

Trauma & Society

**What are the implications of a
Multi-Generational Theory of Trauma
for our view of society?**

Lecture, London 1 October 2010

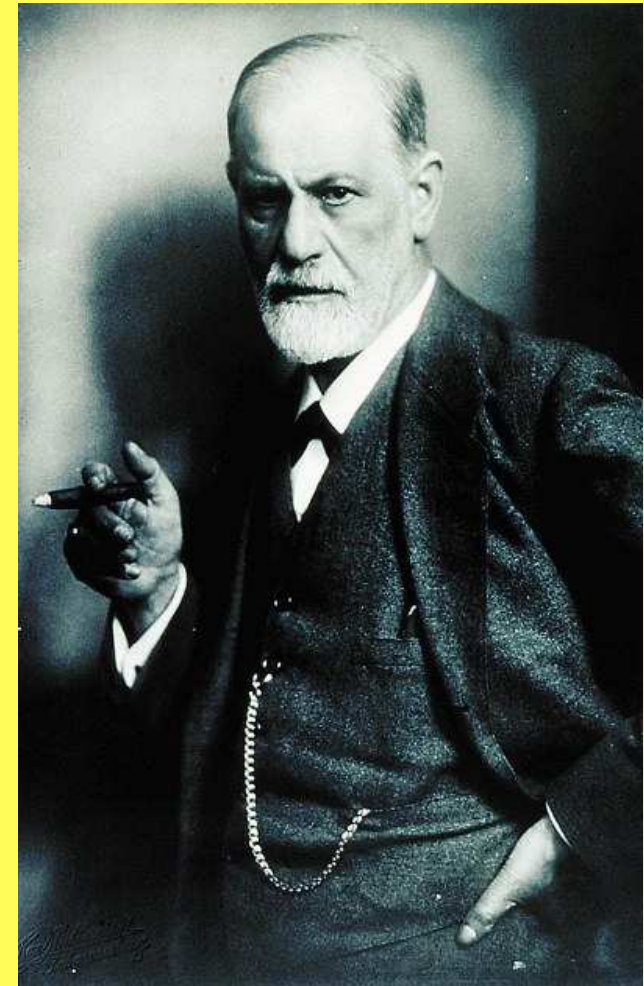
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Messages from Psychoanalysis

- Socialize the sexual and aggressive drives
- Transform sexual energy into culture
- Don't overprotect children



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Sigmund Freud 1856 - 1939

The antithesis of Wilhelm Reich

- Free your sexuality
- Break through the protective shield of your body



Wilhelm Reich 1897 - 1957

The wisdom of Behavioural Psychology

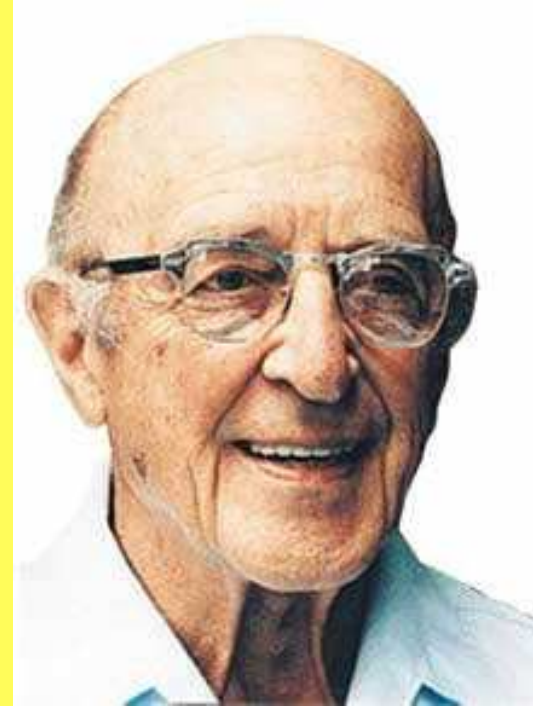
- Shape behaviour
- Reinforce the behaviour of others
- Manage your own behaviour



