

THE EXPERIENCE OF EVIL:  
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH

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by  
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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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To  
Mom and Dad  
whose support and love  
made this exploration possible



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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

The face of evil is actually as  
unimaginable as the face of God . . .  
— Alan Watts<sup>1</sup>

Evil is a phenomenon that does not like to come into the light. It prefers the darkness, shadows, and the deep hidden recesses of the unconscious.

A doctoral dissertation is a project that attempts to shed light on whatever it touches. The form is not conducive to permitting any phenomenon to stay mysterious or hidden. But it may be that what is exposed is not "evil" itself, but rather the effects and disguises of evil. In the end, it will be up to the reader to judge whether this dissertation has revealed anything about the nature of evil.

The purpose of this dissertation is to shed light upon the phenomenon of "evil." More specifically, this purpose will be pursued in three ways:

1. Studying the Contexts--An exploration of how religious, cultural, psychological, and literary contexts give meaning to the concept of "evil." The word "context" itself comes from the Latin words meaning "to weave together," and it is used here as synonymous with

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<sup>1</sup>From his The Two Hands of God: The Myths of Polarity (New York: George Braziller, 1963), p. 163. This is part of a larger quotation which is given in full in this dissertation in Chapter 12 on p. 250.

Weltanschauung or worldview. However, it must be recognized that for many people the contexts in which experience take place are partially "tacit" or out-of-awareness, taken for granted; thus the researcher cannot rely solely on an individual's explicit statement of her or his "worldview," but must also try to discern her or his implicit "tacit" assumptions.

2. Summarizing the Interviews--A narration of how nine "contributors" from three religious traditions talked about their experiences and interpretations of evil. (Throughout this dissertation, the term "contributor" will refer to those who were interviewed by this researcher.)

3. Working Towards Phenomenological Syntheses--This will take place on two levels: first, to state the central themes of "evil" found in the contributors' interviews and then to search for patterns among these themes; and, secondly, to perform a Husserlian operation known as a "free phantasy variation" to see if it is possible to determine the essential elements of evil.

With his overall purpose being to cast light on evil, this researcher chose to explore a different aspect of evil in each chapter. In the second chapter, following this "Introduction," he will discuss the etymology of the word "evil." The aim of this chapter is not only to trace the Greek, Latin, and Old English origins of this word, but also to point out that in all these languages "evil" has both an active and a passive meaning.

The task of the third chapter will be to begin the process of self-hermeneutics. Contemporary philosophers of science and researchers employing the phenomenological approach emphasize that all research comes from a certain point of view or set of assumptions. Since the heart of

the phenomenological method is the "bracketing" of these assumptions, "disengaging" them, or setting them "out of play" as rigorously as possible, this researcher will state his presuppositions at the beginning of the investigation. After a discussion of the role of "hermeneutics" in a phenomenological study, this researcher will show how his understanding of "evil" was originally influenced by his Jewish upbringing and then evolved as he began a Buddhist meditation practice. The chapter will conclude with the researcher telling how his topic became "evil" and stating his present assumptions surrounding this phenomenon.

Chapters Four through Seven, which look at various contexts where the idea of "evil" has appeared, comprise the "review of the literature"; considering the vast amount that has been written about "evil," there is no attempt to be exhaustive. In Chapter Four itself, the focus will be on the worldviews of three religious traditions—Judaism, Christianity, and Buddhism. The word "religion" itself comes from the Latin word religāre, which means "to bind"; a religion "binds" individuals into a community by presenting them with beliefs and rituals relating to ultimate questions. As will be shown, each of these three religions has an evolving set of beliefs concerning the meaning and nature of evil.

Various scholars and phenomenologists have already completed studies relevant to the religious meaning of "evil." Chapter Five will outline their research findings.

The leading theorists of twentieth-century psychology have also developed ideas about the nature of evil. Chapter Six will outline what these explorers of the psyche had to say about evil.

Most of the modern literature about evil appears in various imaginative modes ranging from tales of the supernatural to science fiction



to poems. Although there will only be a moment to glimpse upon this realm, Chapter Seven will discuss the viewpoints of three cultural pathfinders who in their own time evolved a new way of approaching evil.

Starting with Chapter Eight, four chapters will be devoted to linking phenomenological conclusions to the findings of the interviews. Chapter Eight itself will outline three elements common to the phenomenological approach to knowledge, and will then focus on a phenomenological method developed by the Duquesne Group where the data is "stories" of experienced events. This chapter will continue by describing both the research design of the present investigation and the specific procedural steps used by this researcher in thematizing the interviews. Finally, this chapter will conclude by discussing the validity of the research findings.

Chapter Nine will center around the actual interviewing. For each of the nine contributors, both a biographical sketch and a summary of the interview will be provided. When appropriate, there will be direct quotations from the transcripts of the interviews.

Chapter Ten will state the major themes related to "evil" that emerged from each of the interviews, and then look for patterns among these themes. Specifically, an attempt will be made to determine if common themes of "evil" appeared among those contributors who shared a common religious background.

The purpose of Chapter Eleven is to relate the themes that emerged from the interviews to the themes that were present in the review of the literature (in Chapters Four through Seven). This chapter will conclude by listing those themes of "evil" which occurred most frequently in both the interviews and the review of the literature.

Chapter Twelve will be an attempt to determine the essential structural elements of evil. The method used to accomplish this purpose will be "free phantasy variation" (the "ph" in "phantasy" being intentional). After describing both this method and how it was applied to this investigation, this researcher will present a succinct summary of the essential elements of the experience of evil.

The final chapter, Thirteen, after summarizing the findings of this dissertation and suggesting possibilities for further research, will conclude by describing how this researcher was himself affected by the writing of the dissertation.

The overall aim of this researcher is not to thoroughly explore all that is known or has been written about "evil," but rather to present an introduction to a phenomenological approach to the experience of evil.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE ETYMOLOGY OF THE WORD "EVIL"

. . . though the origin of most of our words is forgotten, each word was at first a stroke of genius, and obtained currency because for the moment it symbolized the world to the first speaker and to the hearer. The etymologist finds the dearest word to have been once a brilliant picture. Language is fossil poetry.

-- Ralph Waldo Emerson in "The Poet"  
from Essays, 2nd series (1844)

This chapter has three purposes: to show how both the words signifying "evil" and the meanings of these words have been undergoing continual change for several thousand years; to discuss how evil has both a "passive" and "active" meaning; and to refute the argument that both the "devil" and the "divine" derive from the same etymological root.

"Evil" is an Anglo-Saxon word that first appeared in 825 C.E. Its initial form was yfel and it appeared in the Vespasian Psalter, a version of the Psalms used for religious services; it was used as an adverb and meant doing or saying "with evil intention."<sup>1</sup> Then, in 897, evil first appeared as a noun in the form yfelum, where it meant "ill-will."<sup>2</sup> Etymologically, yfel was probably related to the Anglo-Saxon

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<sup>1</sup>"Evil," Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), Vol. III, p. 349. (Hereafter cited as OED).

<sup>2</sup>OED, p. 348.

ofer, which meant "over, beyond, as going beyond bounds"—as in exceeding due limits. It also appears to have been related to the Icelandic word ūfr, which meant "unfriendly," and the Old High German uppi, which meant "hostile."<sup>3</sup> The first recorded use of the word spelled "evil" was in thirteenth century Middle English, where it appeared as euel (with u=v).

The word "devil" in English had a parallel development to "evil." Its first recorded use was in 800 where it appeared as diobul, a slight variation of the Latin diabolus.<sup>5</sup> It was only in the 1200's, when "evil" became euel, that the "devil" became deuel.<sup>6</sup> The similarity in spelling of these two words is undoubtedly a reflection of the growing influence of the Christian Church in the British Isles.

Before discussing the more ancient words that referred to "evil" in Greek and Latin, it will be useful to make a distinction between two meanings of the word. The first meaning could be called the "passive" sense since here evil is viewed as a fact or a state and is associated with that which is "bad." The second meaning is "active" and associates with a disruptive energy; sometimes this energy is conceived as being a supernatural force such as a devil or demon. Looking at a modern dictionary, these two meanings are apparent. "Evil" is defined as:

1. that fact of suffering and wickedness; the wicked or undesirable element or portion of anything;
2. a cosmic force producing evil actions or states.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>See "Evil" in Rev. Walter W. Skeat's An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 202.

<sup>4</sup>"Evil," OED, III, p. 349.      <sup>5</sup>"Devil," OED, III, p. 283.

<sup>6</sup>OED, III, p. 284.

<sup>7</sup>"Evil," Webster's Third New International Dictionary [Unabridged] (Springfield, Mass.: G & C Merriam Co., 1981), p. 789. This is not an

While the "fact of suffering and wickedness" is a passive sense of the word, the "cosmic force" signifies an active meaning.

In both Greek and Latin there are different words for the passive and active senses of evil. In Greek the most common word for the passive sense was kakos ( κακός ). It meant what a person wants to avoid--in appearance, ugliness; in battle, cowardice; and in conduct, baseness. This meaning appears in the modern English word "cacophony," which comes from the Greek words meaning "bad" and "voice." A second Greek word for "the bad" was ponēros ( πονηρός ); this meant "oppressed, painful, base, and worthless."<sup>9</sup> Neither of these terms was ever applied to the gods by the ancient Greeks:

. . . the word kakos, which along with evil carried a note of inferiority, was not applicable to gods, whether old or young, dethroned or still reigning. Still less ponēros, the word employed for "evil" in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, which to the early Greeks signified: toiler; worthless individual; scoundrel. To the Greek mind the identification of malice as a lasting or constant trait with inferiority was so self evident that its association with a divine figure was unthinkable.<sup>10</sup>

Since no god could be "bad," there was no word for "devil" in ancient Greek.

However, there was in Greece the concept of a daimon ( δαίμων ). Actually, this word had three interrelated meanings:

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exact quotation as two different "passive" senses have been combined in the initial meaning.

<sup>8</sup>See "Kakos" in Henry George Lidell and Robert Scott, eds., A Greek-English Lexicon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 863. (Hereafter cited as Greek.)

<sup>9</sup>"Ponēros," Greek, p. 1447.

<sup>10</sup>Karl Kerényi, "The Problem of Evil in Mythology" in The Curatorium of the C. G. Jung Institute, Zurich, eds., Evil (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1967), p. 12.

1. a spiritual or semi-divine being inferior to the gods;
2. destiny, what the gods ordain, fate; and
3. the guiding genius of an individual or family.<sup>11</sup>

The spiritual being in the first meaning could be either benevolent or malevolent; it is from the bad daimon that the English word demon comes. But in the Greek this word had a generally positive sense. The "fate" referred to in the second meaning could be either good or bad, and the last meaning was purely positive. Socrates believed that a daimon was responsible for his wisdom and was the shaper of his destiny. After a Greek dinner, a toast was drunk to the Good Daimon or "the Good Genius."<sup>12</sup> It was only two generations after Socrates' death that Plato's pupil Xenocrates made a division between the good gods and the bad demons and assigned all the evil and destructive qualities of the gods to the demons.<sup>13</sup> Thus a daimon, who was often quite helpful, if not the source of one's genius, evolved into a demon, who was always a source of evil.

The passive and active forms of evil are found in Latin as well. "Bad" in Latin is malum. This root appears in such English words as "malevolent," "malform," "malice," and "malingering." The active sense of evil was conveyed by both daemon and diabolus. Daemon had only negative meanings in Latin, and signified an evil force or spirit. Diabolus was the word for "devil" that had evolved from the Greek diabolos (διάβολος). In contrast to the Latin, the Greek word did not refer to a supernatural being, but simply meant "to set against, slander, deceive"; or, for

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<sup>11</sup>"Daimon," Greek, pp. 365-66.    <sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup>Jeffrey Burton Russell, The Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity (New York: New American Library, 1977), p. 142.

persons, a "liar" or "slanderer."<sup>14</sup> The Greek word was a combination of two roots: dia, which meant "across," and ballein, which meant "to throw." Thus, in Greek, a diabolos is a person "thrown across" the path, a human adversary.

This "human" origin of diabolos throws into question the often repeated statement that both "devil" and "divine" derive from the same Sanskrit and Persian word deva. Ernest Jones, Sigmund Freud's disciple, wrote:

This conclusion of the original identity of God and Devil receives an interesting confirmation through etymological study of the word 'Devil.' . . . the Greek diabolos. . . is ultimately derived from a primeval root DV, which in Sanskrit is found in two forms, div and dyu, the original meaning of which was 'to kindle'. From the former come, in addition to our Devil, . . . the word deva or daeva, which to the Brahmin means God, but to the Persian or Parsee means Devil.<sup>15</sup>

Jones is correct that the word "divine" comes through the Latin divus, Greek dios (δῖος), and Sanskrit deva, all of which had the meaning of "heavenly."<sup>16</sup> He is also right in asserting that the Sanskrit deva, which referred to a god, reversed its meaning in the Zoroastrian religion and came to mean a demon. But there is no evidence in any Greek etymological dictionary that the word diabolos is related to the Sanskrit root DV.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, daimon comes from older words meaning "skill in fighting" and "distributing destinies" and was not related

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<sup>14</sup>"Diabolos," Greek, pp. 389-90.

<sup>15</sup>Ernest Jones, On the Nightmare, new edition (New York: Liveright, 1951), pp. 158-59.

<sup>16</sup>See "Dios" in Pierre Chantraine's Dictionnaire Étymologique de la Langue Grecque: Histoire des Mots (Paris: Editions Klincksieck, 1968), Tome 1, A - Δ, p. 286. See also Greek, pp. 434-35.

<sup>17</sup>"Diabolos," Greek, pp. 389-90.

to Sanskrit.<sup>18</sup>

Carl Jung, like Jones, made the same incorrect assumption that the "devil" and the "divine" share an etymological root.<sup>19</sup> Although there are many examples where God and the devil are closely related in dreams and myths, this researcher concluded that some of the founders of psychoanalysis projected a mythical etymology onto the devil in order to make him more in the image of God.

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<sup>18</sup>"Daimon," Greek, p. 366.

<sup>19</sup>C. G. Jung, Symbols of Transformation, trans. R. F. C. Hull in Collected Works of C. G. Jung (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1956), Vol. 5, §582 and 582n., p. 376. (The note is by Jung's translator R. F. C. Hull.)



## CHAPTER THREE

### SELF-HERMENEUTICS

The sun is one foot wide.  
-- Herakleitos, Fragment 37

The root for the word "hermeneutics" lies in the Greek verb hermēneuein ( ἑρμῆνευειν ), which means "to interpret or to explain, especially of thoughts by words."<sup>1</sup> The Greek word hermeios was a name for the priest who interpreted the Delphic oracle.<sup>2</sup> Both this word and the more common hermēneuein point back to the winged-footed messenger-god Hermes, the inventor of language. According to the Greeks, Hermes is the god who transmutes what is beyond human comprehension into a form that human intelligence can understand.<sup>3</sup>

Phenomenologists are in general agreement that there is no

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<sup>1</sup>"Hermen-eia," Henry George Lidell and Robert Scott, eds. A Greek English Lexicon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 690.

<sup>2</sup>Richard E. Palmer, Hermeneutics (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1969), p. 13.

<sup>3</sup>Martin Heidegger wrote about the connection between "hermeneutics" and Hermes: "The expression 'hermeneutic' derives from the Greek verb hermeneuein. That verb is related to the noun hermeneus, which is referable to the name of the god Hermes by a playful thinking that is more compelling than the rigor of science. Hermes is the divine messenger. He brings the message of destiny; hermeneuein is that exposition which brings tidings because it can listen to a message . . ." See "A Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and an Inquirer," in his On the Way to Language, trans. Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 29; see also pp. 9-11, 28-30.

"objective" knowledge independent of a "subject." In fact, for some phenomenologists, the search for objectivity is viewed as a distraction from the search for knowledge that is personally meaningful. This point is well expressed by Paul Ricoeur:

Anyone who wished to escape this contingency of historical encounters and stand apart from the game in the name of a non-situated "objectivity" would at the most know everything, but would understand nothing. In truth, he would seek nothing, not being motivated by concern about any question.<sup>4</sup>

A researcher's questions will always spring from a specific set of values in a particular historical-cultural context; part of the hermeneutical task is elucidating both these values and the historical context. When the topic being investigated is itself one that contains a value—such as in studies of God or love or evil—hermeneutics is a necessary component of any investigation. This point is well made by Ken Wilber:

Give me a scientific-empirical proof that you have the precise meaning of Hamlet, of A Streetcar Named Desire, of last night's dream. The point is that, once we reach levels higher than those of the senses. . . . we are dealing with structures of meaning that no empirical-sensory evidence can decide, and therefore we are forced into (or rather privileged to use) symbolic, mental, and communicative discussion and interpretation to decide the crucial issues—and there is hermeneutics. . . . The liberating insight is that an individual's life as a mental being is a life of trans-empirical, hermeneutical exchange.<sup>5</sup>

The danger of any interpretation is that the researcher will bring a set of opinions that will cast the phenomenon in a particular mold. A legendary instance of this is the theorist who cut a piece of tofu into cubes and then wrote a learned treatise entitled "The Cubic Nature of

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<sup>4</sup>Paul Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, trans. Emerson Buchanan (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 18.

<sup>5</sup>Ken Wilber, Up From Eden: Transpersonal Views of Human Evolution (Garden City: Doubleday, 1981), pp. 276-277.

Tofu." Another famous example is the man who dragged a net with a one-inch mesh across a lake and--after carefully measuring all the creatures he caught--proclaimed his evidence proved that no fish in the lake was shorter than one inch.

In order to prevent such "bad hermeneutics" or "mis-interpretation," phenomenologists often begin their studies by "bracketing" their assumptions--"bracketing" being the way phenomenologists detach themselves from their own beliefs and viewpoints so that they can let the phenomenon "speak for itself". In psychological research, "bracketing" often entails a statement of why a particular topic was chosen, the experiences of the researcher relating to that topic, and a delineation of the researcher's values and presuppositions concerning its nature. Most phenomenologists accept that even after "bracketing", the idiosyncrasies of the particular researcher will still affect what is seen. Such a "subjective" element in knowledge is generally considered to be an asset rather than a liability; not only is the "subject" the source of meaning, but her or his unique angle of vision may illuminate aspects of the phenomenon that would otherwise remain unseen.

With this perspective, it is now appropriate to ask what are this researcher's questions, experiences, and assumptions relating to "evil." For this chapter, he will shift to the first person singular in order to emphasize that his own background and interests have shaped the way he questions the phenomenon of evil.

\* \* \* \* \*

Growing up in a Jewish family in a Jewish neighborhood of New York City, I knew many people who had a fear that they would be persecuted just for being Jewish. Among my parents' generation, it was a common

assumption that "deep down" much of Christian America was "anti-Semitic," and that what had happened in Nazi Germany could also happen here; their argument went: "If there's another depression like the last one, then . . ." The mother of one of my friends had barely survived a Nazi concentration camp; when I once asked her about what had happened to her at this camp, there was just a hush and a look of animal fear that spoke to me of events that for her were too horrible ever to be talked about. I was also told by my own mother at an early age about the fate of Grandpa's brothers and sisters and their children who had lived in a small village near Minsk; shortly after the Nazi Army had entered Russia, they had come to this village, ordered all the inhabitants to dig a huge hole, and they systematically shot everyone: old people, young people, infants. As a teen-ager, I felt hate toward the Nazis, and I would have fantasies of killing whole groups of Nazi soldiers before I myself was destroyed. For myself, my parents, and most of the people I grew up with, the Nazis were "evil" and Adolf Hitler was the epitome of what it meant to be an "evil" man.

