrich Hoffmann's drawing – on the pedestal'.³ *Bombenpeter* (*Bomb Peter*) by K.E. Olszewski (Munich, 1915) is a German equivalent; it is a condemnation of the Grand Prince Peter of Serbia, who was agitating against Austria-Hungary with Russia's support; and finally in this category belongs our *Struwwelhitler* written by Dr Schrecklichkeit in 1941. (Interestingly, the polyglot publication of *Der Struwwelpeter* in German, English, French, Spanish, Italian and Latin, published in 1984 and in its third edition in 1994, does not list in its bibliography of editions reworkings and political parodies such as the *Struwwelhitler*.) The Latin text, *Petrus hirrutus*, that is to say 'Long-haired Peter', which is a sermon by Eduardus Bornemann, follows the formula of translation but not of transposition. We have to differentiate between a straightforward translation and a transposition suited to a particular contextual situation. This literary device is a recipe which has been used repeatedly and will certainly be used again as a widely used shorthand which is immediately understood everywhere, a background against which political actions and actors stand out clearly and meaningfully.

There is a parallelism in which political education follows a model from the nursery: first, identification of the hostile conduct or bad behaviour; then, shaming the evildoer, making it publicly known what he has done, making known the penalty which awaits if the hostile conduct is not checked or the bad behaviour is not

³ Klaus Doderer, 'Panoptikum der Struwwelköpfe', in *Struwwelpeter-Hoffmann. Texte, Bilder, Dokumentation, Katalog*, ed. G.H. Herzog and H. Siefert (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Heinrich-Hoffmann-Museum, 1978), 30 (my translation).

abandoned; finally, the turn for the better when the hostility is checked or the bad behaviour is abandoned.

An example from 'The dreadful story of Gretchen and the gun': the heroine of 'The dreadful story about Harriet and the matches' is now called Gretchen; she is alone at home and she is bored. She notices the matches which Father has strictly forbidden her to play with. Do you hear the story of the Creation in the background? God – or Father – has strictly forbidden Eve – or Harriet – to eat of the tree in the midst of the garden. Eve is alone. Perhaps she is bored. Then she sees the tree with the beautiful fruit. The rest is, as they say, history – or, rather, history as men have written it. For, if Eve had not eaten of the Tree of Knowledge, how would the priestly writers, the patriarchs, the Hebrew-writing historians, insisting on their rights, have been able to interpret the course of history to their advantage? And if there had not been women like Harriet or Marie Curie ready to make dangerous experiments with explosives, where would the natural sciences be today? We see how potent stories can be, how very dangerous, as dangerous as explosives. They do not only work on the surface, but reveal the many-layered strata of meaning.

To continue with the three-stage model of warning and prophecy: Harriet presents herself as a child who has nothing to do, does not wish to occupy herself with her needlework and thus gets silly ideas. Once she has set foot on the path of misdeeds she cannot stop until disaster occurs. Had she only desisted or regretted in time, taken Father's good advice to heart, the disaster would never have come about.

In *Struwwelhitler* Harriet's equivalent is called Gretchen and is the archetypal German girl with a blond plait, to be precise a member of the Hitler Youth, the BDM (Bund deutscher Mädchen) girl with a swastika on her sleeve. Instead of playing with matches she fiddles with the little cannon which stands decoratively on the sideboard. The British authors imply that rearmament in itself is bad, for when you once have the toys of military hardware, you do not need to look far for a reason to play with them. Of course she sets herself on fire and of course the plaintive cats are right: 'Meow! Meo! Meow! Meo! You will be burnt if you do so'. The cats wear cummerbunds on which you can see the British and American flags and thus represent the opponents of war who lament the inevitable fate of the German child.

In *Der Aegyptische Struwwelpeter*, published in Vienna in 1895, where in 'Die gar traurige Geschichte mit dem Rauchtabak' 'Miau mio' rhymes splendidly with 'Pharao', the cats are sacred, of course, and the malefactor has had a sex-change and is called Cheops. Visually, the original stories have been transposed to the world of the Pharaohs, decorated with vignettes from the papyri in Vienna. The impulse for this reworking must presumably be related to the

famous private collection of the Archbishop Rainer which he later gave as a birthday present to Emperor Franz Josef in 1899. The name Rainer appears in hieroglyphs in the vignettes.⁴ The world of Egyptian gods, tombs and scholars merely provides an amusing new background for an old story; just as in the Latin text, there are no political objectives in *Der Aegyptische Struwwelpeter* and its English contemporary translation *The Egyptian Struwwelpeter*⁵ such as there are in *Struwwelhitler*. What is merely harmless humour of the former is not so harmless in the latter.