Burrhus Frederic Skinner 1904 - 1990

The message of Carl Rogers

- be empathetic
- be authentic
- actualize yourself



Carl Rogers 1902-1987

Multigenerational Psychotraumatology (MPT)

- Trauma is seen as the cause of psychological disorders, many physical illnesses and most of the conflicts in relationships that cannot find good solutions
- Traumata of parents are prolonged as symbiotic trauma into the psychological structure of their children
- Traumata do not heal themselves, they only produce new trauma

Two “classical” types of trauma



- caused by life threatening events (e.g. natural catastrophies, war, accidents, rape)
- caused by loss of a person (e.g. early death of parents, loss of children, early seperations)

The symbiotic entanglement of traumatised people then produces two new types of trauma

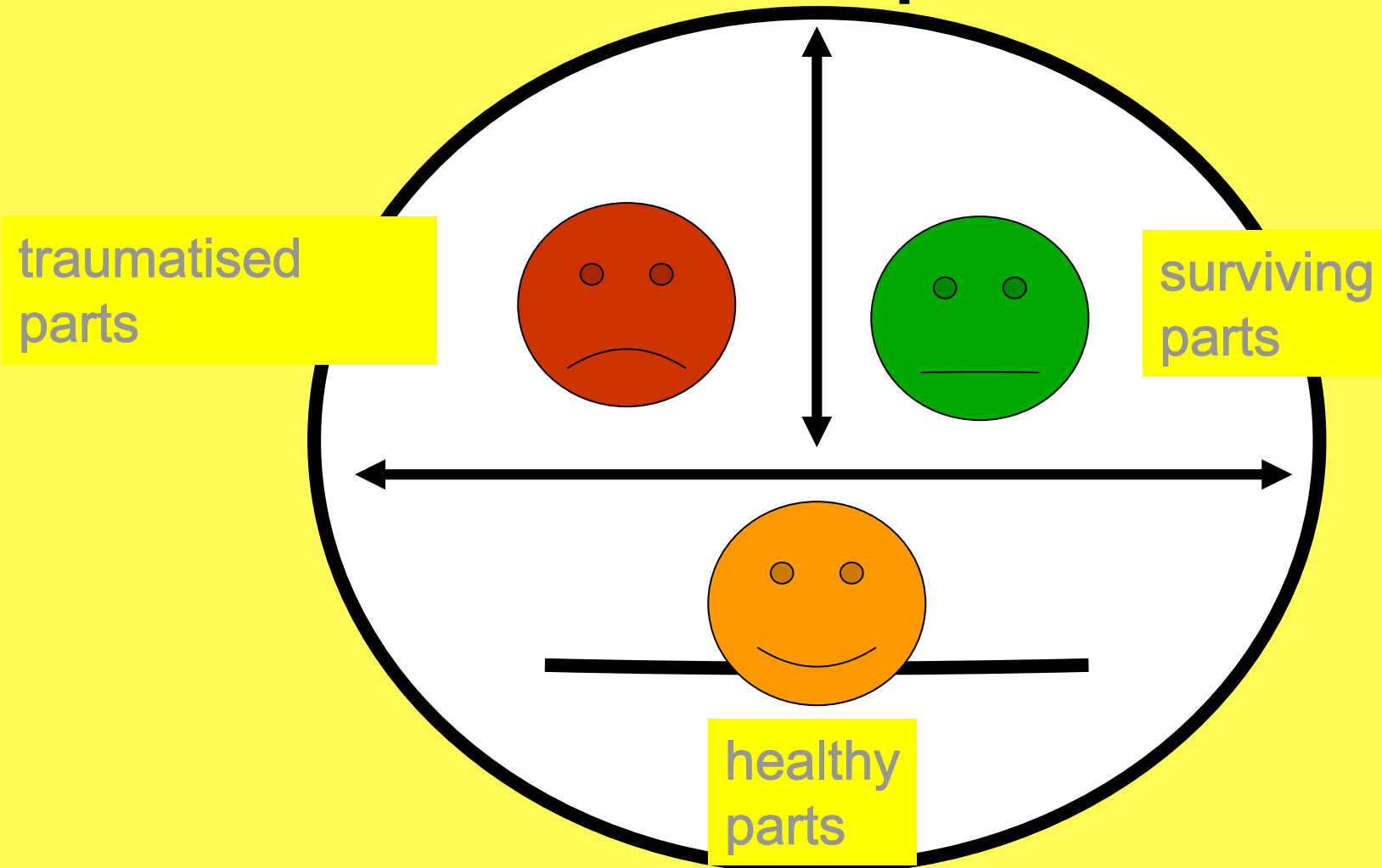


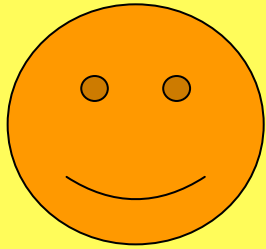
- Symbiotic Trauma (being rejected and hurt by the person one needs to bond to)
- Trauma of confusion in a bonding system (caused by murder, sexual abuse, incestuous relationships within the bonding system)



**When traumatised
we freeze,
dissociate
and our
personality splits
in order for us to
survive.**

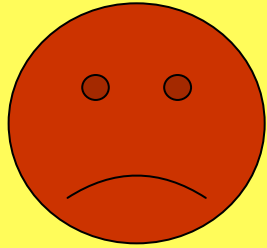
Split in the personality structure after a traumatic experience





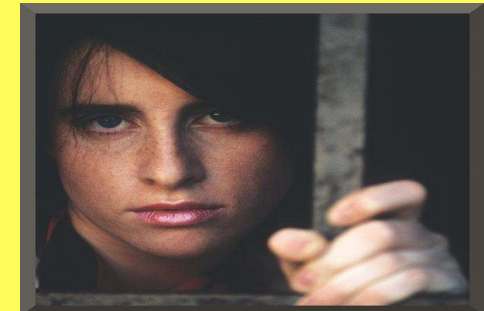
Characteristics of the healthy parts of our personality

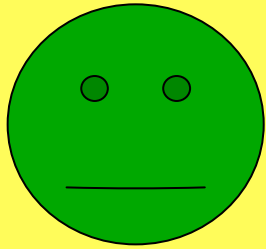
- **capable of regulating feelings**
- **genuine empathy**
- **ability to make safe bonds**
- **ability to resolve bonds if necessary**
- **ability of self-reflection**