During my college years in the middle 1960's, I spent two summer "vacations" doing civil rights work among black people in such southern states as North Carolina and Mississippi. This experience combined with my college reading led me to believe that "social evils" were embedded in the political and economic structures of the United States. Wanting to eliminate such "evils," I became involved in Students for a Democratic Society (SDS)--a movement I saw as trying to transform American society. As a member of SDS, I helped to organize demonstrations against the war in Vietnam and tried to organize poor white and black people in such northern cities as Boston, Newark, and Chicago. During these years

I was angry at "social injustices" and I saw an analogy between what the United States government was doing to the Vietnamese peasantry and what the Nazis did to the Jews.

When I first chose the topic of "evil," I questioned myself whether I ever had had such an experience. What immediately came to mind was a conversation with a young white American named Justin whom I had met in Nairobi, Kenya in the summer of 1970. Justin had just arrived in Africa and in a friendly way I asked him what brought him to this continent. He responded in dead earnestness, "I'm tired of hunting 'coons [meaning raccoons]—I'm heading to the Congo to sign up as a mercenary where I can get practice shooting at human targets." I saw he was all revved up to do exactly that. I was both amazed and shocked, and part of me could not really believe that he meant what he said.<sup>6</sup> I had already been travelling in Africa for eight months, and for me it had been a marvelous land full of wondrous animals and gentle people. Having lived most of the time in tiny African villages, I had been greeted with a warmth and hospitality that continually astounded me. Now, in this place that was closer to Paradise than any I had ever known, I was in the presence of a man who wanted to kill people just for sport. I didn't have a

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<sup>6</sup>In reading what Percy Bysshe Shelley had written about "evil," I discovered that one of his characters had an experience of disbelief similar to my own. In his poem The Cenci, the evil Count is dedicated to torturing people and speaks openly of his intention to Cardinal Camillo. The Cardinal ignores what he hears since it is too monstrous to be believed and says aloud in the presence of the Count:

Hell's most abandoned fiend  
 Did never, in the drunkenness of guilt,  
 Speak to his heart as now you speak to me;  
 I thank my God that I believe you not.

The Cenci, l.i.117-120.

category in which to place Justin's intentions and this made it difficult for me to take him seriously. Awkwardly, I tried to make a joke of what he had said, and Justin, sensing that I was partly making fun of him, stalked away in anger. The next moment I learned he had gone into my friend's room and stolen her gold necklace. At this point I realized on a gut level that it was not possible to joke with Justin as long as powerful destructive intentions motivated his every action. I saw that by not taking him at his word, I was more vulnerable to being hurt by him. While in Africa I never used the word "evil" either to describe Justin's intentions or my own experience. Eleven years later, when beginning this dissertation, this was the experience that "popped" right to mind as being most associated with "evil." In the intervening years, I had occasionally thought of Justin and wondered if he had ever made it to the Congo, but never for a moment did I consider our meeting of any personal significance. Now, in writing down the story and re-living my emotions of yesteryear, I do feel that there was an important teaching here relating to how my longing to be in Paradise made me want to ignore aspects of reality that were either unpleasant or hellish. Furthermore, I do feel this was an experience of "evil"; what makes the word "evil" still seem appropriate is that it communicates my shock and horror upon being confronted by a maniacal killer when I thought I was in an earthly Paradise.

I spent the year of 1973 in Asia. In September I was 28 years old and I spent the night of my birthday in a railway station in northern India on the way to my first Buddhist meditation course. The name of the meditation teacher was Goenka and at the course I spent ten days trying to watch my breath and attempting to notice all the sensations

that arose in different parts of my body. From there I went to live for a month in a Burmese Buddhist monastery in Bodh Gaya. There the teacher was Acharya Anagarika Munindra, considered by all an advanced teacher of meditation. Just before the meditation course started, I went to visit Munindraji, and it turned out two Americans arrived while we were talking. These other visitors started questioning Munindra about what he was doing to correct social conditions in India and they mentioned a famine near to where we were meditating. Munindraji answered that all beings must reap the results of their own actions, and that for him to throw his energies into feeding people would not free these starving people from the wheel of birth and death. He claimed that his work as a meditation teacher was helping to free people from suffering for all time, whereas any social or political activism could only alleviate suffering but for a moment.

During the meditation course that followed, which was accompanied by Joseph Goldstein's evening talks, I remained silent for twelve days. At the end of this period of silence, I had a feeling of the "rightness" of everything in the universe. I saw how words create the worlds of duality, and how without concepts, pain is just pain, and nothing to fear. I also accepted the law of karma—that all beings were receiving the consequences of their own thoughts and actions. At the same time I also experienced a letting go of much of my own accumulated anger. If my anger was like the water in a high tank filled to the brim, this meditation course had pulled out a plug in the middle, leaving but half of the water. I no longer felt hate toward anyone—even the Nazis—and I saw that it was not my responsibility to right the wrongs of the world. I also no longer experienced myself as a victim, and this made

me feel lighter than I ever had felt in my entire life. Even writing about this moment nearly nine years later, I still feel a release from the fear of suffering.

The next significant event that affected my understanding of evil was a developing relationship with Tibetan Buddhism. While living on the Big Island of Hawaii in 1974, I helped to build a Tibetan Temple and then spent a week listening (through a translator) to the teachings of Kalu Rinpoche, a Tibetan lama of the Kagyu Lineage. In one of the question and answer sessions, I remember a troubled woman bringing forth much anxiety about all the difficulties she was having living in the world, and then asking if it was all right to escape from her problems or whether it was her duty to face them. Kalu responded that if she could really avoid them, there was no need to face them; and then went on to say that the world was like "a dream, a cloud, a rainbow." From this answer I got that all the problems that seem so real at one moment may disappear the next moment, and that all the phenomena of the world are but a dream from the perspective of an enlightened awareness.

During this same time, I was reading what the Tibetan Buddhist texts said about "hungry ghosts," "demons," and "the hell realms." When I was growing up, I thought all such beliefs were superstitions, but now I came to see that they could have meaning as metaphors for states of consciousness. I eventually accepted the Tibetan Buddhist point of view that such beings as "demons" had the same reality as a "dream"; they could be very scary—even nightmarish—and yet were simultaneously the creations of an individual's own negative mind states.

In examining why I chose this particular topic of "evil" for a dissertation, I originally could not come up with any reason. I had



previously chosen a topic that interested me--a history of Goddess-worship in Hebrew, Greek and Hindu cultures. When a friend asked me why I wanted to make such a study, I responded, "Because the Goddess is beyond good and evil." Then, after this proposal to make a scholarly study of the Goddess was met both with opposition from a teacher on my dissertation committee and with doubts from within myself, I evolved as an alternative the present phenomenological investigation of "evil." My felt experience is that this topic chose me, rather than I chose it. Now when friends ask why I chose to study "evil." I tell them: "The devil made me do it."

Once I had settled upon the topic, I was curious both to learn what had been written on the subject and to explore what other people and I myself meant by "evil." After I realized that I wanted to talk to people about their experiences of "evil," I became attracted to a method of interviewing that was both open-ended and offered an opportunity for dialogue.

So, returning to the original question of my assumptions about the phenomenon of evil, I realize I have accepted points of view from each of the three religions studied here. With the Kabbalists, I share the notion that the Infinite One is beyond good and evil, but yet Her (His) Manifestation in the world is a mixture of good and evil. With the Gnostics, I hold in common a faith that there is within each person an inner spark of intuitive knowledge, and that "evil" is the obstacle preventing individuals from coming in touch with this wisdom. And, lastly, with the Buddhists, I share the conviction that the world is a mirroring of one's own mind states and that evil is no more real than a dream.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE RELIGIOUS CONTEXTS

. . . for there is nothing either good or  
bad but thinking makes it so.

— Hamlet 11.ii.265-66

To fully discuss the texts relating to "evil" in any one of these three religions--Judaism, Christianity, and Buddhism--would take much more than one dissertation. The purpose of this chapter is not to be exhaustive, but merely to give the reader a taste of how practitioners of each religion faced the question of evil.

#### Judaism

##### The Old Testament

The central myth about "evil" in the Old Testament takes place in the beginning of the Book of Genesis in the Garden of Eden. It is written that Adam and Eve were both happy and unconscious until they disobeyed God by eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Once they ate from the tree, they felt ashamed of their nakedness. God soon expelled them from the Garden of Eden and left an angel with a flaming sword to block their return. It is suggested that although Adam and Eve will now suffer, they have the possibility of becoming conscious.

The unifying faith of Judaism is that "God is One," and that both good and evil are God's emanations. God tells the prophet Isaiah:

I am the LORD, and there is none else. I form the light, and  
create darkness: I make peace and create evil: I the LORD do all

these things.<sup>1</sup>

Satan in the Old Testament is God's servant. The name Satan (שָׂטָן) derives from the Hebrew verb "satan," which means "to oppose" or "to plot against."<sup>2</sup> Satan's most prominent appearance in the Old Testament is in the Book of Job. Here he is a member of the heavenly court and tests the faith of God's devotee Job by taking away both his wealth and health. Throughout the Book of Job, it is clear that Satan can do nothing without God's permission; only after God's assent can Satan test the faith of Job. In the Old Testament, the power to do evil is God's alone.<sup>3</sup>

However, although the ancient Hebrews admitted that God had the power to do evil, they also insisted that he was totally good, just, and righteous. This position is not logically consistent, but one modern scholar has found in it a "superior" solution to the problem of evil:

The Hebrew position stands between the monism of the Hindus and the dualism of the Zoroastrians. It refuses to acquiesce in the idea that evil as well as good proceeds from the divine nature; on the contrary it shuns and fiercely rejects evil. But it also declines to adopt the severing of the two principles, equally fiercely insisting that one god and one god alone can be worshipped and that one god and one god alone exists. It may be that the confusion and ambiguity of the Hebrew position, rather than being inferior to the clarity and consistency of the other two, mark it as superior, because it is founded in a creative tension.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Isaiah 45:7 (Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from the Old Testament are from the King James version of The Bible.)

<sup>2</sup>"Satan," Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), Vol IX, p. 116. This meaning of "Satan" is similar to the Greek meaning of dia-ballein described earlier in Chapter Two, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup>"Satan," Jewish Encyclopedia (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1907), Vol. XI, pp. 69-70.

<sup>4</sup>Jeffrey Burton Russell, The Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity (New York: New American Library, 1977), p. 220.

Ancient Judaism more than any other religion aligned itself against both animism and goddess-worship; these practices were called "idolatry," the greatest of evils. Raphael Patai shows that two of the "idols" condemned by the prophets were Asherah and Astarte, the goddesses of many Middle Eastern peoples.<sup>5</sup> Ancient Judaism was a patriarchal religion in which a male God<sup>6</sup> would severely punish all those who either did not worship Him or disobeyed His Law.

### The Kabbalah

The question of the source of evil was not a central concern of Jewish philosophers until the writings of the Kabbalah.<sup>7</sup> The Kabbalah (which means "received" in Hebrew) was a Jewish religious movement that began in the 7th century A.D. and reached its greatest popularity in the 16th and 17th centuries. Although this movement included magical practices, the magic was always within the framework of Judaism and (unlike Christian magic) never appealed to Satan.<sup>8</sup> The Kabbalah's most important doctrines are espoused in the Zohar, now credited to Moses de Leon, a 13th century Spaniard.<sup>9</sup> The Zohar develops a model of "A Tree

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<sup>5</sup>Raphael Patai, The Hebrew Goddess (New York: Avon Books, 1978), pp. 12-58. (Hereafter cited as Goddess.)

<sup>6</sup>The two Biblical names for God--Yahweh and Elohim--are both masculine; for a discussion of "The Masculine Godhead," see Goddess, pp. 7-10.

<sup>7</sup>Gershom Scholem, On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Schocken Books, 1965), p. 99.

<sup>8</sup>Charles Poncé, Kabbalah (Wheaton, Illinois: Theosophical Publishing House, 1973), p. 19. (Hereafter cited as Kabbalah.)

<sup>9</sup>Gershom Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism (New York: Schocken Books, 1961), pp. 201-04. (Hereafter cited as Mysticism.)

of Life" composed of ten Sefiroth or "spheres." These Sefiroth are the energy centers of the Kabbalistic tree of life.<sup>10</sup> In this tree, "evil" is identified with the Sefirah of Judgment or Wrath (Gevurah or Din) when it is not balanced by its complement of Mercy or Love (Hesed). The Sefirah of Judgment, which is considered feminine and passive, is viewed as needing the Sefirah of Mercy, which is masculine and active.<sup>11</sup> As long as these two Sefiroth are balanced, the world is harmonious; but if either becomes separated from its complement, then there is a moment of danger. If Mercy is too strong, there is a tendency to over-expansion; while if Judgment is too strong, there is a tendency to contraction.<sup>12</sup> Gershom Scholem sums up this Zoharic doctrine in these words:

Thus the quality of stern judgment represents the great fire of wrath which burns in God but is always tempered by His mercy. When it ceases to be tempered, when in its measureless hypertrophical outbreak it rears loose from the quality of mercy, then it breaks away from God altogether and is transformed into the radically evil, into Gehenna and the dark world of Satan.<sup>13</sup>

According to Kabbalistic lore, a person cast into Gehenna—a fiery hell whose purpose is emotional purification rather than eternal punishment—stays there until the power of Mercy is again greater than that of Wrath.

After Moses de Leon, the next innovative explanation of evil was developed by the Kabbalist Isaac Luria (1533-72), who lived in the town

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<sup>10</sup>Mysticism, p. 206.

<sup>11</sup>Kabbalah, p. 81. It should be noted that the identification of Judgment with the "the feminine" and Mercy with "the masculine" is the reverse of the contemporary common cultural stereotypes. On this issue, Scholem has written: "It is the essence of Kabbalistic symbolism that woman represents not, as one might be tempted to expect, the quality of tenderness but that of stern judgment. . . . The demonic, according to the Kabbalists, is an off-spring of the feminine sphere"; see his Mysticism, pp. 37-38.

<sup>12</sup>Kabbalah, pp. 125-27.

<sup>13</sup>Mysticism, p. 237.

of Safed in the Upper Galilee. According to his theory, evil originates with the tsimtsum--the voluntary contraction or withdrawal on the part of the Infinite Being (En-Sof) that is necessary for creation to come into existence. At the moment of this contraction, the Sefiroth of the Tree of Life come into existence,<sup>14</sup> and originally all the forces of evil are concentrated in the Sefirah of Judgment or Wrath.<sup>15</sup> Then there comes a Shevirah or "a breaking of the vessels" of the Sefiroth and the forces of evil take on a separate and independent existence in a realm of darkness. This realm of darkness consists of Kelipot or "shells," and the sparks of the broken vessels that fall into this realm become ensnared by the shells. This mixture of darkness and light, good and evil, is what characterizes our world. Luria concludes his presentation by saying that the purpose of Life is tikkun--"restoration of the harmony"--and this can only be accomplished by retrieving the sparks from the dark realm of the shells. Scholem points out that the idea of "a breaking of the vessels" has similarities to the image of "a birth"--where, also, there is a deep convulsion of the organism "accompanied by the externalization of what might be called waste products."<sup>16</sup> Similarly, the image of tikkun is analogous to a second mystical birth where the world is redeemed from all evil.

The popularity of this doctrine in the 16th and 17th centuries is

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<sup>14</sup>Mysticism, pp. 260-264. Scholem notes that these Sefiroth have a similar relationship to the infinite En-Sof as (in these lines) "life" does to "Eternity":

Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,  
Stains the white radiance of Eternity . . .

These verses are from Percy Bysshe Shelley's Adonais (stanza 52, lines 462-63); Scholem makes this analogy in Mysticism, p. 220.

<sup>15</sup>Mysticism, p. 267.      <sup>16</sup>ibid.

related to the historic fact of exile. The Jews had been expelled from Spain in 1492, and there was an analogy between the sparks ensnared by the shells and the Jews exiled in nations unfriendly to their religion. Just as the purpose of spiritual life was to lift up fallen sparks, the purpose of exile became the redemption of the world.<sup>17</sup>

### Lilith ( לִילִית )

In these same Kabbalistic texts, there is a wealth of feminine images for both God and the demonic. The feminine aspect of the one God is the Shekinah (which is Hebrew for "indwelling"), who is both the Mother and the Daughter. Much like the Hindu Goddess Kali, the Shekinah is imaged as black, war-like, blood-thirsty, and the bringer of death. According to the Zohar, these are the lines of the Bible that refer to Her:<sup>18</sup>

Her feet go down to death;  
Her steps take hold on hell.<sup>19</sup>

She is symbolically represented as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which for Adam was a "tree of death."<sup>20</sup>

If the Shekinah can be both gentle and fearful, the woman in the Kabbalah who is only a She-devil is Lilith. For the ancient Sumerians, Lilith meant "screech owl." In their Gilgamesh epic (2000 B.C.E.), Lilith was a demon related to the father of Gilgamesh; after Gilgamesh slew the dragon, Lilith, terror-stricken, tore down her house and escaped to the desert.<sup>21</sup> Lilith is mentioned only once in the Old Testament, and that is when Isaiah is describing how on the day of the

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<sup>17</sup>Mysticism, p. 284.

<sup>18</sup>Goddess, pp. 173-74.

<sup>19</sup>Proverbs 5:5

<sup>20</sup>Goddess, p. 173.

<sup>21</sup>Goddess, pp. 180-81.

Lord's vengeance the land will be turned into a desolate wilderness:

The wild-cat shall meet with the jackals  
 And the satyr shall cry to his fellow,  
 Yea, Lilith shall repose there  
 And find her place of rest.<sup>22</sup>

This is a reference to Lilith fleeing to the desert much as she did in the Gilgamesh epic.

Although Jews continued to view Lilith as a female demon, it was only in the tenth century C.E. that Lilith is revealed to be Adam's first wife. According to the Talmudic story, Lilith was made from the earth, rather than Adam's rib. When Adam wanted to lie with her, Lilith replied, "Why should I lie beneath you when I am your equal, since both of us were created from dust?" Adam and Lilith then quarrelled, and Lilith uttered the name of God and fled to the Red Sea where she embarked upon her career as a demon.<sup>23</sup>

According to the Zohar, Lilith emerged out of the Sefirah of Judgment or Wrath.<sup>24</sup> Known as "the Harlot," she punishes men for their sexual abuses; after seducing a man, she will kill him and cast him into Gehenna.<sup>25</sup> When a man has lustful thoughts, either awake or asleep, Lilith uses the seed of such a man to create demon children who will

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<sup>22</sup>Isaiah 34:14. Since the King James Version refers to "the screech owl" rather than Lilith, the translation used is from Goddess, p. 182.

<sup>23</sup>This story is taken from the tenth century book of Hebrew stories, Alphabet of Ben Sira; see Goddess, p. 183 and Scholem, On the Kabbalah, p. 163. A modern woman with a Jungian perspective, after noting how Lilith refused to lie beneath Adam, argued that Lilith "expresses the naturalness of the female principle, a principle of Eros that does not wish to be subjected to patriarchal control." She concluded that "Lilith wants to express herself in all her instinctive nature, and because of this, she is a demon." See Maria Teresa Colonna, "Lilith, or the Black Moon," Journal of Analytic Psychology, 25 (1980), 340 and 343.

<sup>24</sup>Goddess, p. 193.      <sup>25</sup>Goddess, pp. 197-98.



come to plague him at the moment of his death.<sup>26</sup> In one Kabbalistic text, an analogy is made which identifies a man's seed with the sparks of the broken vessels and Lilith with the kelipot—"the shells of evil":

And behold, that hard shell, Lilith, is always present in the bed linen of man and wife when they copulate, in order to take hold of the sparks of the drops of semen which are lost--because it is impossible to perform the marital act without such a loss of sparks--and she creates out of them demons, spirits, and Lilin.<sup>27</sup>

"Lilin" are demon children who have wings.<sup>28</sup> To chase away Lilith and her demon children, the Kabbalah includes such magical practices as charms, chants, and amulets. Lilith was particularly feared as a child-killer, and she was known to be most dangerous right after a child was born.<sup>29</sup> She was also seen as lurking about whenever a child laughs during sleep or smiles when alone.<sup>30</sup>

Considering that the Shekinah is an aspect of God and that Lilith is a force of evil, it is noteworthy that some Kabbalistic writers insist that they are actually the same Goddess. The Zoharic literature reads:

Come and see: The Shekina is at times called the Mother, at times the slave-Woman (i.e. Lilith), and at times the King's Daughter.<sup>31</sup>

There was a Kabbalistic tradition that Lilith replaced the Shekinah as God's consort after the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem.<sup>32</sup> This

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<sup>26</sup>Scholem, On the Kabbalah, pp. 154-56.