‘The dreadful story of Gretchen and the gun’ reproduces wonderfully in English the speech rhythms of the German:

It almost makes me cry to tell
 What Gretchen (foolish girl) befell.
 Her two boy friends had been to call,
 And lasting friendship vowed by all.
 Now on the table close at hand
 A little cannon chanced to stand,
 And she had promised both the boys
 She was contented with her toys
 And would not touch it. ‘Now’ she cries,
 ‘I’ll give them both a great surprise
 And shoot at some one: waste of labour,
 To keep a gun and love your neighbour!’

The Pussy-cats heard this,
 And said ‘Oh, naughty, naughty Miss,
 We beg you not
 To fire a shot;
 It’s very, very wrong, you know.
 Me-ow! Meo! Meow! Meo!
 You will be burnt if you do so.’

The rhyming couplets make the poem compact and brief, which cannot always have been easy. We can see just how masterly this version is if we compare it with the English *Egyptian Struwwelpeter*: the sacred cats caution Cheops, who wants to puff Father’s pipe:

The sacred pussies saw,
 Each raised a warning paw:
 ‘Put down the fire-stick, quick!

⁴ *Der Aegyptische Struwwelpeter* was made by the medical student Fritz Netolitzky and his brother Richard and sister Magdalene as a present for the sixtieth or seventieth birthday of a friend of their mother’s, according to G.H. Herzog in the ‘Vorwort’ to the reprint (Frankfurt am Main: Sinemis Verlag, 1987). I am indebted to Dr David Blamires for this information and to Dr Hermann Harrauer of the Papyrus Collection in the Austrian National Library, Vienna, for the information on the vignettes.

⁵ Printed in Bavaria, year not given, accessioned in the British Library 7 July, 1899.

3. THE DREADFUL STORY OF GRETCHEN AND THE GUN

It almost makes me cry to tell
What Gretchen (foolish girl) befell.
Her two boy friends had been to call
And lasting friendship vowed by all.
Now on the table close at hand
A little cannon chanced to stand,
And she had promised both the boys
She was contented with her toys,
And would not touch it. "Now" she cries,
"I'll give them both a great surprise
And shoot at someone: waste of labour!
To keep a gun and love your neighbour!"

The Pussy-cats heard this,
And said "Oh, naughty, naughty Miss,
We beg you not
To fire a shot;
It's very, very wrong you know,
Me-ow! Meo! Meow! Meo!
You will be burnt if you do so."

But Gretchen would not take advice
She fired the gun, it was so nice!
She banged it round and round about,
And frightened everybody out:
She said her Dolly liked it so
And she *would* do it; yes! or no!

The Pussy-cats saw this
And they began to hiss:—
"We fear the worst
That gun will burst."
"Meow!" they said, "Meow! Meo!
You'll burn to death if you do so."



Then hark ! with what a dreadful crash
The gun blew up and burnt her sash ;
Her arms, her hair, her clothing burns
While Dolly squeaks and roars by turns.

So she was burnt with all her clothes
And arms and hands and eyes and
nose ;
Till she had nothing more to lose
Except a heap of I.O.U.'s
And Dolly's head. Nought else was
found
Among her ashes on the ground.

And when the good cats sat beside
The smoking ashes, still they cried
"Meow ! Meo ! Meow ! Meo !
And serve her right, we told her so."
For Gretchen ran their tears so fast
They made a little pond at last.

Before you're deadly sick!
 Miow, miò! miow, miò!
 How can you think of doing so
 What Pharaoh hath forbidden?
 Think not the fault is hidden!

The three-stage format – thoughtless action, warning/disobedience and consequent catastrophe – means that in every story there are know-alls who play the part of the admonisher, the restrainer, the wise person, in a word the grown-up. In *Struwwelpeter* it is the domestic cats; in *Struwwelhitler* it is the British-American cats; in 'The story of the Nazi boys' it is Comrade Joseph. In *Struwwelpeter*, where the story is called 'Die Geschichte von den schwarzen Buben' ('The story of the inky boys'), it is Nikolas with his big inkwell in which naughty children are dipped and dyed. In *Struwwelhitler* the ruler of the Soviet Union, Stalin, takes the rôle of the chastiser, Nikolas. The Nazi boys, Hitler, Ribbentrop and Goebbels, having mocked the 'furry-hatted Bolshevik', are dipped into the inkwell and come out 'red, as red can be':

See there they are and there they run!
 The Bolshevik enjoys the fun.
 They have been made as red as rubies
 Since Comrade Joseph dipped the boobies.
 Now, branded like the Bolshevik,
 They wonder if they've dropped a brick.