- **self-responsibility**
- **love of truth**
- **realism**
- **optimism and basic confidence**
- **Strength to confront traumatic experiences**



Characteristics of the traumatised parts

- store the **memory** of the trauma
- are always the **same age** as when the trauma occurred
- are still **engaged** with the traumatic experience
- can unpredictably and suddenly be **triggered**





Characteristics of the surviving-parts

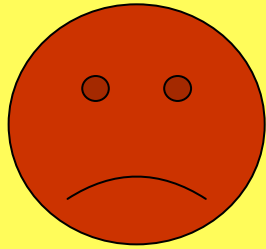
- **constructing and guarding** the split
- **denying and suppressing** the trauma experience
- **avoiding**
- **controlling**
- **compensating**
- **producing illusions**
- **producing new splits**



**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.**

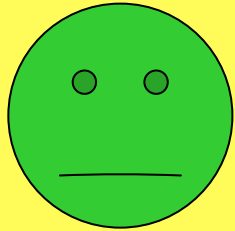
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Characteristics of the traumatised part in a symbiotic trauma

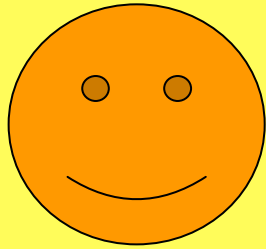
- **despair because there is no love from the mother**
- **deep loneliness**
- **fear of dying**
- **suppressed anger**
- **suppressed sadness**
- **tendency to give up**





Characteristics of the surviving parts in symbiotic trauma

- **idealising the mother/father**
- **fighting for contact with the parents**
- **identification with the survival mechanisms of the mother/father**
- **identification with the traumatised parts within the mother/father**
- **repressing and denying one's own trauma**



Healthy parts of a Child

- **Has own power to live**
- **Has own will to live**
- **Healthy basic needs and desires**
- **Enjoys moving, playing and learning**
- **...**