<sup>27</sup>Goddess, p. 198, citing Naphtali Herz ben Jacob Elhanan, Emeq-Hamelekh (Amsterdam, 1648), 179d-180a. Naphtali was a German-born Palestinian Kabbalist who lived in the second half of the 16th century.

<sup>28</sup>Goddess, p. 183.    <sup>29</sup>ibid.    <sup>30</sup>Goddess, p. 206.

<sup>31</sup>Goddess, p. 218, citing Zohar Hadesh Tiaqunim (Warsaw: Levin-Epstein, no date), p. 117a top.

<sup>32</sup>Goddess, p. 166.

is expressed in the Zohar in these words:

When Israel was exiled, the Shekhina too went into exile, and this is the nakedness of the Shekhina. And this nakedness is Lilith, the mother of a mixed multitude.<sup>33</sup>

Those Kabbalistic writers who viewed the Shekinah and Lilith as merely different aspects of the same Goddess believed that both good and evil were emanations of one God/dess, and that the Goddess Herself was beyond both good and evil.

As can be seen, the Kabbalistic writings combined the magical beliefs enmeshed in the folklore of the times with an innovative symbolic interpretation of the Bible. Whereas those who put their faith in magical practices saw "evil" embodied in literal demons who must be warded off by charms, chants, and amulets, those who gave a symbolic interpretation of Biblical myths and the Tree of Life suggested that since the Infinite One was beyond both good and evil, evil could not be "ultimately" differentiated from good—or, in the language of symbols, that Lilith was none other than the Shekinah.

### The Holocaust

For most modern Jews, the event most identified with "evil" is the Holocaust. There is an aspect of this experience that cannot be rationally comprehended. Elie Wiesel, a survivor of Auschwitz, returned there in 1979 and these were his reflections:

How was it possible? We shall never understand. Even if we manage somehow to learn every part of that insane project, we will never understand it. . . . I think I must have read all the books—

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<sup>33</sup>Goddess, p. 218, citing Zohar i. 27b. Patai's translation is more expressive than that of Harry Sperling and Maurice Simon, The Zohar (London: Soncino Press, 1949), Vol I, p. 105.

memoirs, documents, scholarly essays and testimonies written on the subject. I understand it less and less.<sup>34</sup>

He could sum up his experience only with a paradox: "Man is not human."<sup>35</sup>

One way that the Jewish people tried to cope with the horror of mass murder was through humor. Here is a joke from Elie Wiesel about a small group of Jews gathered to pray in a synagogue of Nazi-occupied Europe:

As the service went on, suddenly a pious Jew who was slightly mad--for all pious Jews were by then slightly mad--burst in through the door. Silently he listened for a moment as the prayers ascended. Slowly he said: "Shh, Jews! Do not pray so loud! God will hear you. Then He will know that there are still some Jews left alive in Europe."<sup>36</sup>

One of Adolph Hitler's rhetorical habits was to use the language of the Old Testament—"ein Reich fuer Immer," "ein ewiges Volk," "ein Volk unter den Voelkern."<sup>37</sup> The Jews had long held that Abraham had made a covenant with God making the Jews His Chosen People. Now, another man was proclaiming himself the leader of a Chosen People--and directing the murder of millions of Jews.

Still, to this day, no Jewish philosopher has ventured to say what was the meaning of the Holocaust. In Elie Wiesel's own "true life" description of a day at Auschwitz, he does try to understand where God

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<sup>34</sup>Otto Friedrich, "The Kingdom of Auschwitz," Atlantic Monthly, September 1981, p. 60

<sup>35</sup>Ernest Becker, Escape from Evil (New York: Free Press, 1975), p. 169.

<sup>36</sup>Emil L. Fackenheim, God's Presence in History (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 67.

<sup>37</sup>These translate as "a Reich forever," "an eternal People," "a Chosen People." This point about the "devilish parody" is made by George Steiner, author of Language and Silence, in "Jewish Values in the Post-Holocaust Future: A Symposium," Judaism, 16 (1967), pp. 297-98.

was during the Holocaust:

One day when we came back from work, we saw three gallows rearing up in the assembly place, three black crows. Roll call. SS all around us, machine guns trained: the traditional ceremony. Three victims in chains--and one of them, the little servant, the sad-eyed angel.

The SS seemed more preoccupied, more disturbed than usual. To hang a young boy in front of thousands of spectators was no light matter. The head of the camp read the verdict. All eyes were on the child. He was lividly pale, almost calm, biting his lips. The gallows threw its shadow over him. . . .

The three victims mounted together onto the chairs.

The three necks were placed at the same moment within the nooses.

"Long live liberty," cried the two adults.

But the child was silent.

"Where is God? Where is He?" someone behind me asked.

At a sign from the head of the camp, the three chairs tipped over. . . .

The two adults were no longer alive. Their tongues hung swollen, blue-tinged. But the third rope was still moving; being so light, the child was still alive.

"Where is He? Here He is--He is hanging here on this gallows. . . ." <sup>38</sup>

### Christianity

Jesus supposes every Thing to be Evident to the Child & to the Poor & Unlearned. Such is the Gospel. The whole Bible is fill'd with Imagination & Visions from End to End & not with Moral Virtues . . . The Moral Virtues are continual Accusers of Sin & promote Eternal Wars & Dominy over others.

-- William Blake, Annotations to Berkeley's Siris (circa 1820)

What is called Christianity includes both the teachings of Jesus and the theology and practices of the church founded in His Name. While Jesus preached a gospel of love and acceptance, the Church often engaged in wars involving persecution and cruelty. The themes chosen in this section are an attempt to explore both the "light" and "dark" sides of

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<sup>38</sup>Elie Wiesel, Night (New York: Pyramid Books, 1961), pp. 75-76.

the Christian conception of "evil."

### Jesus in the Gospels

In the stories of the Gospels, Jesus' teachings about good and evil are often sparked by the moral judgments and accusations of others. Jesus' emphasis is always on correcting one's own behavior rather than accusing others for their wrongdoing:

You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye. For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit.<sup>39</sup>

Jesus taught that following religious laws and moral commandments could not save a person unless it was accompanied by faith and devotion. This often put him on the side of "sinners" and brought forth the wrath of the moralists. One such moralist sees Jesus being touched by a prostitute and as Jesus does not send her away, he begins doubting Jesus is a prophet; Jesus hears his thoughts and speaks:

You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little. . .

And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."<sup>40</sup>

It is implied that the very scrupulousness with which the righteous man has followed the law has played a part in keeping his heart closed to love and faith.

While Satan in the Old Testament was God's servant, Jesus saw the devil as ruling a world that obstructed the divine will. Satan's first

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<sup>39</sup>Luke 6:42-44. (All quotations from the New Testament will be from the Revised Standard Version of The Bible.)

<sup>40</sup>Luke 7:46-47 and 50.

appearance in the gospels is to tempt Jesus in the wilderness:

. . . the devil took him to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them; and he said to him, "All these I will give you if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! for it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.'"<sup>41</sup>

Jesus sees himself as being a messenger from the kingdom of God which is "not of the world."<sup>42</sup> In his parables, Jesus often talks of the devil or Satan as being the ruler of the world (kosmos).<sup>43</sup>

It is possible to interpret Jesus' references to the "devil" as being to an actual metaphysical entity or, alternatively, as being a symbol for the evil of the world. The latter interpretation was made by those who are known today as "Gnostics."

### The Gnostics

The Gnostics were early Christians who flourished around the perimeter of the Mediterranean basin from ca.80-200 C.E.; their teaching centered around the realization of gnosis. Gnosis ( γνῶσις ) is the Greek word for a "knowledge" that is not mental and rational, but rather experiential and intuitive. A close equivalent in English might be "the wisdom of insight." The Gnostics claimed that to know oneself at the deepest level is simultaneously to experience God.<sup>44</sup> For most of the

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<sup>41</sup>Matthew 4:8-10. For the complete story of "the temptation," see Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13.

<sup>42</sup>John 18:36.

<sup>43</sup>Instances of Jesus referring to the devil as a ruler of this world can be found in Matthew 12:26, 13:19, 13:39; and John 12:31, 14:30, 17:15-16. For a discussion of the different Greek words and phrases used to refer to the devil in the New Testament, see Russell, p. 229, n.6.

<sup>44</sup>Elaine Pagels, The Gnostic Gospels (New York: Random House, 1981), pp. xviii-xix.

history of Christendom, their thought was known largely through the explanations of the Fathers of the orthodox church who condemned them as heretics. Then, in December 1945, there was an extraordinary find of 52 Gnostic texts in Nag Hammadi in Upper Egypt. For the first time in 1700 years, the Gnostics could speak in their own voice.

In these texts, the Gnostics interpret the main events of Jesus' life in a symbolic fashion. They give symbolic meanings to Jesus' virgin birth, his suffering on the cross, and to his resurrection.<sup>45</sup> In addition, Satan is not viewed as a superhuman being, but a force that attempts to prevent truth-seekers from gaining self-knowledge. As the Gospel of Thomas proclaims:

If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you.<sup>46</sup>

With this perspective, they give a unique slant to the stories and symbols of both the Old and New Testament. In their interpretation, the serpent in the Garden of Eden is the representative of Sophia (the Goddess of wisdom) whereas Jehovah is the arrogant tyrant representing the Power of Satan. Jehovah is trying to prevent humankind from gaining self-knowledge by telling Adam that he will die if he eats from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.<sup>47</sup> Luckily, the snake finds an ally in Eve and thus foils God's plan to keep humankind spiritually ignorant:

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<sup>45</sup>Pagels, pp. 63-64 and 86-90.

<sup>46</sup>Pagels, p. 152. For a slightly different translation, see The Nag Hammadi Library, ed. James M. Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), verse 70, p. 126. (Hereafter cited as NHL.)

<sup>47</sup>Pagels, pp. 35-36.

But the serpent was wiser than all the animals that were in paradise, and he persuaded Eve, saying, "On the day when you eat from the tree which is in the midst of Paradise the eyes of your mind will be opened." And Eve obeyed. . . .

But of what sort is this God? First (he) envied Adam that he should eat from the tree of knowledge. . . . Surely he has shown himself to be a malicious envier.<sup>48</sup>

Adam's and Eve's minds are opened, but this jealous God, realizing that he does not have the power to kill Adam as he had threatened, still succeeds both in labelling the serpent as the agent of the "devil" and in preventing Adam and Eve from gaining eternal life.

The Gnostics hold that in this created world the passions of greed and hatred will always cast "a shadow" over the light of gnosis.<sup>49</sup> But yet, for those individuals who are dedicated to discovering their own divine nature, the unquenchable "Spark" of wisdom and faith will always remain "an eye of heaven and a voice of light."<sup>50</sup>

Before the publication of the Gnostic texts, the standard scholarly viewpoint was that the Gnostic worldview was "dualistic" in that at its heart there was an ineradicable and irreconcilable opposition between the kingdoms of light and darkness, good and evil, God and Satan. But

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<sup>48</sup>"The Testimony of Truth," NHL, pp. 411-12.

<sup>49</sup>For the Gnostic view on how "the shadow" emerged during creation, see "On the Origin of the World," NHL, pp. 162-63.

<sup>50</sup>"The Paraphrase of Shem," NHL, p. 327; see also pp. 322-23. There are indications that the early Kabbalists knew of Gnostic writings when they developed their paradigm of "sparks" trapped in the darkness. Similarly, both Gnostics and Kabbalists viewed the Goddess (whether referred to as the Sophia or the Shekinah) as a daughter of light who had entered the world of matter. For a discussion of the "profound similarity of outlook" between Gnostics and Kabbalists, see Scholem, Mysticism, pp. 229-230 and 279-80. For a modern mythic novel that describes a struggle for a "spark" of wisdom in a world of passion, see Harold Bloom, The Flight to Lucifer: A Gnostic Fantasy (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), especially pp. 239-40.



this viewpoint was framed without an understanding of how the Gnostics used symbols to refer to internal states of mind. When their discussions of darkness, evil, and Satan are interpreted symbolically, there arises an underlying meaning warning of the internal difficulties and obstacles ahead for all those who want to seek for gnosis and thereby experience God.

### Theology

"Theology" is the study of God and the relation of God to the universe; "theodicy" is a vindication of divine justice in allowing the existence of evil. Once evil is taken as having an existence separate from God, it is possible to ask, "Why does God permit evil?" Jesus just accepted that the devil ruled the world as a self-evident truth; but beginning in the third century of the Christian era, all theologians became involved in justifying the existence of evil.

The most popular solution to the problem of evil was first proposed by Origen (ca.185-254), a philosopher of North Africa, who used the Greek and Roman styles of logic to justify the tenets of Christianity. Origen's view was that God is totally good and that "evil nowhere exists" in God.<sup>51</sup> In this interpretation of Jesus' teachings, any evil that might arise in the world is purely the result of man's free will.

St. Augustine (354-430) accepted Origen's point about God's goodness and made it a central doctrine in all his writings. He held that in the Garden of Eden, not "the tree" or "the fruit" was evil, but the

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<sup>51</sup>Origen, On First Principles, trans. G. W. Butterworth (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), Book III, Chap. VI, section 3, p. 248.

"fault" in man's will.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, the devil was "good by God's creation, wicked by his [the devil's] own will."<sup>53</sup> St. Augustine's basic argument is that "what we call evil is merely the lack of something that is good"; and that as no natural reality is evil, "the only meaning of the word 'evil' is the privation of good."<sup>54</sup>

Theologians referred to this definition of evil as the privatio boni--or "diminution of the good"--and linked it to the doctrine that God is the summum bonum--or "highest possible good." As cornerstones of Christian theology, these doctrines led to the proposition: omne bonum a Deo, omne malum ab homine--"all good from God, all evil from men."

Although this proposition was never challenged by the Protestants of the Reformation, the devil loomed much larger in their theology. For instance, in the writings of Martin Luther (1483-1546), the devil is the ruler of the world. In his view there is nothing a person can do to escape the devil's clutches--even "good works" are but one of the devil's disguises. According to Luther, a person does not even have the free will to choose between good and evil since God has preordained all thoughts and actions. For Luther, the only escape from such a world is

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<sup>52</sup>St. Augustine, The City of God, trans. Gerald G. Walsh and Grace Monahan in The Fathers of the Church, vol. 14 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1952), Book XIV, Chap. 13, p. 381. In 414-415 C.E., while writing The City of God, St. Augustine formulated the doctrine of "original sin" which held that all mankind must now suffer because it had inherited the guilt of "the fault" in Adam's will; for a discussion of this doctrine, see Paul Ricoeur, "'Original Sin': A Study in Meaning," trans. Peter McCormack in The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics, ed. Don Ihde (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974), p. 279.

<sup>53</sup>St. Augustine, The City of God, XI, 17, p. 213.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., XII, 9, p. 201; and XI, 22, p. 220.

through "grace" or a "justification by faith alone."

To shift to a modern perspective on Luther: Norman O. Brown has argued that from within the Freudian worldview, the Protestant Reformation can be interpreted as the triumph of the anal personality.<sup>55</sup> Brown points out that for Luther a confrontation with the devil was an encounter with something "black" and "filthy."<sup>56</sup> Luther referred to an assault of the devil with the homely German verb "bescheissen" and could only rout the devil "mit einem Furz."<sup>57</sup> Sitting around the table one evening, Luther told his wife: "I'm like a ripe stool and the world's like a gigantic anus, and so we're about to let go of each other."<sup>58</sup> For Luther, the world's anus is the devil's anus, and all the phenomenon of the world are defiled by the devil's filth. It is only through faith in God's grace that it is ever possible to be made "clean."<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>Norman O. Brown, Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1959), Chap. XIV, "The Protestant Era," pp. 202-33. Brown views Dante (1265-1321) as a harbinger of the "anal" viewpoint since in The Inferno he conceived the anus of Satan as being the dead center of the revolving universe through which he and Virgil passed upward from Hell to Purgatory; see Brown, p. 207 and Dante Alighieri, The Inferno, trans. John Ciardi, Canto XXXIV, vss. 76-93, pp. 285-86.

<sup>56</sup>Brown, pp. 208 and 225. Although "darkness" is associated with the devil in the New Testament, there is no mention of "filth." In the Book of Revelations, the color for evil is "red" rather than black; see Revelations 6:4, 12:3, and 17:3-4. For a discussion of the color symbolism of the New Testament, see Russell, pp. 246-47.

<sup>57</sup>Brown, citing Sämtliche Schriften, XXIII, Index, s.v. "Teufel"; and XXII, 706.

<sup>58</sup>Martin Luther, "Table Talk No. 5537: Winter 1542-43" in Luther's Works, Vol. 54 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), p. 448.

<sup>59</sup>Erik Erikson makes much of the fact that Luther had his crucial revelation that "justification is by faith alone" while in the toilet;

Luther not only gave the devil a central place in his theology, but he also tended to identify anyone who did not see the world in his way as being the agent of the devil. Luther believed the Pope's words were "farts" and that Papal decretals were "the devil's excretals."<sup>60</sup> Similarly, Luther called the Jews "a brood of serpents and children of the devil."<sup>61</sup> Of the Jews, Luther wrote:

It serves them right that, rejecting the truth of God, they have to believe instead such abominable, stupid, inane lies, and that instead of the beautiful face of the divine word, they have to look<sup>62</sup> into the devil's black, dark lying behind, and worship his stench.

In this same essay on the Jews, Luther went on to propose burning their synagogues and schools, destroying their houses and books, forbidding their rabbis to teach, abolishing their safe conduct on the highways, taking away all their money, and, lastly, ejecting them from Germany.<sup>63</sup> Although these proposals sound extreme by modern liberal standards, they are consistent with Luther's strong belief in the reality of the devil and his desire to root out all the sources of evil in his homeland.

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Erikson's analysis sees this as the resolution of the "crisis" of Luther's "anal stage" which in all people involves a struggle between "will and autonomy" and "shame and doubt"; see Erik H. Erikson, Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1962), pp. 122, 201-06, and 255-57.

<sup>60</sup>Brown, pp. 225 and 229.

<sup>61</sup>Martin Luther, "On the Jews and Their Lies" (1543), in Luther's Works, vol. 47 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), p. 232; for another similar allusion, see also p. 277. Luther's Biblical reference is to Matthew 12:34.

<sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 256.

<sup>63</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 268-72. For a discussion of Luther's proposals in the context of anti-Jewish sentiment in the Middle Ages, see Joshua Trachtenberg, The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and Its Relation to Modern Antisemitism (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), especially pp. 217-220.

Although modern Protestant theologians no longer see the Papacy or Jewry as the devil's agents, many still express a strong belief in the reality of demonic forces. To give one example, Paul Tillich defines the demonic as "the perversion of the creative and as such belongs to the phenomena that are contrary to essential nature, or sin."<sup>64</sup> In a later book, Tillich elaborates upon this concept and comments on its popularity:

The idea of the demonic is the mythical expression of a reality that was the center of Luther's experience as it was in Paul's, namely, the structural, and therefore inescapable, power of evil. . . . None of the concepts used by our interpretation of history has found as much response in religious and secular literature as has the concept of the demonic.<sup>65</sup>

For Tillich, the reality of the demonic lies not in the literal existence of the devil, but in the actual experience of evil.