The 'boobies' are, of course, a stroke of translator's luck and licence, the relationship with the German 'Buben', boys, only obvious to German-speakers. The story alludes to the treaties which Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop negotiated with the Soviet Union from 1939 to the start of 1940, to begin with the non-aggression pact and the frontier agreement of 1939, then the economic treaty of 1940. Despite all this, in June 1941 the Germans attacked the Soviet Union and the opportunistic friendship of the two dictatorships came to an abrupt end. The first counter-offensive of the Soviet troops began in December 1941, but the British authors of *Struwwelhitler* could not take account of this; their politicized *Struwwelpeter* had already been published earlier in 1941.

'The story of the Nazi boys' exemplifies the three-stage format. The thoughtless action and warning result in the prophesied catastrophe. At the first stage, the Nazi boys, Adolf, Ribbentrop and Goebbels, do indeed sign the pacts, but who can really believe that peace will follow? At the second stage, Comrade Stalin tells them kindly not to provoke him but to respect him and then he will let them go. But they take no notice of him, with the final result that he has no choice but to punish them and put them in his immense inkwell, that is, give them a thorough ideological rinse from which

Now Comrade Joseph lived close by
 So tall, he almost touched the sky;
 He had a mighty inkstand too,
 In which a great goose feather grew;
 He called out in an angry tone
 "Boys, leave the Bolshevik alone!
 Promise me no more to tease him,
 But do everything to please him;
 And I'll grant you on that score
 Leave to plague the boy next door."

"Aha!" said Ribby, "Mark you then
 I'm very glad I brought my pen;
 I'm just as good at signing pacts
 As Goebbels at distorting facts."
 So Comrade Joseph took his pen
 All wrote their names down too, and then
 He seizes Adolf, seizes Gob
 Grasps Ribby by his pallid nob
 And they may scream and kick, and call,
 Into the ink he dips them all;
 Into the inkstand, one, two, three,
 Till they are red, as red can be;
 Turn over now and you shall see.



Leaf 10 of *Struwwelhitler*: a Nazi story book

they emerge as deep-red Germans. This is not the place to speculate whether that was a prophecy of a divided Germany in which brown Germans turn into red Germans. It seems more probable that the hopes of the British authors for a Soviet victory are tainted by the fear that a victorious Stalin means a Bolshevist Germany.

The English version was sold by a newspaper, the *Daily Sketch* and the proceeds donated to charity. To date I have not been able to establish whether Robert Spence was the playwright who wrote Ulster comedies *Leave it to Willie* (Belfast, 1955) and *Thomas James takes a wife* (Belfast, 1950) or the novelist who wrote *The three isles* (1947) or whether he was the artist who did the etchings in Norman Penney's *Journal of George Fox* (1924) and whether Philip Spence was the illustrator whose drawings and paintings were published in Thomas Hood's *The dream of Eugene Aram* (London, 1902). Both Robert and Philip Spence supplied the text and drawings to the newspaper which promoted the War Relief Fund charity. With the money made by each sale, one shilling and six pence, or the price of a meal, radios, games and woollen clothing were provided for the troops and clothing, bedding and food for the victims of air raids. Now and again at book fairs, at places like Hampstead in London, you can still find copies which can cost – depending on condition – about £30 to £60.

It is a moot point whether the English text of *Struwwelhitler* and before it *Swollen-headed William* (see below) 'had propaganda value in strengthening the British resolve to defeat Germany in the two world wars'.⁶ While both texts were witty transpositions, metamorphoses, caricatures of other races with their serious distortions and oversimplified misrepresentations, I hold that they were less central to the much-vaunted war effort. They were sold for a good cause and read for a good read, but not to stiffen the resolve or the fighting spirit to fight the German. How much money was raised is not known. The *Daily Sketch*, which was started by Edward Hulton Jr, in Manchester in 1908, was bought by Lord Beaverbrook in 1923, amalgamated with the *Daily Graphic* in 1946 and taken over by the *Daily Mail* in 1971.⁷ It is also not clear how many copies were sold. According to information from the owners, Associated Newspapers, Ltd, the records were thrown away at amalgamation. Emigré circles, no doubt, bought the book as did middle class people who knew *Struwwelpeter*. A survey made amongst acquaintances as to whether they had read both

⁶ David Blamires, 'Some German and English political travesties of *Struwwelpeter*', in *Connections: essays in honour of Eda Sagarra on the occasion of her 60th birthday*, ed. Peter Skrine, Rosemary E. Wallbank-Turner and Jonathan West (Stuttgart: Verlag Hans-Dieter Heinz, Akademischer Verlag, 1993), 27.