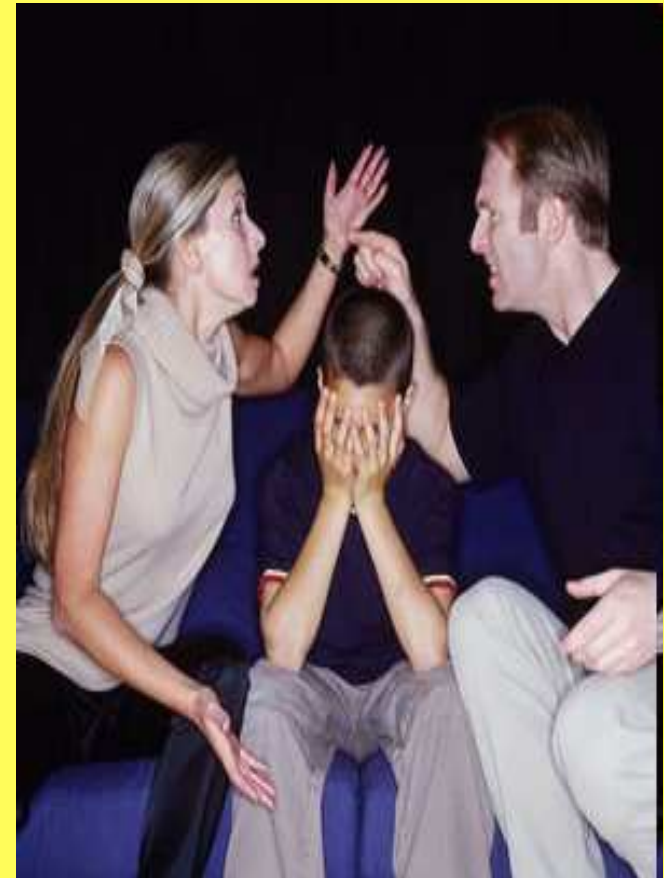
Consequences of symbiotic trauma for a child

- no capacity to distinguish between own feelings and those of the mother
- not living one's own identity
- mental illness such as hyperactivity, depression, psychotic episodes
- repeating symbiotic entanglement in other relationships



Characteristics of a symbiotic entanglement

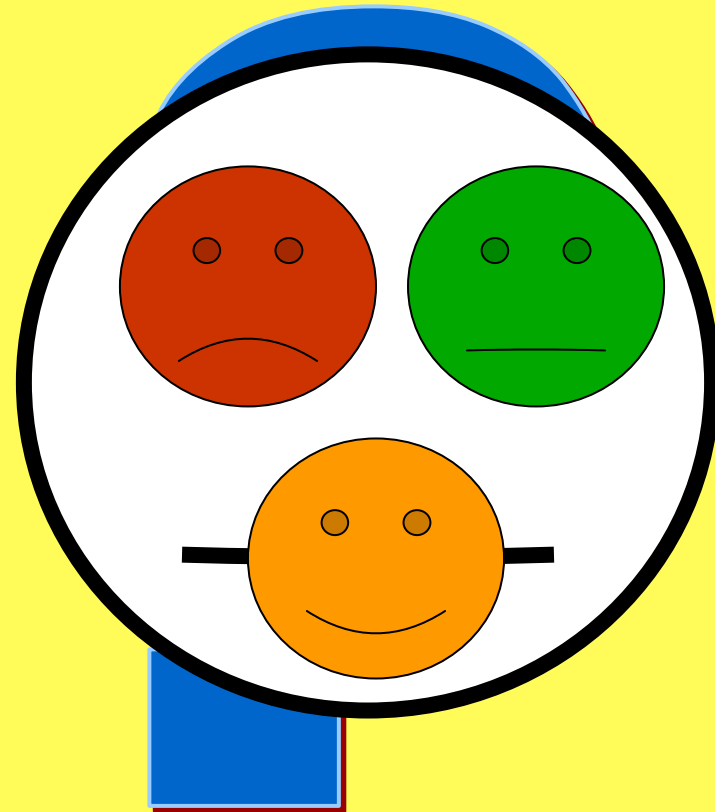
- clinging and merging
- hiding one's vulnerability
- anger, hate and violence in relationships
- no real self-esteem
- always looking to others
- illusions and delusions in love situations



In society there are people and institutions that support trauma theories, and others that neglect or deny trauma and its many consequences.