#### The Search for Witches

Looking back at the witch scare that spread through European and North American Christendom between the 14th and the 18th centuries, many commentators have pointed out how it was linked to a fear and hatred of both women and sexuality. The image of the devil that emerged from the witch trials was of a highly sexual being ready to seduce lustful women. One scholar who made a study of the confessions of the medieval witches noted that they consistently described intercourse with the devil as both cold and painful.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>Paul Tillich, The Interpretation of History (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1936), p. 93. For the entire discussion, see pp. 77-122.

<sup>65</sup>Paul Tillich, The Protestant Era (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), pp. xx-xxi.

<sup>66</sup>Margaret A. Murray, "'Witches' Fertility Rites," Man, 19, No. 27

The "Bible" of the witch hunters was the Malleus Maleficarum or "Witch Hammer." This book, written in Latin and first published in 1486, was intended to be a guide for identifying witches. The book argues that although "the power of the devil lies in the privy parts of men,"<sup>67</sup> it is women who are most to blame as they tempt men:

What else is woman but a foe to friendship, an inescapable punishment, a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, a domestic danger, a delectable detriment, an evil of nature, painted with fair colors.<sup>68</sup>

As part of the evidence for the fact that women have less faith than men, it says that the word "Femina comes from Fe and Minus, since she is ever weaker to hold and preserve the faith."<sup>69</sup> All these various arguments lead to one conclusion: "All witchcraft comes from carnal lust, which is in women insatiable."<sup>70</sup>

These "insatiable lusts" that were no longer acceptable and condemned as "pagan" led to a new image of the devil. In the late Middle Ages, the devil accrued many of the traits of the pagan gods; not only

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(1919), 57. Less substantiated is her supposition that an artificial phallus used in witches' rites was the source of the cold and the pain; see p. 58.

<sup>67</sup>The Malleus Maleficarum of Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger, trans. Rev. Montague Summers (New York: Dover Publications, 1971), p. 26. Both authors were Professors of Sacred Theology in Germany; after being appointed as Inquisitors by the Pope, they were given civil authority by the Emperor of Germany.

<sup>68</sup>*ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>69</sup>*ibid.*, p. 44. Modern etymological books do not support this contention; "feminine" is instead derived from the Latin word fēlāre, which means "to suckle" and the Greek word thele (θηλή), which means "the breast." See "Feminine" in Rev. Walter W. Skeat, An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 211.

<sup>70</sup>The Malleus Maleficarum, p. 47.

did the folklore describe him as being as swift and as unpredictable as Hermes, but in the statues he now appeared for the first time with the horns of Dionysius and the erect cock of Pan. The same fear of lust that was at the heart of the witch hunt led to the devil being given the power over all human sexual energies.

#### A Response to Nazism

In the Nazi slaughter of the Jews, it was often the most devout Christians who came to the aid of the Jewish people. One such person was Corrie ten Boom who, during the Nazi occupation of Holland, built a secret room to hide Jews. She describes her experience in The Hiding Place—the "hiding place" being both the secret room and her own increasing faith in God's love and justice.<sup>71</sup> After the Nazis discover her "treachery," she is sent along with her sister Betsie to a concentration camp in Ravensbruck, Germany. When Corrie and Betsie eventually arrive at their overcrowded, dark, and foul-smelling permanent sleeping quarters, they see all the straw beds are swarming with fleas. Corrie despairs that she can ever live in such a place, but Betsie reminds her of St. Paul's advice to "give thanks in all circumstances." Corrie can't believe that God meant her to give thanks for the fleas.<sup>72</sup> Miraculously the sisters sneak a Bible into the camp and they conduct nightly religious services for the inmates of their barracks. Although the Nazis are everywhere in the camp, the sisters cannot understand why the Nazi guards are not

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<sup>71</sup>Corrie ten Boom, The Hiding Place, ed., John and Elizabeth Sherrill (New York: Bantam Books, 1974), p. viii. For a reference to a "hiding place" in the Bible, see Isaiah 32:2 (and also Isaiah 28:17).

<sup>72</sup>ten Boom, pp. 198-99. St. Paul's words are from 1 Thessalonians 5:18.

present in the barracks during these services. One day Betsie hears a guard saying that she would never go into those barracks as "that place is crawling with fleas."<sup>73</sup> Corrie now accepts that even fleas have their place in God's plan.

Corrie is the stronger of the two sisters, and Betsie begins wasting away from a combination of starvation and disease. Because Betsie is working too slowly, a Nazi guard slashes her across the chest and neck with a leather crop. Betsie lies dying in the camp hospital and Corrie has to lean down to hear Betsie's voice as she whispers these words:

" . . . must tell people what we have learned here. We must tell them that there is no pit so deep that he is not deeper still. They will listen to us, Corrie, because we have been here."<sup>74</sup>

#### Buddhism

Unlike Old Testament Jews or orthodox Christians, Buddhists have never tried to destroy those who disagreed with their ideas. Historians of Buddhism have noted that no Buddhist ruler has ever fought a "holy" war to kill or convert the unbeliever or ordered the killing of a person over a disagreement in belief. Clearly this is a religion that does not equate the "wrong belief" of others with an external evil that must be extinguished and exterminated. To explore what Buddhists actually do believe about evil, this section will examine the teachings of each of the three main traditions of Buddhism.

Before beginning, it should be noted that Buddhism differs from Judaism or Christianity in that there is not the same divergence between exoteric and esoteric teachings. (Kabbalism and Gnosticism are two of

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<sup>73</sup>ten Boom, p. 209.      <sup>74</sup>ten Boom, p. 217.



the Western religious movements that are often labelled "esoteric"—meaning "taught only to the initiated.") In Buddhism, however, there is often a different emphasis (within the teachings of each tradition) depending upon whether the message is being directed to householders or monks. For householders, the emphasis is upon the law of karma—how wholesome actions will gain merits and unwholesome actions will bring suffering. Accordingly, the proper work of householders is considered to be worldly activities wherein there is the possibility of building up merit through virtuous conduct. But all the oral and written teachings are in agreement that the highest truth can only be realized through renunciation of the rewards of the world and the development of a meditation practice. Accordingly, the work of monks is a self-purification that is designed to culminate in an experience in which any notion of self is seen as a delusion. Once a monk is free of any notion of self, there is no one either to suffer or to receive merit.

### Theravādin

Theravādin is the name given to the Buddhist tradition that developed in India in the centuries following the Buddha's death, and which is today still practiced in Sri Lanka, Burma and Thailand. Thera means "elders" and Theravādin can be translated as "the Way of the Elders." The central goal of these teachings is self-purification:

Him I call a brāhmana who in this world has risen above bondage to both good and evil, who is free from grief, from lust, and from impurity.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup>Dhammapada: The Buddha's Path of Virtue, trans. Upendra Maharathi (Kathmandu, Nepal: The Wisdom Eyed Printworks, 1973), verse 412, p. 101. Although in Hindu society, a "brāhmana" is a member of the highest caste, the Buddhists used the same term to signify an enlightened being.

Virtuous conduct (puñña) that is motivated by desire for worldly benefits is acceptable for a householder, but is viewed as inferior to the monk's renunciation of all desire and passion.

For both householders and monks, Māra--the Lord of Death--plays a central role in the teachings and stories of this tradition. Etymologically the term Māra is related to the Pali "maccu" and the Sanskrit "mr̥tyu," both of which mean "death."<sup>76</sup> Throughout the Pali Canon, Māra is commonly known as Māra pāpimā--which is usually translated as "Māra the Evil One." "Pāpaḥ" originally designated inferior social classes,<sup>77</sup> but it came to mean "all that is essentially miserable and full of suffering."<sup>78</sup> Māra is the Evil One because he brings suffering and destruction to all sentient beings.

Before proceeding, it is important to note that all these words have slightly different connotations in English than in Pali. For instance, "death" in Pali is not simply the event which ends a life, but also means continual death after rebirth. In particular, it is the necessity for remaining in samsāra--the wheel of birth and death--which gives death an aspect of dread.<sup>79</sup> Similarly, although pāpa means "evil" in

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<sup>76</sup>The Sanskrit *mr̥* root also evolved into the English words "murder" and "mortal"; see "Murder," Oxford English Dictionary, Vol VI, p. 770.

<sup>77</sup>James W. Boyd, Satan and Māra: Christian and Buddhist Symbols of Evil (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1975), p. 157, citing Wilhelm Rau, Staat und Gesellschaft im Alten Indien (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1957), pp. 32ff., 61. There is a similarity here to English where words like "common," "base," and "plebeian," which originally referred to the lower social classes, have also acquired "bad" connotations.

<sup>78</sup>Boyd, p. 130; see also pp. 73-74.

<sup>79</sup>ibid., pp. 97-98.

the sense of "the bad,"<sup>80</sup> it has no connotations either of sinfulness or of a force external to the mind. Samsāra is pāpa because it is dukkha ("unsatisfactory and full of suffering") and is inherently inferior to Enlightenment.<sup>81</sup>

According to Buddhist legends, Māra was a constant companion of the Buddha. While the Buddha was still practicing his austerities, Māra had tried to convince him to give up this goal of Enlightenment. Māra says:

What wilt thou gain by this striving? Go and live at home. Thou wilt become a universal king. Perform the great sacrifices . . . (and) when thou diest thou wilt rejoice in heaven and wilt beget great merit.<sup>82</sup>

The Buddha replies that he has no need of merit as his mind is pure of defilement, and eventually proceeds to the Bodhi tree. Māra then begins an assault on the Buddha and tries to make him feel dread and horror and creeping of the flesh:

Then Māra, in his chariot drawn through the air by oxen and horses, conjured up his host, including horses and elephants, and advanced to the Bodhisattva's noble seat. Mounting his chariot drawn by thousands of horses and carrying a dazzling bow, he uttered a fearful cry, "Slay him slay him, quickly seize him."

Terrible hordes of Rākṣasas, with the features of elephants, asses, horses and bulls, armed with clubs surged menacingly against the foe-slaying Bodhisattva.

Some big-bellied snakes rose from the ground and cried, "Slay him, seize him"—a horrible cry of desperation. Others breathed snakes from their mouths, others fire, and others venom. Hordes of Piśācas carrying elephants rushed on foot to the assault.

Some carried mountain-tops as they attacked the Sage. Other hordes of Piśācas rained down from the sky showers of hot embers. Others hovering in the air brandished wheels with blades on their

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<sup>80</sup>This is the "passive" meaning of evil discussed in this dissertation in Chap. 2, p. 7.

<sup>81</sup>Boyd, pp. 158-159.

<sup>82</sup>The Mahāvastu, Vol. II, trans. J. J. Jones in Sacred Books of the Buddhists, Vol. XVIII (London: Luzac & Co., 1952), pp. 224-25; see also 360. This passage is also discussed in Boyd, pp. 365-66.

rims. In the sky was a clash of weapons making a frightful thunderous din.<sup>83</sup>

But the Buddha recognizes all these demons as agents of Māra, and with a hand "soft like cotton to the touch," the Buddha

thrice stroked his head; thrice he stroked his couch, and thrice he stroked the ground. And as he did so, this great earth roared and echoed deeply and terribly . . . And Māra's hosts, magnificent and well-armed as they were, were frightened, terrified, shaken, and dismayed; shuddering with terror they scattered and dispersed.<sup>84</sup>

Māra in one last desperate effort calls forth his three daughters:

Taṅhā (craving), Arati (discontent), and Ragā (passion). They come to display their bodies and use all their powers of enticement to seduce the Buddha. But the Buddha shows no inclination to sense desire (kāma). Then, with his right hand, the Buddha touches the ground but once, and immediately the earth responds by shaking. The Buddha is now "the measure"<sup>85</sup> of the earth and will be forever free of suffering and death.

According to Buddhist legend, the Buddha felt compassion toward Māra all during this battle. In looking at Māra's hosts, the Buddha saw many who had the roots of virtue, and had watched two of Māra's sons desert their father before the attack.<sup>86</sup> Although Māra himself will have to suffer for his unwholesome mind states, he is not condemned to eternal punishment.

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<sup>83</sup>The Mahāvastu, pp. 365-66. The "Rākṣasas" and "Piśācas" were demons who frequently appeared in the epic poems of ancient India.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., p. 264

<sup>85</sup>For a discussion of why the Sanskrit word "pramāṇa" should be translated as "who is the measure of" rather than the usual "bears witness to," see Alex Wayman, "Studies in Yama and Māra," Indo-Iranian Journal, III (1959), pp. 117-18.

<sup>86</sup>The Mahāvastu, pp. 296, 304-10; see also Boyd, pp. 115-16.

Māra's second assault upon the Buddha occurs four weeks after the first. Again Māra comes with his hosts and his three daughters. Although the Buddha is already enlightened, Māra now tries to make the Buddha despair of this world so that he will not preach the dhamma--the truth about the way to liberation. The Buddha experiences a moment of doubt and says these words:

By folk with lust and hate consumed  
 This dhamma is not understood.  
 Leading on against the stream,  
 Deep, subtle, difficult to see, delicate,  
 Unseen 'twill be by passion's slaves  
 Cloaked in the murk of ignorance.<sup>87</sup>

Māra tells the Buddha that since no one will ever listen to his teachings anyway, it would be better for him to leave his body and enter directly into nirvāṇa at this very moment. The Buddha is about to listen, but then he recognizes that this is not his inner voice, but actually the voice of Māra. Again Māra and all his hosts are defeated. The conclusion of the story is that the Buddha is the one "whom Māra at no time could overcome anymore than the winds can overcome the Himalayas . . ." <sup>88</sup>

One of the most intriguing aspects of this legend is that the way the Buddha defeats Māra is not by engaging in actual combat, but just by recognizing him.<sup>89</sup> The reason for the ease of the victory is that it is really an internal battle; once the Buddha is without sense desire,

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<sup>87</sup>Majjhima-Nikāya [The Collection of the Middle Length Sayings], Vol. 1, trans. I. B. Horner (London: Luzac & Co., 1967), §168, p. 212.

<sup>88</sup>The Mahāvastu, p. 228

<sup>89</sup>Notice the similarities to the way Jesus defeats the devils by simply exclaiming: "Be gone, Satan"; quoted previously in this chapter, p. 33.

although his body will die, who he is is now death-free.

Māra means "death" both in its passive sense of "that which dies" and in its active sense of "that which kills." Both forms of Māra are characteristic of samsāra. The five skandhas or personality aggregates (body, feelings, perception, karma-producing activities, and consciousness) are Māra. So are the six faculties (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind), the objects perceived by these faculties, and the consciousness of both the faculty and the object perceived. Although Māra's energies are concentrated in the world of sense desires (Kāmaloka), he also rules the world of archetypes (Rūpaloka) and even the formless worlds that can only be approached in the most advanced state of concentration and meditation (Arūpaloka). All of samsara is therefore none other than the realm of Māra.

Māra rules this Triple World in the form of a deva.<sup>90</sup> For the Buddhists, a deva had great magic, majesty, and splendor, and lived much longer than a mortal. Very seldom are terms such as "darkness" associated with Māra since his body is self-luminous and he does not cast a shadow.<sup>91</sup> His body is not actually made of matter, but purely of mind. Thus Māra can say disdainfully to the Buddha:

Thou art a human being, Recluse, while I am a deva; thou wilt not escape from me. A recluse's body is born of a mother and father, is a heap of boiled rice and sour milk, is subject to rubbing,

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<sup>90</sup>As noted earlier (in Chap. 2, p. 10), deva is the Sanskrit origin of the word "divine." In Buddhism, a deva is superior to a human in the powers and pleasures he enjoys, but inferior in his ability to follow the path of the Buddha.

<sup>91</sup>Boyd, pp. 113-17 and his summary on p. 151. An interesting convergence between Buddhist and Western folklore is that vampires also never cast a shadow.

massaging, sleep, dissolution, disintegration, and destruction; while my body, Recluse, is made of mind (manomayah-kāyo).<sup>92</sup>

There can only be one Māra at a time, but beings succeed each other in holding this position. Since being can only gain the matter-free body of a Māra through great previous virtue, the gulf between a Māra and an enlightened being is not very great. Moggallāna, one of the Buddha's two main disciples and an enlightened being, tells how he was a Māra in a former existence.<sup>93</sup> At that time, after he had killed a monk and assailed a previous Buddha, he had died and been forced to suffer for thousands of years the terrible torments of the Niraya Hell.<sup>94</sup> But once the karma accumulated by his unwholesome actions had been spent, he was given a human birth in this life wherein he could reap the benefits of his great virtue.

T. O. Ling, a scholar of Buddhism, presents evidence that the "demonic" imagery surrounding Māra and his hosts derived from a pre-Buddhist animism that attributed all the ills which people suffered to "wholly external forces."<sup>95</sup> According to Ling, the Buddhist position was the exact opposite of the animists in that the Buddhists viewed the

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<sup>92</sup>The Mahāvastu, pp. 252-53.

<sup>93</sup>The story is told in the Majjhima-Nikāya, §333-38, pp. 396-403.

<sup>94</sup>A scholarly book on Buddhism argues that "hell" in such Buddhist texts is "a creation of one's own mind as a result of egocentric desire and clinging"; it is therefore not an actual place, but a symbol for the suffering of unwholesome mind states; see Daigan and Alicia Matsunaga, The Buddhist Concept of Hell (New York: Philosophical Library, 1972), p. 79.

<sup>95</sup>T. O. Ling, Buddhism and the Mythology of Evil: A Study in Theravāda Buddhism (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1962), p. 26. The Appendix to this book contains summaries and translations of the main references to "Māra the Evil One" in the Pali Canon; see pp. 96-163.

source of suffering as not in outer circumstances, but in how a person responded to those circumstances. But what the Buddhists did was to take the animistic imagery surrounding various "demons" and used this imagery to develop the symbol of "Māra the Evil One." Once freed of its animistic meanings, Māra became "a symbol which connects: a bridge between popular demonology on the one hand, and the abstract terms of the Dhamma on the other."<sup>96</sup> The symbol of Māra was particularly valuable precisely because it had "this range of features, from the picturesque on the one hand to the abstract on the other."<sup>97</sup> A "symbol" to Ling is the representation of a spiritual truth as if it were a thing or a person and is not a matter of doctrine:

. . . the Evil One is only a symbol, an aid; its importance is relative, not absolute. The point may be put in another way by saying the figure of Māra represents an approach to the Dhamma (from animism), but is no part of the Dhamma itself. . . . Māra is to be regarded in whatever way it is most useful to regard him . . . as grossly demonological or a more subtly metaphysical symbol . . . ; he is a doctrinal device, not an item of doctrine.<sup>98</sup>

### Mahāyāna

Mahāyāna Buddhism developed as an elaboration of Theravādin doctrines, and eventually became the most popular form of Buddhism in both China and Japan. Mahāyāna means "greater vehicle" and practitioners of this form of Buddhism considered Theravādin Buddhism to be Hīnayāna or the "lesser vehicle." The founder of the Mahāyāna tradition was Nāgārjuna (ca.113–213 C.E.) who was born an Indian Brahmin

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 77.      <sup>97</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 94. For a further discussion of what Ling means by "symbol," see pp. 68–69.



and whose writing is in Sanskrit.<sup>99</sup>

Nāgārjuna's central teaching was śūnyatā, which means "full solid emptiness." It is believed that śūnya originally derived from the Sanskrit root svi--"to swell"--and śūnya meant "relating to the swollen."<sup>100</sup> The doctrine of śūnyatā asserts that all beings and phenomena lack any self, soul, subsisting entity, or intrinsic nature (svabhāva). This means that although people and things appear on the outside to be real and substantial, they are actually, when known from within, ephemeral and insubstantial. This "emptiness" should not be understood as either "absence" or "annihilation," but rather "empty" in the same sense that zero is nothing:

Zero is both nothing and the possibility of everything. It is definitely not something nihilistically empty, but rather it is dynamic and vital to all manifestations. In the same way, śūnyatā does not mean complete nothingness.<sup>101</sup>

"Emptiness" in this sense means "fullness," as all oppositions and dualities are not in fact separate entities, but are contained within each other. The culminating insight of this way of viewing reality is that samsāra is none other than nirvāṇa.

