



Hitler's Private Library

By Timothy W. Ryback

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A *Washington Post* Notable Book

With a new chapter on eugenicist Madison Grant's *The Passing of the Great Race*

In this brilliant and original exploration of some of the formative influences in Adolf Hitler's life, Timothy Ryback examines the books that shaped the man and his thinking.

Hitler was better known for burning books than collecting them but, as Ryback vividly shows us, books were Hitler's constant companions throughout his life. They accompanied him from his years as a frontline corporal during the First World War to his final days before his suicide in Berlin. With remarkable attention to detail, Ryback examines the surviving volumes from Hitler's private book collection, revealing the ideas and obsessions that occupied Hitler in his most private hours and the consequences they had for our world.

A feat of scholarly detective work, and a captivating biographical portrait, *Hitler's Private Library* is one of the most intimate and chilling works on Hitler yet written.

From the Trade Paperback edition.

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Hitler's Private Library By Timothy W. Ryback Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Hitler's personal library of over 16,000 volumes was picked clean by American troops. But Ryback found 1,200 of Hitler's volumes in the Library of Congress and other caches scattered through the U.S. and Europe. By looking at the books Hitler read (sometimes obsessively, judging from marginalia and other signs of wear and tear), Ryback paints an unusually vivid and nuanced portrait of the dictator. Among the authors and works Hitler was most interested in were Shakespeare (in translation), whose grand historical subjects, Hitler felt, made him superior to Schiller and Goethe; Henry Ford's anti-Semitic *The International Jew*; adventure novelist Karl May; Dietrich Eckart's interpretation of Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*; works of the occult and esoterica; and Thomas Carlyle, particularly his biography of Frederick the Great. Ryback (*The Last Survivor: Legacies of Dachau*) offers a unique view of Hitler's intellectual life. 47 photos. (Oct. 22)
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From [The New Yorker](#)

Hitler was a voracious reader, finishing a book every night, either at his desk or in his armchair, always with a cup of tea in his hand. His library at one time contained more than sixteen thousand books, of which some twelve hundred survive in various archives. Ryback's analysis covers books Hitler wrote (including speculation on the content of his missing war memoir), books he read (with extensive comments on marginalia), and books he was given (a copy of the bizarrely titled autobiography *Mein Kampf*, *What Were You Thinking! A Sketch from a Life?* was presented to Hitler by his self-absorbed deputy). Ryback relies heavily on Walter Benjamin's idea of the private library as a map of its owner's character, but Hitler's reading yields few new insights, and some of what Ryback dredges up is merely peculiar: between the pages of an early acquisition, a guidebook to Berlin, is "a wiry inch-long black hair that appears to be from a moustache."

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From [Booklist](#)

Hitler wasn't particularly well educated, and he despised the "impotent flabbiness" of intellectuals. Yet he was a voracious reader, and his various personal libraries contained more than 6,000 volumes at his death. Ryback found several hundred of these volumes stored in the Library of Congress. On the assumption that Hitler's tastes in reading will be revelatory, Ryback examines some of these works, with Hitler's handwritten notations found in the margins, and he speculates about the effects these readings had upon Hitler's views. Some of Hitler's tastes were generally known, such as his love for cheap American western novels, which seemed to appeal both to his romantic fantasies and his obsession with the struggle between civilization and "barbarism." He also liked Shakespeare, particularly *The Merchant of Venice*, with its caricature of the greedy Jew. Predictably, Hitler also read such nineteenth-century "proto Nazi" writers as Paul La Garde, who demanded the elimination of Jewish influence in Germany. Ryback doesn't conclusively demonstrate how these writers shaped Hitler's beliefs; still, this is an interesting glimpse at an often-neglected facet of Hitler's personality. --Jay Freeman

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jose Callender:

The reserve with title Hitler's Private Library has lot of information that you can learn it. You can get a lot of help after read this book. This book exist new expertise the information that exist in this reserve represented the condition of the world at this point. That is important to you to understand how the improvement of the world. This kind of book will bring you in new era of the global growth. You can read the e-book in your smart phone, so you can read this anywhere you want.

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