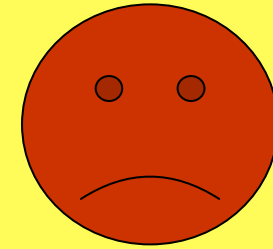
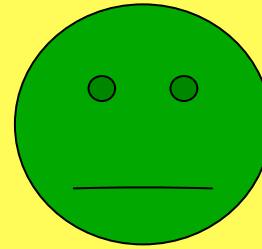
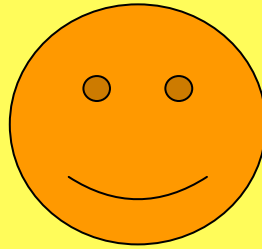
Bringing life-decisions on a safer ground

- Marriage
- Divorce
- Children
- Professional carrier

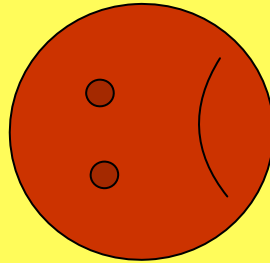
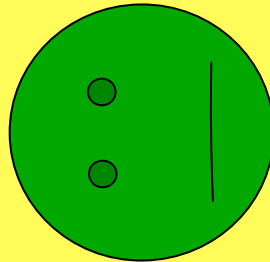
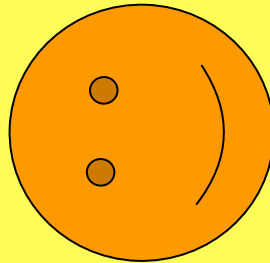


Who is interacting with whom?

Person A



Person B



HP/HP	HP/SP	HP/TP
SP/HP	SP/SP	SP/TP
TP/HP	TP/HP	TP/TP

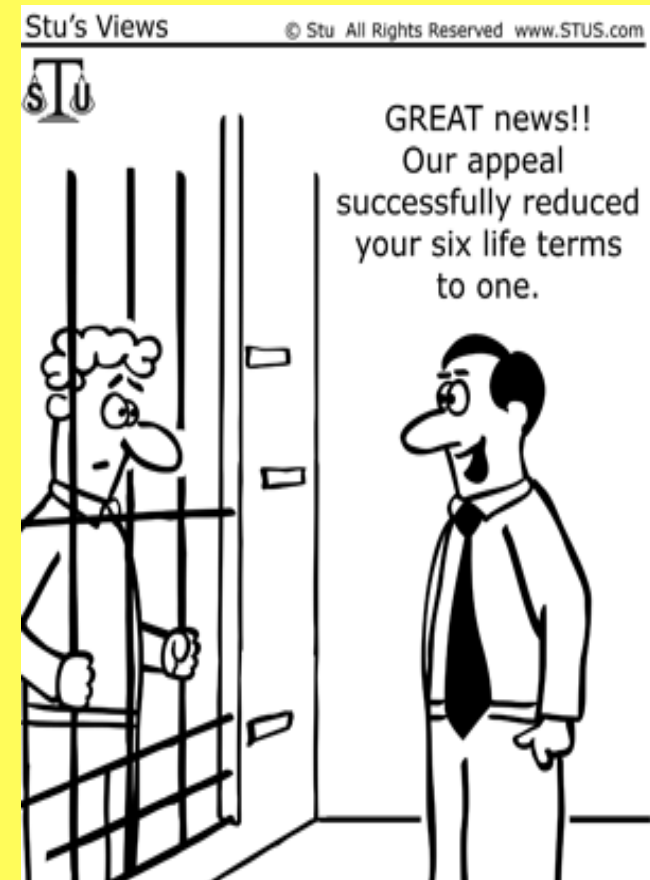
Consequences of MPT for Health Care Systems