Along with the doctrine of śūnyatā came a different way of talking about good and evil. For instance, The Vimalakīrti Nirdēśa Sūtra, which was popularized by Nāgārjuna, states:

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<sup>99</sup>Frederick J. Streng, Emptiness: A Study in Religious Meaning (Nashville, New York: Abingdon Press, 1967), p. 28.

<sup>100</sup>Edward Conze, Buddhism: Its Essence and Development (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951), pp. 130-31.

<sup>101</sup>Garma C. C. Chang, The Buddhist Teaching of Totality: The Philosophy of Hwa Yen Buddhism (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1971), pp. 60-61.

The Bodhisattva Puṣya said: "Good and evil are a duality; if neither good nor evil arises so that formlessness is realized to attain Reality, this is initiation into the non-dual Dharma."<sup>102</sup>

The "non-dual Dharma" is that state of being free from all dualities wherein there is no need to affirm or negate anything—everything both "is" and is without "self-nature." "Formlessness is realized" when the enlightened mind no longer affirms "good" nor opposes "evil."

The Mahāyāna texts make the further point that it is only because this world has its apparent evils and defilements that enlightenment is even possible; Mañjuśrī, the head of the bodhisattvas, has this to say about the "morally defiling passions" known as kleśas:

Therefore, we should know that all sorts of kleśa are the seeds of the Tathāgata. This is like one who does not plunge into the ocean and will never find the priceless pearl. Likewise, a man who does not enter the ocean of kleśa will never win the gem of all-knowledge (sarvajña).<sup>103</sup>

### Vajrayāna

Vajrayāna Buddhism refers to a Buddhist tradition that first developed in India and then, after the eighth century C.E., spread to Tibet. Although Vajra is often translated as "diamond," a more exact translation would be "adamantine"—"of impenetrable hardness"—which is even harder than diamond. The key that unleashes the power of the vajra is a still mind. Once the mind is still, an inner force is aroused that is invincible—the result is immediate and instantaneous enlightenment.

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<sup>102</sup>The Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra, trans. and ed. Charles Luk [also known as Lu K'uan Yü] (Berkeley: Shambhala, 1972), p. 93. On the same page in a footnote, Luk explains that Puṣya is the 23rd sign of the Indian lunar Zodiac "under the influence of which the Bodhisattva was born."

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., p. 85. Tathāgata means "the one who has thus come (or thus gone)"; it is a name given to the Buddhas.

Tibetan Buddhists elaborated a world of "demons" far beyond the imagination of any other school of Buddhism. The Tibetan word for "demon," geg, means "hindrance" and refers at the same time "to both the outer hindrances of the external world and the inner hindrances of the mind."<sup>104</sup> All the Tibetan texts make it clear that these "demons" are creations of one's own unwholesome mind states and that they will disappear instantaneously once the mind is still.

In The Tibetan Book of the Dead, which could be more exactly translated from the Tibetan as "Liberation by Hearing on the After-Death Plane,"<sup>105</sup> the Lord of Death is quite fierce and wrathful:

Then . . . the Lord of Death will place round thy neck a rope and drag thee along; he will cut off thy head, extract thy heart, pull out thy intestines, lick up thy brain, drink thy blood, eat thy flesh, and gnaw thy bones; but thou wilt be incapable of dying. Even when the body is hacked to pieces, it will revive again. The repeated hacking will cause intense pain and torture.<sup>106</sup>

At this point in the service, the person undergoing these tortures in the after-death state is given the following directive:

Thy body being a mental body is incapable of dying even though beheaded and quartered. In reality, thy body is of the nature of voidness; thou needst not be afraid. The Lords of Death are thine own hallucinations. . . .

Apart from one's own hallucinations, in reality there are no such things existing outside oneself as Lord of Death, or god, or demon, or the Bull-headed Spirit of Death. Act so as to recognize this.<sup>107</sup>

If the person in the Bardo can quiet her or his mind, she or he may be

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<sup>104</sup>Edwin Bernbaum, "Wrathful Deities," Parabola, 6 (October 1981), 58. This issue of Parabola is devoted to "Demons."

<sup>105</sup>The Tibetan Book of the Dead, trans. and ed. Walter Y. Evans-Wentz (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), "Introduction," p. 2.

<sup>106</sup>*Ibid.*, Book II, Part I: "The Judgment," p. 166.

<sup>107</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 166-67.

able to recognize that all beings and phenomena are "empty"—and at that exact moment the Lord of Death will be vanquished and immediately vanish.

Vajrayāna Buddhists had their own encounter with what some Westerners would call "evil" when the troops of the People's Republic of China invaded Tibet in 1959. Initially the Chinese troops engaged in both the destruction of monasteries and religious books and the imprisonment and/or torture of those lamas they could capture. From his new refuge in India, the Dalai Lama condemned the acts of the Chinese, but never suggested to his people that they should hate the invading soldiers. Informally, Tibetan lamas have acknowledged that the Chinese invasion was destined and that the expulsion of so many lamas from their homeland was what made it possible for the dharma of Vajrayāna Buddhism to come to the West. Lamas have often encouraged their followers to feel compassion towards the Chinese since these invaders must now suffer for their "unwholesome" actions. This cultivation of compassion towards individuals who are committing "evil" actions is consistent with the Vajrayāna worldview that neither good nor evil is ultimately real.

In their belief that "evil" is no more real than saṃsāra, Vajrayāna Buddhism converges with the other two Buddhist traditions. This universal Buddhist attitude toward both evil and saṃsāra is cogently summed up by these verses from the Mahāyāna Buddhist Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramita Sūtra:

Thus shall ye think of all this fleeting world:  
A star at dawn, a bubble in a stream,  
A flash of lightning on a summer cloud,  
A flickering lamp, a phantom, and a dream.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>108</sup>Kenneth Saunders, ed., Lotuses of the Mahāyāna [Wisdom of the East series] (London: John Murray, 1924), p. 11. Although the common name for

### Conclusion

All generalizations comparing traditions that have had millions of followers and spanned thousands of years are fraught with danger. Exactitude is not possible and there are always exceptions. However, if it were necessary to compare the differing approaches to "evil" of these three religions, it might be said that in general Jews have tended to view both good and evil as part of God; Christians have seen a war between a God who is good and a devil who is evil; and Buddhists have neither affirmed nor denied the existence of evil.

However, even more divergent than the differences between Judaism and Christianity are the disagreements within each of these two religions between their exoteric (popular) and esoteric (taught only to the initiated) traditions. Whereas the exoteric traditions have viewed "evil" as an external reality to be feared and fought, the esoteric traditions of Kabbalism and Gnosticism have seen "evil" in the internal difficulties and obstacles which prevent a person from experiencing God.

In Buddhism, where there is not the same divergence between exoteric and esoteric teachings, the emphasis throughout the tradition is that all "evils" and "hells" are the products of an individual's own unwholesome thoughts and actions, and that nothing evil is ultimately real. To the extent that Buddhism does consider evil to have a conditioned reality in this relative world, it converges with Kabbalism and Gnosticism in its turning to the symbols for evil (i.e. Māra) as a way of becoming more aware of unwholesome mind states.

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the text from which this quotation is taken is The Diamond Sūtra, a more exact translation would be "The Cutting Adamantine of Perfect-Wisdom."

CHAPTER FIVE  
THREE MODERN SCHOLARS DISCUSS THE RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN EVIL AND RELIGION

The three scholars discussed in this chapter have each made a significant contribution to an understanding of "evil" in a religious context. Of the three, Rudolf Otto was the only one who did not consider himself a phenomenologist.

Rudolf Otto

Rudolf Otto (1869-1937) coined the word "numinous" from the Latin nūmen--"the divine"--to indicate the felt experience of what is holy. Otto insists that "the numinous" is not amenable to conceptual understanding and "is non-rational, as is the beauty of a musical composition which no less eludes complete conceptual analysis."<sup>1</sup> The "numinous" could thus be defined as that felt experience of the divine which both eludes and transcends a rational and ethical understanding.

In tracing the origin of the "numinous" in humankind's distant past, Otto conjectures:

It first begins to stir in the feeling of "something uncanny," "eerie," or "weird." It is this feeling which, emerging in the

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<sup>1</sup>Rudolf Otto, The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and Its Relation to the Rational, trans. John W. Harvey (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 59. (Hereafter cited as Otto.)

mind of primeval man, forms the starting-point for the entire religious development in history. "Daemons" and "gods" alike spring from this root.<sup>2</sup>

Otto sees the "uncanny" can arise as a fleeting shadow passing into a person's mood or as the awe and dread signified by "creeping flesh."<sup>3</sup> But in both cases, there is a felt experience of a something that is neither natural nor ordinary.

For Otto, there are four main elements in the "numinous." Each may be present by itself or with any combination of the other three. Otto himself only elaborated on the first three and suggested a separate inquiry to explore the fourth. The four are as follows:

Mysterium: Otto begins this chapter with the quotation: "A God comprehended is no God."<sup>4</sup> The mysterium is the felt experience of the "wholly other"--that which is "uncanny" and fills the mind with blank wonder and astonishment.<sup>5</sup> One of its forms is the peace that passeth all understanding "of which tongue can only stammer brokenly."<sup>6</sup>

Tremendum: Otto relates this to the awesomeness and awfulness of the divine. It is of such power and majesty that, once seen, an individual must both shudder and tremble.<sup>7</sup> It takes its awful shape in both the wrath of God and in the mystic's "consuming fire" of love. Otto writes approvingly of the mystic who said, "Love is nothing else than quenched wrath"; like this mystic, Otto considers wrath and love as just two different manifestations of the same energy. Otto concludes that the energy of the tremendum is "a force that knows not stint nor stay, which is urgent, active, compelling, and alive."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Otto, p. 14.

<sup>3</sup>Otto, p. 16.

<sup>4</sup>Otto, p. 25.

<sup>5</sup>Otto, pp. 25-26.

<sup>6</sup>Otto, p. 34.

<sup>7</sup>Otto, p. 17.

<sup>8</sup>Otto, p. 24.

Fascinsum: This is the attracting power of the numinous, and Otto calls it "the Dionysiac element of the numen."<sup>9</sup> For primitive peoples, there was an alluring and entrancing quality in what was dreaded and feared in the "uncanny." For the mystic, the fascinsum is "overabounding" and "exuberant" and "may pass into blissful excitement, rapture, and exaltation."<sup>10</sup> In its highest form, this element of the numinous is the ecstasy of union with God.

Horrendum: After discussing how the divine contains within itself both "goodness and love on the one hand and fury and wrath on the other," Otto includes the following footnote:

The "ferocity" is the origin of Lucifer, in whom the mere potentiality of evil is actualized. It might be said that Lucifer is "fury," . . . the mysterium tremendum cut loose from the other elements and intensified to mysterium horrendum. . . . It is a horror that is in some sort numinous, and we might designate the object of it as the negatively numinous. . . . As such it should be the subject of a special inquiry, which must be an analysis of fundamental feelings . . . <sup>11</sup>

Otto wrote nothing else about the horrendum, but it is this footnote that completes the model of "the numinous." It also provides the insight that "evil"—at least in the Judaeo-Christian traditions—can be a "negatively numinous" mysterium horrendum.

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<sup>9</sup>Otto, p. 31.      <sup>10</sup>Otto pp. 36-37.

<sup>11</sup>Otto, pp. 106-07. Horrendum derives from the Latin word horribilis which means both "terrible" and "dreadful." William Earle's "Some Phenomenological Notes on Horror" explores "a most living feeling" that makes what is horrible "irresistibly fascinating"; the implication of this insight is that the horrendum always has a quality of fascinsum. See Earle's The Autobiographical Consciousness: A Philosophical Inquiry into Existence (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1972), especially pp. 204 and 210.



### Paul Ricoeur

Paul Ricoeur is the first phenomenologist who made "evil" a central concern in his writings. His point of view is that the main obstacle to an understanding of "evil" is a literal interpretation of the myths of good and evil. He believes that Christianity took such a wrong turn with St. Augustine's doctrine of "original sin" which holds that each new-born baby inherits the guilt from Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden. Ricoeur argues that because St. Augustine took Adam as literally one actual person rather than as a symbol for humankind, "the treasure hidden in the Adamic symbol has been squandered."<sup>12</sup>

Before continuing, it will be useful to let Ricoeur define his terms. About "symbol," he writes:

I define "symbol" as any structure of signification in which a direct, primary, literal meaning designates, in addition, another meaning which is indirect, secondary, and figurative and which can be apprehended only through the first. This circumscription of expression with a double meaning properly constitutes the hermeneutic field.<sup>13</sup>

And he continues with this definition of "interpretation":

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<sup>12</sup>Paul Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics, ed. Don Ihde (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974), p. 285. (Hereafter cited as Conflict.) This is the conclusion of an essay entitled "'Original Sin': A study in Meaning," trans. Peter McCormack, pp. 269-86. It should be noted that Ricoeur's critique of the doctrine of "original sin" does not apply to the way this doctrine was interpreted in the Eastern Orthodox Church of the Byzantine Empire. In this Church, the doctrine of "original sin" centered on humankind's tendency to pride and selfishness and there was no implication that these were "inherited." For a discussion of how "sin" is approached in Eastern Orthodox Christianity, see both Father John Meyendorff's Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes (New York: Fordham University Press, 1976), pp. 143-46; and James and Myfanwy Moran's "The Battle for Person in the Heart," Parabola [issue on "Holy War"] 7 (Oct. 1982), 52-59.

<sup>13</sup>Conflict, pp. 12-13. In Ricoeur's version, the entire first sentence is italicized.

Interpretation, we will say, is the work of thought which consists in deciphering the hidden meaning in the apparent meaning, in unfolding the levels of meaning implied in the literal meaning.<sup>14</sup>

From these definitions it is clear that it is only through an "interpretation" that the multiple meanings of a "symbol" can be made apparent.<sup>15</sup> But for Ricoeur, it is not possible to know all the meanings of a symbol. A technical sign can be "translated"--that is, be given an exact meaning; but a symbol, which has inexhaustible depth, must forever remain "opaque."<sup>16</sup> In this set of definitions, to be "literal" is to attempt to "translate" a symbol into a sign. Ricoeur sums up his position by declaring a symbol only "presents its meaning in the opaque transparency of an enigma and not by translation."<sup>17</sup>

Ricoeur's main work on evil, The Symbolism of Evil, grew out of what he saw as a gap in phenomenology in accounting for the "bad" will.<sup>18</sup> Ricoeur did his own research on "evil" by learning to understand the symbols pertaining to it that appeared in the Bible, in the philosophy

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<sup>14</sup>Conflict, p. 13.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid. This point and the previous two definitions appear in the essay "Existence and Hermeneutics," trans. Kathleen McLaughlin, pp. 3-24.

<sup>16</sup>Paul Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, trans. Emerson Buchanan (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 15. (Hereafter cited as Evil.) Carl Jung made the identical distinction between "symbol" and "sign" when he wrote: "A symbol is an indefinite expression with many meanings, pointing to something not easily defined and therefore not fully known. But the sign always has a fixed meaning, because it is a conventional abbreviation for, or a commonly accepted indication of, something known." See his Symbols of Transformation, Vol. 5 in The Collected Works of C. G. Jung, trans. R. F. C. Hull (New York: Pantheon Books, 1956), §180, p. 124.

<sup>17</sup>Evil, p. 16

<sup>18</sup>Paul Ricoeur, "A Response" in "Symposium: Paul Ricoeur and Biblical Hermeneutics," Biblical Research, 24-25 (1979-80), 77.

and religion of ancient Greece, and in various creation myths.

Ricoeur begins his study by defining evil as the "crisis" in "the bond between man and what he considers sacred."<sup>19</sup> Because humankind's consciousness of the sacred is heightened whenever this bond is threatened, "evil is supremely the crucial experience of the sacred."<sup>20</sup> Ricoeur then proceeds to discuss the three layers of the experience of "fault" that appeared consistently in the writings he studied:

Defilement: This is spoken of under the symbol of a stain or blemish that infects from without. Its first appearance among mankind was in the "dread of the impure and rites of purification."<sup>21</sup> The most ancient reaction to this fear of defilement were sexual taboos that regulate the time and place for sexual contact and prohibit both incest and sodomy.<sup>22</sup>

Sin: This is spoken of under the symbol of deviation. The different Old Testament roots of this symbol were "missing the target," "a tortuous road," "stiff-neckedness," and "having gone astray."<sup>23</sup> For the ancient Hebrews, "sin" was the collective experience of the breaking of the bond of the Covenant.

Guilt: This is spoken of under the symbol of accusation and presents itself as a feeling of unworthiness at the core of one's personal being. It has as its basic metaphor "the court of law" that exacts penalties for wrongdoing.<sup>24</sup> "Sin" becomes "guilt" when the experience of fault is no longer collective, but becomes located in the individual's conscience. Whereas sin either is or is not, guilt has

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<sup>19</sup>Ricoeur, Evil, p. 5.      <sup>20</sup>Evil, p. 6.      <sup>21</sup>Evil, p. 25.

<sup>22</sup>Evil, pp. 27-29.      <sup>23</sup>Evil, pp. 72-73.      <sup>24</sup>Evil, p. 108.

degrees.<sup>25</sup> It culminates in a paradox—

namely, the concept of a man who is responsible and captive, or rather a man who is responsible for being captive—in short, the concept of the servile will.<sup>26</sup>

For the Christian, the way to escape the guilt of being "captive" was through St. Paul's teaching that justification is not by "good works" in following the letter of the law, but through faith alone.<sup>27</sup>

For Ricoeur, each of these experiences follows the previous ones in such a way that people of the later historical period re-interpret the old symbols to give them new meaning. To give one example, "sin" today is usually thought of as an individual wrongdoing rather than as an entire people going astray from the correct path. One implication of Ricoeur's historical argument would be that most present day experiences of "evil" would not be expected to be those of defilement (the breaking of a taboo) or sin (a collectivity going astray), but rather would involve guilt (accusations directed against either the self or other individuals).

Ricoeur concludes his work with his own interpretation of the myth of Adam and Eve. Viewing this couple as symbols for man and woman, Ricoeur refuses to call this myth "the fall" since that would imply that there was a previous lost golden age. For Ricoeur, this myth is not literally about particular people or a particular sequence of events, but is about a symbolism of sin that explores the human experience of "deviation" and "going astray."<sup>28</sup> Ricoeur explains the paradisiac nature

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<sup>25</sup>Evil, p. 107.      <sup>26</sup>Evil, p. 101.

<sup>27</sup>Evil, pp. 148-49. For St. Paul's teaching on justification by faith, see Romans 3:28.

<sup>28</sup>Evil, pp. 232-33.

of the Garden of Eden as coming from the insight that evil is "contingent" and not "primordial." But in his view sin is an impossibility without goodness and innocence, and therefore sin and innocence must have arisen at the same instant.<sup>29</sup>

For Ricoeur, the real meaning of "the Adamic myth" is "eschatological"—that the "first Adam" will be followed by a "second Adam," and that "earthly man" will be transformed into "spiritual man."<sup>30</sup> Thus the myth of Adam and Eve implies a "pardon" from sin and an "acquittal" from guilt; Adam is not a person who committed an "original sin," but a symbol for humankind's coming salvation.<sup>31</sup>

James W. Boyd

James Boyd spent many years studying the references to "evil" in Christian and Buddhist texts written between ca.100 B.C.E. and ca.350 C.E. The Christian texts ranged from the New Testament to the Apostolic Fathers and included several of the early Greek Fathers.<sup>32</sup> The Buddhist texts included the Theravādin canonical literature written in Pali and several of the early Mahāyāna sutras written in Sanskrit. Boyd, who considers himself a phenomenologist, tackled this literature from the "hermeneutical position" of "demythologizing" the myths of evil in order

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<sup>29</sup>Evil, p. 251.