⁷ Dennis Griffiths (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the British press 1422–1992* (London: Macmillan, 1992), 187.

Struwwelpeter and *Struwwelhitler* yielded interesting answers: most said they had read *Struwwelpeter* but classified it as sadistic literature which they would not give their children to read. The few who had read *Struwwelhitler* remembered doing so with a grin and satisfaction, because it confirmed and strengthened their view of Hitler. At all events, it is safe to say that the English edition of *Struwwelhitler* was not nearly as widespread as the children's book *Struwwelpeter*. It was aimed at a narrow band of the population which had, perhaps, heard of *Struwwelpeter* during German lessons at school or come across it as children's literature. In order to understand and enjoy fully the clever and meaningful allusions it was necessary to have read the English original and this was, of course, rarely the case.

The exaggerated depiction of Stalin's character as a clumsy but just man is a caricature of the Russian national character similar to that of Tsar Nicholas who appeared as 'disaster personified'⁸ in a satire updating it to the contemporary political scene, called *Swollen-headed William, painful stories and funny pictures after the German* by George Morrow and E.V. Lucas (1914). However, these stereotypes were shorthand, common explanations for patterns of behaviour and, therefore, effective. In the same way, through the key figure of Mussolini, not merely he alone but the whole Italian nation is caricatured in the reworking of 'Hans-Guck-in-die-Luft' (Johnny-head-in-air) as 'The story of little Musso head in air'. Mussolini doing the goose step, lost in thought, trips over an 'English' bulldog. He falls down and picks himself up again – but without having learned anything from it. He is still convinced of his own importance and eventually overreaches himself: he makes a false step and tumbles into Mare Nostrum, the Mediterranean. This confuses the fighting navy – represented by three model ships – so much that it promptly makes a political volte face.

It is interesting that the frequent textual reworkings, the updatings, the contextualization, always appear much more elastic and modern than the reworking of the illustrations. The drawings are still very much in the idiom of the mid-nineteenth century, the original *Struwwelpeter* style. Nearly everywhere they depend heavily on the originals, for example, in 'The story of fidgety Adolf' (originally the story of 'Fidgety Philip', in which Philip ruins the meal he has with his parents) he now ruins the table, pulling everything down with him, which elicits 'frowns' from 'Aunt Britannia' and a 'face' from 'Uncle Sam'. Although details need to be different, the visual language comes very close to the original. 'The story of little Gobby poison pen', the story of the thumb-sucker, follows similarly closely the original: the dress of the mother

⁸ Riha, op cit., 9.

is embellished with the word 'Europa' embroidered on the ruffles of her crinoline, but otherwise the devil and the furnishings are identical with the original. German-speaking readers recognize the illustrations instantly and verses such as "'Konrad", sprach die Frau Mama: "ich geh' aus und du bleibst da".' ('One day, Mama said: "Gobby, dear, I must go out and leave you here."') have doubtless become quotable idiom in numerous German-speaking households. The English translation will have occasioned mirth where the original was known.

Fairy stories in word and picture are a means of socialization which makes the world order visible in black and white. The pedagogic models are grossly exaggerated. The bad man is really evil and the good, initially weak but eventually justified, always wins. Groups and group culture, by ridiculing the loser and exalting the upright and conventional, employ caricature, exaggeration, boasting and denigration also as a prophetic means, as a didactic means of raising family morale. In the English metamorphosis in the remaining stories cruel Frederick appears in 'The story of cruel Adolf'; even Fritz, the dog, has to suffer – he is sent to Dachau concentration camp. In *The Egyptian Struwwelpeter* this is 'The story of cruel Psamtek', who nips the tail of the crocodile in the sacred Nile with pincers. The wild huntsman in 'The story of the man that went shooting' is, of course, Mussolini; the story refers to the blundering attempt by Italy to invade Greece in late October 1940 and shows the Duce being pushed around by a stubborn little Greek goat. It is the turn of Reichsmarschall Hermann Goering in 'The story of Hermann who wouldn't have any butter', equivalent to 'The story of Augustus who would not have any soup' (Suppenkaspar), only this time the story parodies Goering's disastrous economic policy. In the *Egyptian Struwwelpeter* this story is converted in truly Viennese fashion into 'Of Sneferu, who waltzed not' who stammers truculently: 'No waltzer will I ever be! No waltz shall e'er be danced by me!' so that when it comes to ladies' choice no one wants Sneferu, who sits fast on his evening dress tails which hang down over his loin cloth.

The last story about flying Robert is a recent event of the day, the sensational flight of Rudolf Hess to Britain and his parachute landing in Scotland on 10 May 1941, and is called, of course, 'The story of flying Rudolf'. Hess wanted to end the war with Britain on his own initiative and persuade them to enter an alliance with the Nazis. His plans met with no success and he spent the rest of his life – until 1988 – in prison.