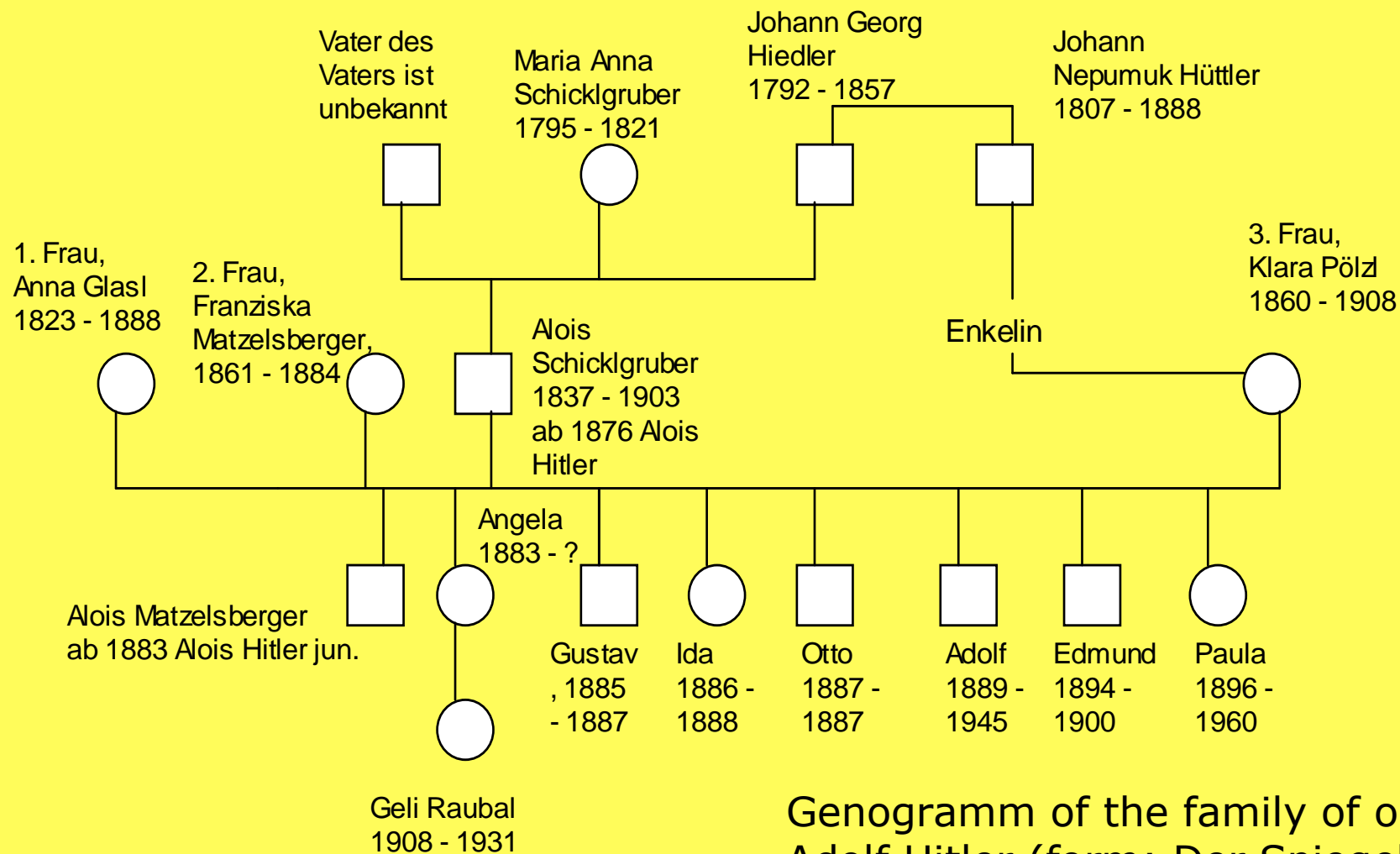
- Acknowledging of trauma as the main cause of mental and physical illnesses
- Diagnosis of causes instead of symptoms
- Therapy with the causes instead of the symptoms
- For example, therapy with the parents instead of the children
- Prevention of trauma in families, schools, in business and in society