<sup>30</sup>Evil, pp. 238 and 272-75. For St. Paul's references to the first and second Adam, see I Corinthians 15:45-49 and Romans 5:12-21.

<sup>31</sup>Evil, pp. 275-278.

<sup>32</sup>James W. Boyd, Satan and Māra: Christian and Buddhist Symbols of Evil (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1975), "Introduction," pp. 1-7. (Hereafter cited as Boyd.) As Boyd did not include any of the Gnostic texts, his conclusions are not applicable to this esoteric tradition.

to uncover their symbolic meaning.<sup>33</sup>

Boyd begins his book by thematizing a vast array of references made to Satan (by Christians) and to Māra (by Buddhists). Compiling his themes in table form, this is a summary of the deeds and activities of these two personifications of evil:<sup>34</sup>

<u>Satan...</u>	<u>Māra...</u>
tempts	inclines toward sense desire
lies and deceives	attacks and confuses
obstructs and torments	obstructs and interrupts
possesses and instigates	possesses and holds in bondage
kills and destroys	kills and destroys

According to Boyd, the most significant difference illustrated by this comparison is in the first comparison. While Satan is quite often the tempter, Māra rarely plays this role; instead, he is interested in encouraging a person's own inclination to sense desire. The difference is between an external and internal source of "disruption."<sup>35</sup> While the Christian term "temptation" connotes an external "enticement to sin," the equivalent Buddhist concept of "inclination" implies the source of desire is the misdirecting of one's own natural instincts.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Boyd, pp. 137-39.

<sup>34</sup>But for several slight modifications to make the comparison more parallel, the different themes in this table appear as chapter subheadings in Boyd, "The Activities of Satan," pp. 19-37 and "The Deeds of Mara," pp. 79-99.

<sup>35</sup>Boyd defines evil as "a disruptive break in the bond between man and what he considers sacred"; he notes Ricoeur's definition of evil as the "crisis" in "the bond between man and what he considers sacred," but prefers the more general term "disruptive break" since it can include both the Buddhist and the Christian experience of evil; see Boyd, p. 145, n.12.

<sup>36</sup>Boyd's argument involves a close comparison of the meanings of the verb "to tempt" in the New Testament--peirazō ( πειράζω ) in the original Greek--with the Pali verb namati, which means "to bend down" or "to incline," but has no implication of an outside cause; see Boyd, p. 82, n.25 and pp. 144-45.

Boyd also points out that although both Satan and Māra are involved in "killing and destroying," the connotations of "death" in the two traditions are both similar and different. The similarity is that for both "death" is not the biological end of life, but the obstruction of an inner spiritual awakening. The difference is that while Satan kills spiritually through destroying faith, Māra's death-dealing is to perpetuate continued life in the realm of the senses.<sup>37</sup>

In his concluding chapter, Boyd discusses three major differences between the two traditions. The first is that he sees the Buddhists have gone much further in "demythologizing." This is indicated by the fact that while not even one Buddhist text held that Māra is a real power external to mankind, many of the Christian writers believed Satan is an actual superhuman being. Boyd sums up this difference by pointing out:

To demythologize Satan, for example, in such a way to conclude that the power of evil in this world is ultimately derived from men themselves, is to change the content as well as the form of the early Christian perspective.<sup>38</sup>

This difference is entwined with a second crucial difference between the two religions—while the Christians viewed evil (ponēros) as external to man, the Buddhists understood all evil (pāpa) as stemming from the internal impurities of the mind. In Boyd's words:

Ponēros, unlike pāpa, was understood by early Christians as a power external and hostile to man and ultimately derived from one source—Satan, the adversary.<sup>39</sup>

Boyd's third and most dramatic conclusion about a difference between the two religions involved a comparison of evil in the two traditions from the perspective of Rudolf Otto's model of the numinous. What he

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<sup>37</sup>Boyd, pp. 35-37 and 96-99.

<sup>38</sup>Boyd, p. 165.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

discovered was that both Satan and Māra have the quality of mysterium (being beyond ordinary experience) and tremendum (being of vast energy and power); but that while Satan's dominant characteristic is horrendum (including horror and revulsion), Māra's is fascinosum (inducing pleasure and attraction). Boyd states the contrast as being between Satan who is a "low" being from the regions of darkness and sin, and Māra who is a "high" being whose home is the realms of light and splendor. For the Buddhist, Māra is the implacable foe not because he makes life so awfully miserable and horrible, but rather because he makes it so mysteriously enticing and delightful. Boyd sums this up by asserting that for the Buddhist

life is not principally experienced as offensive, malignant, and filled with horrendum. Quite the contrary, it is precisely life's fascination that makes it so problematic.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Boyd, p. 165; see also pp. 149-57. The reader should note that the source of Boyd's generalizations is an examination of texts that were all written over 1500 years ago. The researcher's experience of current oral and written Buddhist teachings concerning Māra is that there is now a greater emphasis on his "dark" side--that is, he is usually linked to pain and suffering. However, even if today's Māra has less fascinosum, he still has not developed the horrendum quality of wrathful "fury."



CHAPTER SIX  
PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLANATIONS AND METAPHORS FOR EVIL

O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall  
Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed.

— Gerard Manley Hopkins  
"No worst, there is none" (1885)

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the theories and metaphors surrounding "evil" in the writings of various twentieth century psychologists. Phenomenologists have pointed out the close relationship between psychology and metaphor:

Psychological life understood on its own terms, psychologically rather than scientifically or philosophically, is neither thing nor thought, matter nor mind, fact nor idea . . . It is a metaphor. To appreciate the character of psychological life as psychological requires an eye and a heart for metaphor. To recover the originary metaphorical character of the world is to cultivate a psychological eye and heart.<sup>1</sup>

Each of the psychologists presented here has used metaphors—either more or less intentionally—in expressing his understanding of "evil."

Sigmund Freud

No one who, like me, conjures up the most evil of those half-tamed demons that inhabit the human breast, and seeks to wrestle with them, can expect to come through the struggle unscathed.

— Sigmund Freud<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Robert D. Romanyshyn, "Science and Reality: Metaphors of Experience and Experience as Metaphorical" in Ronald S. Valle and Rolf von Eckartsberg, The Metaphors of Consciousness (New York: Plenum Press, 1981), p. 19. A metaphor is an analogy—the purpose of the "as if" is to reveal an aspect of whatever is being described.

<sup>2</sup>See his "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria" (1905),

In the writings of Freud can be found both his explanations of why many people believe in "the devil" and his own understanding of the source of "evil" in the world.

Freud considers himself a scientist and has no belief in the existence of "the devil."<sup>3</sup> He explains other people's belief in the devil as due to either hostility to the self or hostility to the father. In both cases, the psychic mechanism involved is a splitting, although in the first case it is a splitting of the good-bad polarity in the image of the self and in the second case of the ambivalent attitude toward the father.

When the splitting is in the image of the self, there is a repression of unacceptable self-representations into the unconscious. For Freud, the most common aspect of the self repressed involves the individual's anality:

I am beginning to dream of an extremely primitive devil religion the rites of which continue to be performed secretly.<sup>4</sup>

The "secret rites" referred to are the fantasies of the anal-sadistic stage; once these excremental fantasies are repressed into the unconscious, the adult is forced into the habits of cleanliness, parsimony,

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trans. Alix and James Strachey, Collected Papers, authorized translation under the supervision of Joan Riviere (New York: Basic Books, 1959), Vol III, pp. 131-32. (Hereafter the Collected Papers will be cited as CP.)

<sup>3</sup>Freud proclaimed, "I write for those who believe in psychoanalysis and not in the Devil"; see his "A Neurosis of Demoniactal Possession in the Seventeenth Century" (1922), trans. Edward Glover in CP IV, p. 464. (This essay will be hereafter referred to as "Possession.")

<sup>4</sup>Letter of 24 January 1897 in Sigmund Freud, The Origins of Psychoanalysis: Letters to Wilhelm Fliess, trans. Eric Mosbacher and James Strachey (New York: Basic Books, 1954), p. 189. (Hereafter cited as Origins.)

orderliness, and obstinacy.<sup>5</sup> It is the power of these repressions that creates the devil:

We know that the gold which the devil gives his paramours turns into excrement after his departure, and the devil is most certainly nothing else than the personification of the repressed unconscious instinctual life.<sup>6</sup>

Freud's other explanation for the devil centers around ambivalence toward the father. Freud assumes that originally God and the devil were one being:

It requires no great analytic insight to divine that God and the Devil were originally one and the same, a single figure which was later split into two bearing opposed characteristics. In the prehistoric age of the religions, all those terrifying features which were afterwards merged in the form of his counterpart were still borne by the god himself.<sup>7</sup>

For Freud, this "single figure" is a projection of humankind's experience of a father onto a metaphysical dimension. Only after religious leaders began teaching that God was solely benevolent did there arise a psychological necessity for another figure to represent hostility to the father:

If the benevolent and righteous God is a father-substitute, it is not to be wondered at that the hostile attitude, which leads to

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<sup>5</sup>Sigmund Freud, "Character and Anal Eroticism" (1908) in The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, trans. from the German under the general editorship of James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1953-66), Vol. IX, p. 171. (Hereafter The Standard Edition will be cited as SE.)

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 174. Freud also believed that unless adults can make contact with their childhood fantasies, they will never find satisfaction: "Happiness is the deferred fulfillment of a prehistoric wish. That is why wealth brings so little happiness; money is not an infantile wish." Letter of 16 January 1898, Origins, p. 244.

<sup>7</sup>"Possession," p. 174. An example of this would be Satan's role in the Old Testament as the servant of God; see p. 22 of this dissertation.

hate, fear and accusation against him comes to expression in the figure of Satan.<sup>8</sup>

As many individuals come to see a similarity between their fathers and the devil,<sup>9</sup> they may swing between a desire to defy the devil and a longing to imitate him.<sup>10</sup>

Freud also identifies "evil" in humankind with aggression and cruelty. In a lecture delivered at the University of Vienna during the First World War, he instructed his audience to

think of the colossal brutality, cruelty and mendacity which is now allowed to spread itself over the civilized world. Do you really believe that a handful of unprincipled place hunters and corrupters of men would have succeeded in letting loose all this latent evil, if the millions of their followers were not also guilty? Will you venture, even in these circumstances, to break a lance for the exclusion of evil from the mental constitution of humanity?<sup>11</sup>

In his later writings, Freud locates the source of this aggression in Thanatos or "the death drive."<sup>12</sup> He theorizes that part of the Thanatos

<sup>8</sup>"Possession," p. 451.

<sup>9</sup>A modern Freudian made an empirical study comparing how the same people would talk about both their own father and the devil; she found that often the same images were used to describe both personalities. For instance, one person said the Devil "wants us to be bad, because then we can't be happy"; and then later in the interview said, "The member of my family whom I despise the most is my father, because he never let any of us be happy . . ." See Ana Maria Rizzuto, The Birth of a Living God: A Psychoanalytical Study (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), especially p. 163.

<sup>10</sup>Ernest Jones interprets the folklore and legends surrounding the devil as a reflection of the love-hate relationship between father and child; see his chapter on "The Devil" in On the Nightmare, 2nd ed. (New York: Liveright, 1951), pp. 154-89.

<sup>11</sup>Sigmund Freud, A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis, ed. Joan Riviere (New York: Liveright, 1963), pp. 130-31. A less poetic translation of the same passage can be found in SE XV, p. 146.

<sup>12</sup>Bruno Bettelheim points out that "instinct" is a mistranslation of Freud's use of Treib, and argues that either "drive" or "impulse" would be more accurate. Bettelheim concludes, "In no respect has the rendering

is an innate aggression against the self (masochism); when this drive is pressed into the service of Eros, it becomes extroverted aggression (sadism). The most common social expressions of this sadism are persecutions and wars.<sup>13</sup> Freud offers no solutions and does not expect humankind to discover either lasting peace or permanent gratification. His only slim hope is that a certain few creative individuals may indeed experience a sense of satisfaction through a "sublimation" of their bodily drives:

. . . sublimation is a way out, a way by which the claims of the ego can be met without involving repression.<sup>14</sup>

Freud is aware that "the death drive" is a metaphor or a myth. In "Why War?" Freud's famous letter to Albert Einstein, he refers to "our mythological theory of instincts."<sup>15</sup> In New Introductory Lectures, he writes of the "theory of instincts" as "our mythology," and then continues, "Instincts are mythical entities, magnificent in their indefiniteness."<sup>16</sup>

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of Treib as 'instinct' done more harm to the understanding of psychoanalysis than its use in connection with the 'death instinct.'" See his "Freud and the Soul" in The New Yorker, 1 March 1982, especially p. 89.

<sup>13</sup>For Freud's theories relating "the death drive" to sadism and aggression, see Civilization and Its Discontents (1929), SE XXI, pp. 112-22, particularly Chapter VI; and New Introductory Lectures (1932), SE XXII, pp. 103-07.

<sup>14</sup>CP IV, p. 52. For Freud's discussion of how one individual found fulfillment through sublimation, see his Leonardo da Vinci (1910), SE XI, especially pp. 80-81 and 132-36.

<sup>15</sup>"Why War?" (1932), SE XXII, p. 212. Earlier in the same letter, Freud had asked Einstein: "But does not every science come in the end to a kind of mythology like this? Cannot the same be said to-day of your own Physics?"; *ibid.*, p. 211.

<sup>16</sup>SE XXII, p. 95. For a lucid discussion of Freud's understanding of myth and symbol, see Lillian Feder, Ancient Myth in Modern Poetry (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), pp. 34-48.

Freud is acknowledging that his concept of Thanatos is a way of bringing into consciousness humankind's urge for self-destruction. If, as Freud believes, this impulse is innate to the species, there can be no end to the destructiveness that he considers evil.<sup>17</sup>

Freud's own understanding of the mind located "evil" forces in the unconscious. He wrote to his friend Wilhelm Fliess about his attempt to explore the unconscious:

The big problems are still unsettled. It is an intellectual hell, layer upon layer of it, with everything fitfully gleaming and pulsating; and the outline of Lucifer-Amor coming into sight at the darkest center.<sup>18</sup>

Metaphorically, Freud identified heaven with the super-ego and conscience, and hell with the unconscious and sexuality.<sup>19</sup> Thus in the epigraph to The Interpretation of Dreams, he quoted Virgil: "If the gods above are no use to me, then I'll move hell itself."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Post-Freudians Herbert Marcuse and Norman O. Brown have come to see the possibility of a more hopeful future for humankind in a non-repressive society where it is possible to integrate Eros and Thanatos; see Herbert Marcuse, Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), especially Chapter Eleven: "Eros and Thanatos"; and Norman O. Brown, Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1959), especially Part Three: "Death."

<sup>18</sup>Letter of 10 July 1900, Origins, p. 323. "Amor" is the Roman name for the Greek god Eros.

<sup>19</sup>In an earlier letter to Fliess he proposed this quotation from Goethe's Faust for his chapter on sexuality; "from heaven through the world to hell" (Origins, p. 184). He later used this quotation in connection with the perversions in his "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality" (1905), SE VIII, p. 162.

<sup>20</sup>Electere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo. These words are spoken by Juno, the queen of the gods, in the Aeneid (VII, 312).

Carl G. Jung

When a tree grows up to heaven,  
 its roots reach down to hell.  
 -- Friedrich Nietzsche<sup>21</sup>

More than any of the psychologists discussed in this chapter, Carl Jung had a lifelong concern for understanding the nature of "evil." Not only did Jung use his terms archetype, shadow, and anima to explore the phenomenon of "evil," but facets of the "problem of evil" appeared throughout his writings.<sup>22</sup>

In the Jungian worldview, good and evil are not opposites, but interdependent in a higher unity. One form of this unity is what Jung calls an enantiodromia--a pendulum-swinging psychic law of energy that every "psychological extreme" has a tendency to become its own opposite.<sup>23</sup> As examples of this law, Jung proceeds to cite how

in one version of a fairytale we find God, in another the devil. And how often has it happened in the history of religion that its rites, orgies, and mysteries degenerate into vicious debauches!<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Quoted by Jung in Psychology and Religion: West and East, Vol 11 in The Collected Works of C. G. Jung, trans. R. F. C. Hull (New York: Pantheon Books, 1953-67; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967-79), §791, p. 495. (Hereafter the Collected Works will be cited as CW followed by the volume number; all references will be to both paragraph and page number.)

<sup>22</sup>For an entire book on Jung's ideas about "evil," see Howard Littleton Philp, Jung and the Problem of Evil (London: Rockliff, 1958); this book contains a correspondence where Jung answers challenges and questions put by the author of this book (pp. 5-21 and 209-54).

<sup>23</sup>Symbols of Transformation, CW 5, §581, p. 375. This same principle was well stated by Herakleitos 2500 years ago when he wrote: "To live is to die, to be awake is to sleep, to be young is to be old, for the one flows into the other, and the process is capable of being reversed." See Herakleitos' Fragments in Herakleitos and Diogenes, trans. Guy Davenport (San Francisco: Grey Fox Press, 1981), Fragment 113.

<sup>24</sup>CW 5, §581, p. 376.

Looking at the conflict between good and evil with this law in mind,

Jung writes:

And just as the conscious mind can put the question, "Why is there this frightful conflict between good and evil?," so the unconscious can reply, "Look closer! Each needs the other. The best, just because it is the best, holds the seed of evil, and there is nothing so bad but good can come of it."<sup>25</sup>

For Jung, both good and evil are principles. Since principles have a numinous quality, they cannot be conquered, controlled, or even fully comprehended by the ego;<sup>26</sup> however, they can be experienced, but such an experience is independent of a person's will or choice.<sup>27</sup> Similar in their numinous<sup>28</sup> quality to the principles are the archetypes. Jung defines the archetypes as the ideal and transcendent patterns of the collective unconscious,<sup>28</sup> and sees each as containing both good and evil.<sup>29</sup>

Jung believes that individuals can only feel harmonious with the archetypal dimension after they have shown a willingness to sacrifice

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<sup>25</sup>Two Essays on Analytical Psychology, CW 7, §289, p. 181. The I Ching presents a similar point of view in the hexagram "Darkening of the Light": "The dark power at first held so high a place that it could wound all who were on the side of good and of the light. But in the end it perishes of its own darkness, for evil must fall at the very moment when it has wholly overcome the good, and thus consumed the energy to which it owed its duration." See The I Ching, trans. Richard Wilhelm (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), Hexagram 36, p. 142.

<sup>26</sup>"Good and Evil in Analytical Psychology" (1959) in Civilization in Transition, CW 10, §864, p. 458.

<sup>27</sup>CW 11, §6, p. 7.

<sup>28</sup>For Jung's definition of archetype, see Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, CW 9, Part I, §5-6, pp. 4-5. James Hillman views the archetypes as "metaphors": "Archetypes throw us into an imaginative style of discourse. In fact, it is precisely as metaphors that Jung—who reintroduced the ancient idea of archetype into modern psychology—writes of them, insisting upon their indefinability." See James Hillman, Re-Visioning Psychology (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), p. viii.