And the Führer screamed, 'Don't dare
Take a plane into the air!
Rudolf thought: – 'To leave by stealth
Will be better for my health'.

So he flies to the skies,
 Never heeding Adolf's cries,
 Till appears a tiny dot
 O'er the land of Burns and Scott.

Visual caricature, with its personification of consolation, admonition, knowing-better and resistance, forms opinion, makes impressions, expresses the unsaid in a striking and concise way, so that it is possible to draw what often cannot be said. For example, a caricature by Ratalanga with the title *The last cannon, a fantasy of peace* shows a catafalque on which a cannon lies in state. The only mourner following the bier is Death.⁹ This shows the drawing to be indeed a fantasy, a programme which cannot be realized.

How far the visual impact of *Struwwelhitler* works better than the linguistic reshaping is a moot question. Taken together they achieved mocking the enemy and a victory, albeit it fantasy terms only, over the evildoer. This has always been an important method; however, it remains questionable how effective it is. *Struwwelhitler* did not change the mind of anybody in Germany. It was published for a British readership. But the image, the drawing and the text, where they not often intended as a weapon? 'No doubt, they were often so intended, but have they not frequently back-fired? Is their true function not rather to preach to the converted?'¹⁰ It is the same question about aerial bombardment with propaganda material. Neither Churchill, who fought the war with armaments not words, nor Air Marshall Harris, commander of the bomber squadrons which showered the pamphlets on Germany, were particularly interested in the question of propaganda. Thus publications like *Struwwelhitler* were more a means of raising morale at home with the message that justice always triumphs than they were ever a means of converting or frightening the Germans. The stories were like sermons, existing to renew and deepen 'the ties of common faith and common values that hold the community together . . . with a fatuous sense of superiority . . . by reinforcing the stereotype any group has of itself and of the others'.¹¹

If we look at the introductory poem, brief though it is, it exhibits exemplarily the three-stage structure employed in these stories intended to inculcate morals. In the original the children who got on quietly with their business were given toys and even a fine picturebook, namely *Struwwelpeter* itself. In the *Egyptian Struwwelpeter*, too, the glittering prize is a picturebook:

⁹ See E. Fuchs, *Die Karikatur der europäischen Völker vom Jahre 1848 bis zur Gegenwart*, 515 Illustrationen und 65 Beilagen (Berlin: A. Hoffmann & Co., 1903), 484.

¹⁰ Ernst H. Gombrich, 'Magic, myth and metaphor: reflections on pictorial satire', in *L'art et les révolutions. Conférences plénières, Congrès International d'Histoire de l'art* (Strasbourg, 1990), 38.

¹¹ Gombrich, op. cit., 39.

Good or bad behaviour, abstention from thoughtless action:

Children, if you're very good,
Always do the things you should,
Mark what great Osiris says,
Giving Ra and Amen praise,

condition or warning or punishment:

Do not tease the sacred cats,
Vex the Apis bull like gnats,
But are pious, well-behaved,
And, as good Egyptians, shaved -

result or reward or denouement:

Isis will be pleased and look!
Give you this fine Picture-book!

The three steps unfold in *Struwwelhitler* in the following way, turning upside down the *good* moral behaviour of normal times:

Good or bad behaviour, abstention from thoughtless action:

When the children have been good,
That is, be it understood,
Good at killing, good at lying,
Good at on each other spying.

condition or warning or punishment:

When their fourteen Pas and Mas,
Grandmamas and Grandpapas,
Great Grandparents too, are sure
That their Aryan stock is pure.

result or reward or denouement:

They shall have the pretty things
Krupp Von Bohlen kindly brings,
And the blessings, only listen!
Brought by Stinnes, Frick, and Thyssen,
Who will welcome all your savings
While you feed on grass and shavings.
Only such as these shall look
At this pretty picturebook.

Finally, the first poem, dedicated to Hitler: the fixed gaze, the blood spurting from the fingers, the hair standing on end are the creation of the reworking. This image is not designed merely to scare children, it is Terror personified, which no longer radiates from Hitler on to children but will turn back on himself:

Just look at him! there he stands
With his nasty hair and hands.
See! the horrid blood drops drip
From each dirty finger tip;
And the sloven, I declare,
Never once has combed his hair.

To conclude, the final rhyme, which is nothing short of inspired and shows the superb mastery of the English wordsmiths, displays the fragility of this seemingly all-powerful tyrant:

Piecrust never could be brittler
Than the word of Adolf Hitler.