Consequences of MPT for the Judicial System

- Understanding trauma as a phenomenon that can result in illegal acts
- Understanding splits in the personality as the basis for criminal actions
- Supporting the healthy parts of people who break the law instead of fighting with their survival strategies

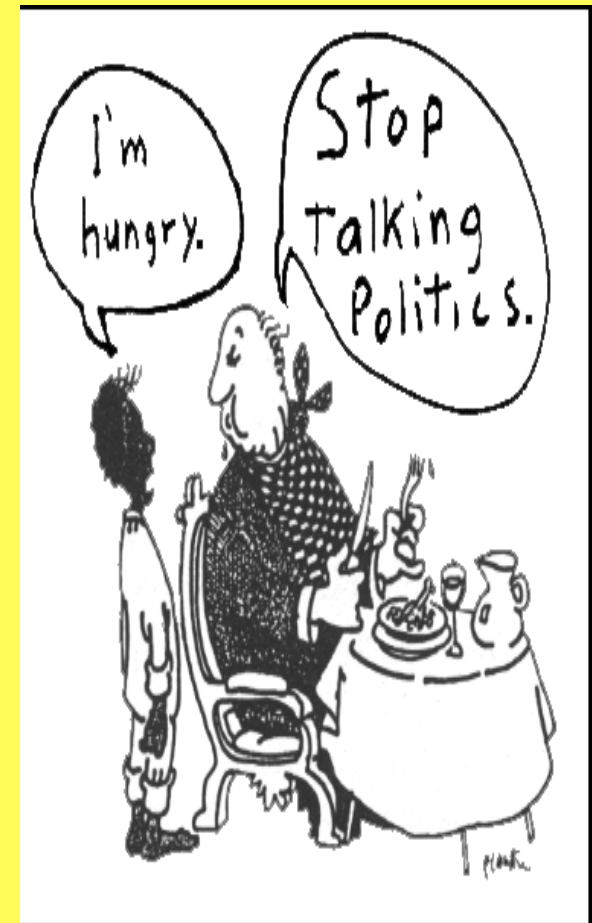




Genogramm of the family of origin of Adolf Hitler (form: Der Spiegel 28/2001)

Consequences of MPT for politics

- Traumatized politicians can entangle the whole of society in their unresolved personal problems
- Can end up with perpetrator-victim-dynamics with an inability to create new dynamics.
- If we understand trauma dynamics we would not conserve and cultivate social traumas but try to dissolve them.
- We could learn to distinguish between social survival strategies and more constructive ways of living in a community.



Consequences of MPT for the Media

- trauma in films and games would not be celebrated
- We would offer realistic information about trauma and the short- and long-term consequences



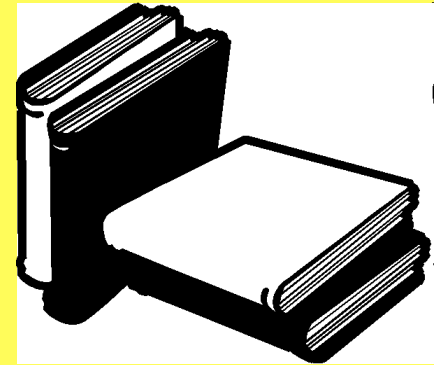
Basic Questions

- Do I traumatise others through my own behaviour?
- Do I entangle others in my own trauma?
- What can I do to solve a given trauma?
- What can I do to prevent new trauma occurring?

Messages of the MPT

- Don't traumatise others
- Realise your own traumas
- Avoid entanglement with others who are traumatised
- Cultivate your healthy parts, free your traumatised parts and minimize your surviving strategies

Literature



- **Franz Ruppert (2003). Verwirrte Seelen. Der verborgene Sinn von Psychosen. München: Kösel Verlag.**
- **Franz Ruppert (2008). Trauma, Bonding & Family Constellations. Understanding and Healing Injuries of the Soul. Frome/UK: Green Balloon Publishing.**
- **Franz Ruppert (2010). Seelische Spaltung und innere Heilung. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta Verlag.**
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