<sup>29</sup>CW 10, §474, p. 237.



their instinctual gratification for the good of the Self:

Only through the mystery of self-sacrifice can a man find himself anew.<sup>30</sup>

When a person cannot make this sacrifice, the ego is in danger of being inflated by the archetype, much like Goethe's Faust:

It is a psychological rule that when an archetype has lost its metaphysical hypostasis, it becomes identified with the conscious mind of the individual, which it influences and refashions in its own form. And since an archetype always possesses a certain numinosity, the integration of the numen generally produces an inflation of the subject. It is therefore entirely in accord with psychological expectations that Goethe should dub his Faust a Superman.<sup>31</sup>

But after such an inflation, there must be a deflation and the end result is that

the daemon throws us down, makes us traitors to our ideals and cherished convictions . . . That is an unmitigated catastrophe, because it is an unwilling sacrifice.<sup>32</sup>

The problem of evil from Jung's point of view is whether or not an

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<sup>30</sup>CW 7, §434, p. 260. Marie-Louise von Franz has written about how this sacrifice results in the triumph of the good in fairy tale: "Thus when a redeemed prince or god steps forth from a sacrificed animal in a fairy tale, this symbolizes the sudden disclosure of the spiritual meaning that seems to lie behind the 'rightness' of animal instinct . . . Instinct itself demands to be sacrificed, and in so doing reveals its spiritual aspect. Ego-consciousness is led to renounce what is dearest to it, a renunciation demanded by its greatest inner being, the Self, which is thus manifested in sacrifice. What first appeared as animal instinct and helped in times of difficulty, proves in its profoundest essence to be something human or even divine." See her "The Problem of Evil in Fairy Tales" in *The Curatorium of C. G. Jung Institute, Zurich*, ed., *Evil* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1967), p. 104.

<sup>31</sup>CW 11, §472, p. 315.

<sup>32</sup>CW 5, §553, p. 357. Jung argues that what were once called "demons" in yesteryear could now be usefully looked upon as "psychological complexes" that are "autonomous" from the ego and capable of possessing a person from without. See *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, CW 8, §204, p. 98.

individual has the wisdom to make the right sacrifice.<sup>33</sup>

The shadow<sup>34</sup> is not in itself "evil," but can become so when the anima or animus<sup>35</sup> "possess" an individual. Once an individual is "possessed," those negative qualities that the individual has not previously permitted to enter into his or her consciousness become inflated by the archetypal dimension:

. . . whereas the shadow can be seen through and recognized fairly easily, the anima and animus are much further away from consciousness and in normal circumstances are seldom if ever realized. With a little self-criticism, one can see through the shadow--so far as its nature is personal. But when it appears as an archetype, one encounters the same difficulties as with anima and animus. In other words, it is quite within the bounds of possibility for a man to recognize the relative evil of his nature, but it is a rare and shattering experience for him to gaze into the face of absolute evil.<sup>36</sup>

Jung's point is that whereas the shadow contains "relative evil," only the numinous can be "absolutely evil."

Jung holds that the shadow elements of a religion are given more power when there is an attempt to deny their numinosity. He sees this

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<sup>33</sup>For a discussion of this theme in Jung's writings, see G. Dreifuss, "Sacrifice in Analysis," Journal of Analytical Psychology, 22 (July 1977), 265.

<sup>34</sup>Jung writes: "By shadow I mean the 'negative' side of the personality, the sum of all those unpleasant qualities we like to hide, together with the insufficiently developed functions and the contents of the personal unconscious." CW 7, §103n., p. 65. It would only be a slight simplification of Jung's model to say that the ego consists of the persona (that portion of the psyche with which a person identifies) plus the shadow (those unwanted aspects of the psyche which a person blocks from consciousness for the sake of the ego ideal).

<sup>35</sup>The anima is the archetype which personifies the feminine qualities in a man while the animus is the archetype which personifies the masculine qualities in a woman.

<sup>36</sup>Aion; Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self, CW 9, Part II, §19, p. 10.

as the case in official Christianity where

the Christ symbol lacks wholeness in the modern psychological sense, since it does not include the dark side of things but specifically excludes it in the form of a Luciferian opponent.<sup>37</sup>

According to Jung, the "dark side" of God was first excluded in Origen's doctrine of the privatio boni--that evil is "the mere diminution of the good."<sup>38</sup> Such a denial of God's "evil" side eventually led Christianity into a "splitting of the archetype":

In the empirical self, light and shadow form a paradoxical unity. In the Christian concept, on the other hand, the archetype is hopelessly split into two irreconcilable halves, leading ultimately to a metaphysical dualism--the final separation of the kingdom of heaven from the fiery world of the damned.<sup>39</sup>

Jung's response to this "splitting of the archetype" was to insist that the Trinitarian aspect of God was not complete since wholeness in the unconscious has a four-fold structure:

The Christian deity is one in three persons. The fourth person in the heavenly drama is undoubtedly the devil.<sup>40</sup>

The devil is viewed as being aligned both with the anima and with all that has been repressed and thereby made unconscious. Once the devil is added to the Trinity, the God archetype is again whole.

Towards the end of his life, Jung came to believe that "spirits"

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, s74, p. 41.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* For a discussion of this doctrine in the writings of Origen and St. Augustine, see pp. 36-37 of this dissertation. For a defense of privatio boni by a man who is both an Episcopal priest and a Jungian analyst, see John A. Sanford, Evil: The Shadow Side of Reality (New York: Crossroad, 1981), Chapter Nine: "The Ontology of Evil."

<sup>39</sup> CW 9, Part II, s76, p. 42.

<sup>40</sup> Psychology and Alchemy, CW 12, s192, p. 144. For a further exploration of the devil as part of God, see Roberts Avens, "The Image of the Devil in C. G. Jung's Psychology," Journal of Religion and Health, 16 (July 1977), pp. 216-17.

(including those that are not evil) could not be "explained away" by psychological theories.<sup>41</sup> His interest in exploring such paranormal phenomena as "spirits" influenced his new theory that the archetypes per se are psychoid--that is, unknowable structuring factors "that arrange both psychical and physical events in typical patterns."<sup>42</sup> One form of this patterning is the appearance of "relatively autonomous 'images'"<sup>43</sup> that can be perceived by more than one person at the same time:

The psychoid archetype has a tendency to behave as though it were not localized in one person but were active in the whole environment. . . . Animals and primitives have a particularly fine nose for these things.<sup>44</sup>

From this perspective, "spirits" would be archetypal images whose manifestation into consciousness is governed both by synchronicity (an acausal connecting principle) and the unknowable psychoid archetype.<sup>45</sup>

In giving credence to the parapsychological and synchronistic appearance of "spirits," Jung was breaking a psychoanalytic tradition that had held for over fifty years. Freud and the other founders of psychoanalysis

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<sup>41</sup>When Jung spoke to the British Society for Psychical Research on "The Psychological Foundation of Belief in Spirits" in 1919, he explained "spirits" as unconscious autonomous complexes which are exteriorized projections and concluded, "I see no proof whatever of the existence of real spirits." When he published a new edition of this paper in 1948, he added to this statement the footnote, "I doubt whether an exclusively psychological approach can do justice to the phenomena in question." See CW 8, §600 and 600n., p. 318.

<sup>42</sup>This definition appears in J. Marvin Spiegelberg, "Psychology and the Occult," Spring 1976, pp. 107-108. Jung's lengthiest discussion of the psychoid archetype is in "On the Nature of the Psyche" (1954), CW 8, particularly §419-20, pp. 215-16.

<sup>43</sup>Mysterium Conjunctionis, CW 14, §786, p. 551.

<sup>44</sup>"A Psychological View of Conscience" (1958) in CW 10, §851, pp. 451-52.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., §849, p. 450.

explained visions of demons, devils, and spirits as the hallucinations "projected" by hysterics, neurotics, and psychotics; never did they believe that such "beings" could make an actual appearance in the world.

In his later years Jung came to assume that humankind was possessed by "demons":

It seems to me, frankly, that former ages did not exaggerate, that the spirit has not sloughed off its demonisms, and that mankind, because of its scientific and technological development, has in increasing measure delivered itself over to the danger of possession . . . When shall we stop taking men for granted in this barbarous manner and in all seriousness seek ways and means to exorcize him, to rescue him from possession and unconsciousness, and make this the most vital task of civilization?<sup>46</sup>

Jung suggested that the only way for humankind to exorcise its "demons" was through individuals becoming aware of their wholeness in the Self.

The similarity in world views between Jung and the early Christian Gnostics has been noted by many scholars. When Jung broke away from Freud, he became deeply involved in the Gnostic texts:

We have seen during 1914 to 1920 how Jung was deeply interested in Gnosticism. He hailed the Gnostics as people who did not just believe but knew, and learned from their exploration of the unconscious. Like Jung, they were preoccupied with the problem of evil.<sup>47</sup>

Jung himself tells how the Gnostics were among the first to use the

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<sup>46</sup>"The Phenomenology of the Spirit in Fairytales" (1948) in CW 9, Part 1, §455, pp. 253-54. Another psychotherapist has written, "Is psychotherapy as practiced in the twentieth century a form of exorcism? I think so. In a sense, we are all possessed by demons. If these demons get the better of us, we may develop symptoms, act in disturbed ways, and seek an accepted 'twentieth century exorcist' who goes by the socially sanctioned title of psychotherapist." See Alan Gettis, "Psychotherapy as Exorcism," Journal of Religion and Health, 15 (July 1976), p. 189.

<sup>47</sup>Henri F. Ellenberger, The Discovery of the Unconscious (New York: Basic Books, 1970), p. 719. Another scholar considers Jung to be "the herald and pioneer of a new Gnosis and Gnosticism"; see Stephan A. Hoeller's The Gnostic Jung and the Seven Sermons to the Dead (Wheaton, Illinois: Theosophical Publishing House, 1982), p. 207.

concepts of shadow and archetype.<sup>48</sup> But Jung's greatest resemblance to the Gnostic position is the way he came to regard the God of the Old Testament as an arrogant tyrant:

At the bottom of Yahweh's marriage with Israel is a perfectionist intention which excludes that relatedness we know as "Eros." The lack of Eros, of relationship to values, is painfully apparent in the Book of Job: the paragon of all creation is not a man but a monster!<sup>49</sup>

. . . . .  
The victory of the vanquished and oppressed is obvious: Job stands morally higher than Yahweh. In this respect the creature has surpassed the creator.<sup>50</sup>

Even Jung's conclusion to this essay—that God is in part unconscious and can grow into wholeness and perfection along with humankind—is a variant of the Gnostic viewpoint that spirit is unconscious in matter and that humankind's evolution is an ever-increasing awareness of its own true spiritual nature.

During his life Jung gave many explanations for the existence of "evil"—the unwillingness of the ego to sacrifice instinctual gratification, the splitting of the god archetype, and even possession by demonic spirits. Jung believed that "evil" would only appear to be separate from the "good" after an individual or a society had lost touch with the wholeness of the archetypal and numinous dimensions. Jung's response to "the

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<sup>48</sup>As Jung did his research before the discovery of the Nag Hammadi texts, he could only study the Gnostic teachings through the eyes of the Church Father Irenaeus (ca. 125–202 C.E.) who cited the Gnostic doctrines in order to prove they were heresies. For Jung's comments on the Gnostic doctrine of the umbra (shadow), see CW 9, Part II, §75 and 75n., p. 41 and also CW 9, Part I, §469, p. 262. For the Gnostic meaning of archetypis (archetype), see CW 9, Part I, §5, p. 4.

<sup>49</sup>"Answer to Job" (1952), CW 11, §621, p. 395.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., §640, pp. 404–05.

problem of evil" was to acknowledge that below, above, and beyond all duality there was a oneness that was both indivisible and eternal. Jung accepted that this oneness lay in the Self, and as he himself wrote: ". . . in the self good and evil are indeed closer than identical twins."<sup>51</sup>

### Wilhelm Reich

Homo normalis . . . wants his psychiatrists and biologists to be "aloof," "unemotional," "academic," "removed," so that he can continue to plant the emotional plague into millions of newborn, healthy babies.

— Wilhelm Reich<sup>52</sup>

Towards the end of his life, Wilhelm Reich developed a belief in "the devil":

When I say "devil" I mean exactly the same thing the Christian or the mystic speaks of when he describes "evil." The core of the matter is the deep anxiety in the organism, so-called orgasm anxiety, which keeps man from realizing himself and his aspirations. We know it is the armoring of the human animal that threw it off the path of rational biosocial living.<sup>53</sup>

Reich defines this "orgasm anxiety" as "the TERROR that seizes the armored individual when he comes into contact with his biological core."<sup>54</sup> The "devil" is thus both "the terror" that creates "the character armor" and "the character armor" itself. In an earlier book, Reich describes how anxiety is instrumental in forming the armoring of

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<sup>51</sup>CW 12, §24, p. 21.

<sup>52</sup>See his Character-Analysis, 3rd rev. ed., trans. Theodore P. Wolfe (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1966), p. 462. (Hereafter cited as Character.)

<sup>53</sup>Wilhelm Reich, Ether, God and Devil. Cosmic Superimposition (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1973), p. 132. (Hereafter cited as Devil.)

<sup>54</sup>Devil, p. 133.

"character":

The ego, the exposed part of the personality, under the continued influence of the conflict between libidinal need and threatening outer world, acquires a certain rigidity, a chronic, automatically functioning mode of reaction, that which is called "character." It is as if the affective personality put on an armor, a rigid shell on which the knocks from the outer world as well as the inner demands rebound. The armor makes the individual less sensitive to unpleasure but it also reduces his libidinal and aggressive motility, and, with that, his capacity for pleasure and achievement.<sup>55</sup>

The armor binds both anxiety and aggression. But the frustrated primary and natural needs of "the biological core" still continue to seek for satisfaction and the result is the creation of "secondary" drives:

The conflict between inhibited primary impulse and armor leads to the formation of secondary, antisocial impulses (sadism, etc.). Primary biological impulses break through the armor; in doing so, they are changed into destructive-sadistic impulses.<sup>56</sup>

Reich makes it clear that "the realm of the devil" is among these

"secondary" drives:

. . . the devil is tempting and so easy to follow because it represents the secondary drives that are so accessible. God is so boring and distant because it represents the core of life that has been made inaccessible by the armoring.<sup>57</sup>

Reich discusses two such "evil" secondary drives: sadism and perfectionism. The first, sadism, is a cruelty and brutality to another,<sup>58</sup> whereas the second, perfectionism, is a "compulsive accuracy of mechanistic civilization" that permits no error or uncertainty and thereby destroys

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<sup>55</sup>Character, p. 342.

<sup>56</sup>Character, p. 150. For Reich's understanding of why "the devil" arises in schizophrenia, see the section "The Rational Function of the 'Devilish Evil'," Character, pp. 458-62.

<sup>57</sup>This quotation appears entirely in italics in the original; it is in the chapter "The Realm of the Devil" in Devil, p. 138.

<sup>58</sup>Devil, p. 126.



both flexibility and spontaneity.<sup>59</sup>

Reich, like Freud, sees sadism and aggression as the result of the re-channeling of a primary drive; the difference is that while for Freud the primary drive is self-destructive (Thanatos), for Reich this drive is creative. The metaphor underlying Reich's explanation of "evil" is that of a primary, spontaneous, natural, and flowing biological energy—it is only when this energy is obstructed by "anxiety" or "terror" that the devil enters the world.

Considering that Reich theorized that terror would be the result of any sudden emergence of the biological core in the armored individual, it is not surprising that the revolutionary sexual implications of his theories brought forth persecution from the political authorities. One year before Reich's death, agents of the Federal Drug Administration confiscated the stockpiles of orgonomic literature held at the Orgone Institute in New York. Among the books eventually incinerated were both Character-Analysis and Ether, God and Devil.<sup>60</sup>

#### Erich Fromm

. . . as long as one believes that the evil man wears horns, one will not discover an evil man.

— Erich Fromm<sup>61</sup>

Fromm, who was at one point an enthusiastic supporter of Wilhelm

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<sup>59</sup>Devil, p. 84.

<sup>60</sup>This incident of August 1956 is described in David Boadella's Wilhelm Reich: The Evolution of His Work (New York: Dell, 1975), pp. 325-26.

<sup>61</sup>Italicized in the original in his The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), p. 432. (Hereafter cited as Destructiveness.)

Reich, <sup>62</sup> offers the following explanation for humankind's propensity for destruction:

Destructiveness is the outcome of un-lived life. Those individual and social conditions which make for the blocking of life-furthering energy produce destructiveness which in turn is the source from which the various manifestations of evil spring.<sup>63</sup>

Fromm continues by making a distinction between "primary and secondary potentiality" where "primary" stands for growth under proper conditions and "secondary" for the destructiveness when these conditions are denied.<sup>64</sup>

In his magnum opus on "evil," The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness, Fromm writes from the point of view of "biophilic" ethics:

Biophilia is the passionate love of life and of all that is alive . . .

Biophilic ethics have their own principle of good and evil. Good is all that serves life; evil is all that serves death. Good is reverence for life, all that enhances life, growth, unfolding. Evil is all that stifles life, narrows it down, cuts it into pieces.<sup>65</sup>

From this standpoint, he assumes that "biologically adaptive aggression" that is "defensive and reactive" is not evil; but that "malignant aggression" which is "the specifically human propensity to destroy and to crave for absolute control" is indeed evil.<sup>66</sup>

Fromm proceeds to argue that there is a causal connection between the denial of a person's existential needs and the development of an

<sup>62</sup>For a description of how Fromm greeted Reich upon the latter's arrival in Berlin in 1930 and Fromm's initial enthusiasm about Reich's integration of Marxism and psychoanalysis, see Boadella, p. 94.

<sup>63</sup>Erich Fromm, Man for Himself (New York: Rinehart, 1947), pp. 216-17.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 218. <sup>65</sup>Destructiveness, pp. 365-66.

<sup>66</sup>Destructiveness, p. xvi.

aggressive destructive "character."<sup>67</sup> Within this theoretical framework, Fromm devotes his book to

a detailed discussion of the various forms of character-rooted, malignant aggression, especially of sadism--the passion for unrestricted power over another sentient being--and necrophilia--the passion to destroy life and the attraction to all that is dead, decaying, and purely mechanical.<sup>68</sup>

In the latter part of the book are several "clinical cases" showing the formation of "sadistic" and "necrophiliac" character traits in various "evil" men who became leaders of totalitarian states.

As can be seen, Fromm accepts Reich's metaphor of a free flowing primary nature and similarly views "evil" as a "second nature" created by anxiety. He differs from Reich in not giving emphasis to the sexual nature of this anxiety, and in a different assessment of the prevalence of "destructive" characters. Whereas Reich viewed the "normal" person in modern Western society as having "sadistic" and "perfectionistic" drives, Fromm sees "sadism" and "necrophilia" as "abnormal" passions.

Fromm's model differs from all the other psychological theories presented in this chapter in that for him "evil" is seen as inherent only in the "abnormal" and not in the "normal" psyche. Fromm estimates that these destructive "abnormal" people--whom he labels "evil"--make up only "ten percent of the population," but can be "very dangerous if they attain influence and power."<sup>69</sup> He further warns that they are not easily recognizable since they don't "wear horns" and often mask themselves under the cloak of goodness.<sup>70</sup> His implication is that the "normal"

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<sup>67</sup>In a definition reminiscent of Reich, Fromm defines "character" as "the human substitute for the missing animal instincts; it is man's second nature" (Destructiveness, pp. 226-27).

<sup>68</sup>Destructiveness, p. 6.      <sup>69</sup>Destructiveness, p. 432.      <sup>70</sup>*Ibid.*

majority who do not have "sadistic" or "necrophiliac" character structures would oppose these "abnormal" individuals if they understood their intent.

One challenge to Fromm's model comes from those social scientists who argue that many destructive acts are done by individuals who are otherwise perfectly "normal." For instance, Hannah Arendt says about Adolf Eichmann:<sup>71</sup>

The trouble with Eichmann was precisely that so many were like him, and that the many were neither perverted nor sadistic, that they were, and still are, terrifyingly normal.<sup>72</sup>

Arendt's point is that although Eichmann participated in "destructiveness," in every other way he was "normal." Other social scientists have shown "normal" individuals will usually act with cruelty rather than disobey an authority figure; one study coming to this conclusion demonstrated that most "normal" people were willing to give potentially lethal doses of electric shocks rather than disobey an experimenter. Stanley Milgram, the designer of this experiment, wrote:

After witnessing hundreds of ordinary persons submit to the authority in our experiments, I must conclude that Arendt's conception of the banality of evil comes closer to the truth than one might dare imagine. The ordinary person who shocked the victim did so out of

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<sup>71</sup>Eichmann, the Nazi official in charge of transporting Jews to the gas chambers, called himself "a little cog in the machinery" and "a man of average character." There is no evidence that he ever killed anyone personally and he often claimed to have been repelled by the murders he was forced to witness. He concluded his life story by writing: "But to sum it all up, I must say I regret nothing . . . I must say truthfully that if we killed all the 10 million Jews that Himmler's statisticians originally listed in 1933, I would say, 'Good, we have destroyed an enemy.'" These reflections were published while Eichmann was waiting to stand trial in Jerusalem; see "Eichmann Tells His Own Damning Story," Life, 28 November 1960, p. 21 and 5 December 1960, p. 161.

<sup>72</sup>Hannah Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil (New York: Viking, 1965), p. 276.

a sense of obligation, a conception of his duties as a subject, and not from any peculiar aggressive tendencies.<sup>73</sup>

Such findings suggest that a majority of the population may be secretly, passively, or even vicariously intent on "destruction."<sup>74</sup> If no clear demarcation can be made between the "destructiveness" of the normal and the abnormal, this would suggest that the potentiality to do "evil" is not limited to a small "abnormal" portion of the population.

#### Rollo May

If my devils are to leave me,  
my angels may take flight as well,  
— Rainer Maria Rilke<sup>75</sup>

Rollo May regularly attended the courses of Paul Tillich at Union Theological Seminary in New York City in the late 1930's.<sup>76</sup> These were the years in which Tillich emphasized the power of the demonic—a

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<sup>73</sup>Stanley Milgram, "The Compulsion to Do Evil," Patterns of Prejudice [London], 1 (November 1967), 5. For a complete description of Milgram's experiment, see his Obedience to Authority (New York: Harper & Row, 1974). In an alternative interpretation of the Milgram experiment, Fromm found it encouraging that when the subjects who behaved cruelly were told the nature of the experiment, most reacted with horror and pangs of conscience; see Destructiveness, pp. 47-52.

<sup>74</sup>Since Fromm only discusses totalitarian dictatorships, he does not address the question of how in some revolutions the majority of the population may be "destructive" and yet the outcome may be "creative." For instance, are the actors in the French Revolution of 1789 to be seen as purely "destructive"? It is certain that this revolution attracted individuals whom Fromm would consider sadistic (for example, the Marquis de Sade), but yet it could be argued that the result of destroying the old order was to unleash a flood of creativity in the arts, sciences, and government.

<sup>75</sup>Rilke wrote this after discontinuing psychotherapy once he learned the goals to which it aspired; Letter 74, Briefe aus den Jahren 1907 bis 1914; quoted by Rollo May in Love and Will (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969), p. 122. (Hereafter Love and Will will be cited as Love.)

<sup>76</sup>For more details of their relationship, see Clement Reeves, The Psychology of Rollo May (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1977), pp. 252-53.

concept he defined as meaning "disintegrating," "destructive," "satanic," and "evil."<sup>77</sup> In his early writings, May used the adjective demonic with the same meaning as Tillich, but then in Love and Will May introduced the new concept of the daimonic:

The daimonic is any natural function which has the power to take over the whole person. Sex and eros, anger and rage, and the craving for power are examples. The daimonic can be either creative or destructive and is normally both. When this power goes awry and one element usurps control over the total personality, we have "daimon possession," the traditional name throughout history for psychosis.<sup>78</sup>

May relates that he derived his concept from the ancient Greek word daimon which unambiguously includes "the divine as well as the diabolical,"<sup>79</sup> and he notes its etymological connection to "genius":

The daimon gives individual guidance in particular situations. The daimonic was translated into Latin as genii (or jinni). This is a concept in Roman religion from which our word "genius" comes and which originally meant a tutelary deity, a spirit presiding over the destiny of a person . . .<sup>80</sup>

May points out the connection between the daimonic and the Freudian concept of eros:

"Eros is a daimon," said Diotima, the authority on love among Plato's banqueting friends. The daimonic is correlated with eros rather than libido or sex as such. Anthony presumably had all his sexual needs well taken care of by concubines . . . But the daimonic power that seized him in his meeting with Cleopatra was a very different thing. When Freud introduced eros as the opposite and adversary of libido, i.e. as the force which stood against the death instinct and fought for life, he was using it in this way which includes the daimonic. The daimonic fights against death,

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<sup>77</sup>For a discussion in this dissertation of Tillich's concept of the demonic, see p. 40.

<sup>78</sup>Love, p. 123.      <sup>79</sup>Ibid.

<sup>80</sup>Love, p. 125. A "tutelary deity" is a god who offers protection and serves as a guardian. For a discussion of daimon as "genius," see p. 9 of this dissertation.

fights always to assert its own vitality, accepts no "three-score and ten" or other timetable of life . . . <sup>81</sup>

While the daimonic has the potential for disintegration, it can be a force for transformation if its energy can be integrated. May notes that diabolos means "to tear apart" and continues:

Now it is fascinating to note that this diabolic is the antonym to "symbolic." The latter comes from sym-bollein, and means "to throw together," to unite. There lie in these words tremendous implications with respect to the ontology of good and evil. The symbolic is that which draws together, ties, integrates the individual in himself and with his group; the diabolic, in contrast, is that which disintegrates and tears apart. Both of these are present in the daimonic.<sup>82</sup>

May's view is that "evil" is that which "disintegrates" while "the good" is that which "integrates." If the daimonic is feared and not brought forth into consciousness, then the result is "evil":

When the daimonic is repressed, it tends to erupt in some form--its extreme forms being assassination, the psychopathological tortures of the murders on the moors and other horrors we know only

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<sup>81</sup>Love, p. 127. May's contention that eros and libido are "adversaries" in Freud's model calls for comment. When Freud introduced the concept of eros in Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1920), he viewed eros as an expression of the sexual drives or libido; only later in Civilization and Its Discontents (1929) did he note how eros--which seeks to bind individuals in ever larger groups--would inevitably impose sacrifices upon an individual's sexual impulses. Contrary to May's assertion, Freud never (1) considered eros and libido to be "adversaries" or (2) suggested that libido was an expression of thanatos. May's reason for his revision of the Freudian model is founded on Freud's speculation that the reduction of tension through total sexual satisfaction could lead to homeostasis, one of the three elements of thanatos. This speculation was one of the reasons Freud himself abandoned a theory of drives that was founded on the mechanistic reduction of tension (the purpose of libido) and proposed a new theory that interpreted drives as having a vitalistic historical-directional purpose (eros and thanatos). For a lucid discussion of how Freud related libido to both eros and thanatos, see Frank J. Sulloway, Freud, Biologist of the Mind: Beyond the Psychoanalytic Legend (New York: Basic Books, 1979), Chapter 11: "Life and Death Instincts." For the full statement of May's position, see his section "Freud and Eros" in Love, pp. 81-88.

<sup>82</sup>Love, p. 138.

too well in this century.<sup>83</sup>

If the daimonic can be integrated, it is possible for the individual to experience her or his own unique "genius."

Clement Reeves, who devoted a book to evaluating May's contribution to psychology, claims that in May's writings the concepts of the daimonic and eros are not clearly distinguished. To Reeves, the daimonic "appears greatly to resemble Eros in that both are held to be creative--destructive, vital, self-assertive urges toward union and self-fulfillment."<sup>84</sup> May replies to this criticism (in his own chapter at the end of Reeve's book) by asserting that the daimonic includes activities other than eros and that only "some of eros is the daimonic."<sup>85</sup> As part of this response, May presents his clearest summary of what he means by daimonic:

I use the term the daimonic as a noun to include these many aspects of evil. It refers to any capacity which has the power to push the individual into disintegrative behavior, such as sex, rage, power needs, and so on. When the daimonic is used integratively, it produces creativity. But whether it is used disintegratively or creatively, the daimonic

- (1) is powerful,
- (2) is dynamic,
- (3) changes the status of the person and what he creates,
- (4) involves some choice on the part of the individual.<sup>86</sup>

This concept of the daimonic differs most from the ancient Greek notion of the daimon in its fourth aspect; for the Greeks, the daimon was linked to "fate" and if there was any "choice," the choosing was done by the gods and not by the individual.<sup>87</sup> May's own belief is that while

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<sup>83</sup>Love, p. 129.      <sup>84</sup>Reeves, p. 137.

<sup>85</sup>Rollo May, "Reflections and Commentary" in Reeves, p. 306.

<sup>86</sup>ibid., p. 305. The numbered sequence is not listed in this format in the original quotation.

<sup>87</sup>Daimon as "fate" is discussed on p. 9 of this dissertation.



the daimonic enters an individual's life as "fate," that person can then choose how to "channel" this energy:

The daimonic needs to be directed and channeled. Here is where human consciousness becomes so important. We initially experience the daimonic as a blind push. It is impersonal in the sense that it makes us nature's tool. . . . But consciousness can integrate the daimonic, make it personal. This is the purpose of psychotherapy.<sup>88</sup>

The metaphor underlying May's concept of the daimonic is of a powerful fire that (when it blazes within an individual) can create either the agonizing torments of the "damned" or the holy inspiration of "genius."

Otto Rank, Ernest Becker, Norman O. Brown, and Ken Wilber

. . . for the time being I gave up writing—there is already too much truth in the world—an over-production which apparently cannot be consumed!

— Otto Rank<sup>89</sup>

Several psychologists—after noting that humankind in previous ages attempted to gain immortality through sacrificial rites—use the metaphor of the substitute sacrifice as their explanation of "evil" in the modern world. While sacrifice originally meant "to make sacred,"<sup>90</sup> the substitute sacrifice is one that has lost all connection to the realms of the sacred. The purpose of this section is to trace the evolution of the idea of the substitute sacrifice from its origin in Otto Rank to its eventual emergence in the evolutionary scheme of Ken Wilber.

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<sup>88</sup>Love, p. 126.

<sup>89</sup>Letter of 8 February 1933 in Jessie Taft, Otto Rank (New York: Julian Press, 1958), p. 175.

<sup>90</sup>Sacrifice is a fusion of the Latin words sacer (sacred) and facere (to make); see "sacrifice" in Rev. Walter W. Skeat An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 530-31.

For Otto Rank, humankind's main striving is the will to immortality. When individuals do not know how to experience their immortality through their own creativity in the here and now, they begin to search for eternal values in man-made ideologies that promise perfection. Since these "man-made ideologies" are powerless to offer immortality, they do not actually lessen the fear of death. It is then this fear of death that leads individuals to make substitute sacrifices:

The death fear of the ego is lessened by the killing, the sacrifice, of the other; through the death of the other, one buys oneself free from the penalty of dying, of being killed.<sup>91</sup>  
 . . . . .

The killing does not need to be actual, it can occur symbolically as for example in the withdrawal of love or in the desertion of a person; it can also ensue partially instead of totally, a slow murder, as it were, through constant tormenting.<sup>92</sup>

According to Rank, this offering of another's life "to buy off" one's own death is the source of aggression and war. Eventually humankind arrives at the point where there is only confusion about what is profane and what is sacred:

All our human problems, with their intolerable sufferings, arise from man's ceaseless attempts to make this material world into a man-made reality . . . aiming to achieve on earth a "perfection" which is only to be found in the beyond . . . thereby hopelessly confusing the values of both spheres.<sup>93</sup>

The final irony is that, amidst this confusion, people have lost touch with their own artistic and imaginative capabilities which are beckoning to offer them an authentic experience of immortality.

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<sup>91</sup>Otto Rank, Will Therapy, trans. Jessie Taft (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), p. 130.

<sup>92</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 131.

<sup>93</sup>This quotation was formed by fusing ideas from two consecutive paragraphs in Otto Rank's Beyond Psychology (New York: Dover, 1958), pp. 58-59.

Ernest Becker is often called a popularizer of the theories of Otto Rank. However, it would be more accurate to say that while Becker ignores Rank's faith that immortality could be experienced through creativity, he focuses on the negative results of "the death fear." While Becker was dying of cancer, he wrote:

. . . the idea of death, the fear of it, haunts the human animal like nothing else; it is a mainspring of human activity—activity designed largely to avoid the fatality of death, to overcome it by denying in some way that is the final destiny for man.<sup>94</sup>

He proceeded to develop the idea that the main way that humankind tries to deny death is through a belief in cultural symbols and hero systems. In his last book, which was published after his death, his purpose was more ambitious:

In this book I attempt to show that man's natural and inevitable urge to deny mortality and achieve a heroic self-image are the root causes of human evil.<sup>95</sup>

He distinguishes his position from that of Erich Fromm by seeing the source of "evil" not in particular character systems, but in humankind's urge to escape from death:

Erich Fromm was wrong to argue that psychically crippled people, what he calls "necrophiliac characters," do evil things by valuing death over life and so lay waste to life because it makes them uncomfortable. Life makes whole nations of normal people uncomfortable.<sup>96</sup>

For Becker, it is the "normal" person who—through striving for "the lie" of immortality—creates a society dedicated to aggression and

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<sup>94</sup>Ernest Becker, The Denial of Death (New York: Free Press, 1973), Preface, p. ix.

<sup>95</sup>Ernest Becker, Escape from Evil (New York: Free Press, 1975), Preface, p. xvii.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., p. 160.

destruction.

For Norman O. Brown, the belief systems of both traditional and modern societies encourage humankind to sacrifice play and joy in the present moment for the promise of eternal freedom from death. But such belief systems could only prevail because of an all-pervading fear of death. While in traditional societies this "flight from death" led people to value objects symbolizing God—what Brown calls "the religious complex," in modern societies the quest for immortality takes the form of what Brown names "the money complex":

. . . the essence of the Protestant (or capitalist) era is that the power over this world has passed from God to God's negation, God's ape, the Devil. And already Luther has seen in money the essence of the secular, and therefore of the demonic. The money complex is the demonic, and the demonic is God's ape; the money complex is therefore the heir to and substitute for the religious complex, an attempt to find God in things.<sup>97</sup>

While under the sway of "the religious complex," humankind searched for immortality through relics and pyramids; now, under the influence of "the money complex," the modern way to escape death is through the cherishing of money and the collecting of possessions.

Ken Wilber includes the notion of substitute sacrifices in his theory of human development. Wilber contends that human history is a movement toward Atman—oneness in God—and that this movement takes place in stages. Within this progression of stages, he sees two dangers for the individual. The first is getting stuck in the gratifications of a certain stage; this is called "fusion" and is viewed as resulting from the incapacity to surrender or transform eros. The second danger is repressing those drives that are unacceptable to the conscience; this is

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<sup>97</sup>Brown, p. 240.

viewed as resulting from excessive thanatos and leads to what he terms "dissociation"—meaning that the drives in question are cut off from the rest of the personality.<sup>98</sup> In this developmental model, the substitute sacrifices are linked to the second danger:

Instead of differentiation, transcendence, and integration, there occurred dissociation, fixation, and repression. . . . Dissociation is basically a substitute sacrifice. That is, instead of accepting the proper death of the particular previous stage, the individual offers up portions of himself as substitute sacrifices.<sup>99</sup>

The "portions" of the psyche that an individual "offers up" are most commonly what Jung called the shadow—all that is not acceptable to the ego-ideal. But, in addition to repressing the shadow, individuals are often drawn to make substitute sacrifices on a social level and, according to Wilber, this is the source of persecution, exploitation, and war.

In Wilber's model, while the motive force of history is the quest for Atman, the substitute sacrifices are part of what is called the Atman project. An Atman project is a substitute gratification which replaces the ultimate experience of Self as Atman:

. . . all a person wants is Atman; all he finds are symbolic substitutes for it. This attempt to regain Atman consciousness in ways or under conditions that prevent it and force symbolic substitutes—this is the Atman-project.<sup>100</sup>

Atman projects involve not only the substitute sacrifices (repressions) of thanatos, but also the substitute seeking (addictions) of eros.

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<sup>98</sup>For a discussion of "fusion and "dissociation," see the section on "Fusion, Differentiation, and Dissociation" in Ken Wilber, The Atman Project: A Transpersonal View of Human Development (Wheaton, Illinois: Theosophical Publishing House, 1980), pp. 130-32. (Hereafter The Atman Project will be cited as Atman.)

<sup>99</sup>Atman, p. 140.

<sup>100</sup>Atman, p. 103.

Wilber credits Rank, Becker, and Brown<sup>101</sup> as being influential in the formulation of his evolutionary model.<sup>102</sup> His only disagreement is with Becker. Although he praises Becker's insight that "consciousness of death is the primary repression, not sexuality,"<sup>103</sup> he argues that Becker ignores how the substitute sacrifices are part of a heroic quest for God:

. . . Becker sees the Atman project very clearly, but leaves out Atman.<sup>104</sup>

While for Becker all substitute sacrifices are simply delusions and lies, Wilber views them as intermediate substitutes for Atman that are partially lies, but also have an element of "truth." The "truth" is that all individuals are involved in a heroic quest for infinity, eternity, and Self-realization.<sup>105</sup>

In the last chapter of Up From Eden, Wilber suggests two ways that humankind can be free of the destructive potential inherent in the Atman

<sup>101</sup>About Brown, Wilber comments: "Money as the new immortality symbol—this is precisely the insight that energized Norman O. Brown's penetrating analysis of history, an analysis that disclosed the very blood of civilization to be money as death denial (what we would call the negative wing of Atman project)." The "negative wing" is that of substitute sacrifice while the "positive wing" is motivated by substitute seeking. See Ken Wilber, Up From Eden: Transpersonal Views of Human Evolution (Garden city: Doubleday, 1981), p. 98. (Hereafter cited as Eden.)

<sup>102</sup>Discussing the "untold inhumanities and cruelties" of humankind's striving for immortality, Wilber writes: "We would arrive at the same conclusion if we started with the whole approach of Rank, Brown, and Becker—that evil—and-anguish is the result of trying to radically deny death through fetishizing immortality symbols, that 'men are truly sorry creatures because they have made death conscious,' and that in trying to avoid death and mortality, they have historically brought more evil, more destruction, and more anguish than could the Devil himself incarnate" (Eden, pp. 336-37).

<sup>103</sup>Atman, pp. 105-06.    <sup>104</sup>Eden, p. 98.    <sup>105</sup>Atman, p. 121.

project. Both of these "ways out" assume that "evil" is not biologically innate:

The repression of one's Buddha nature creates evil . . . If men and women are instinctively evil, then there would be no hope, whereas if they are substitutively evil, we have two choices: offer actual transcendence, or offer benign substitutes.<sup>106</sup>

Offering "benign substitutes" means finding atman projects that are beneficial both to the individual and to the community; Wilber gives as an example how in certain hunting groups a person became "a big Hero" by catching more game than anyone else and then giving it away.<sup>107</sup> The other choice, "actual transcendence" (the experience of Atman) is only possible as a person lets go of the ego boundaries that create desire, worry, anxiety, and fear:

And that . . . is accomplished only by prajna, or transcendent insight into sunyata, the seamless coat of the Universe, which is nothing other than Atman, one's own true Self, the Dharmakaya.<sup>108</sup>

### Conclusion

In looking for common themes among these nine diverse psychologists, five clusters of meaning may be distinguished:

- a) sadism and destructiveness (particularly Freud, Reich, Fromm, and Becker, but also Jung, May, Rank, Brown, and Wilber)
- b) the wrong or substitute sacrifice (Jung, Rank, Becker, Brown, and Wilber)
- c) possession by demons or the daimonic (Jung and May)
- d) the ultimate unity of demonic/daimonic forces and God (Jung and May)
- e) no evil from the vantage point of actual transcendence (Wilber)

Clearly only the first is an issue for all. (For instance, Fromm does not even mention the latter four clusters.) Although some make the theme of cruel and sadistic behavior their central focus and others keep

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<sup>106</sup>Eden, p. 335.      <sup>107</sup>ibid.      <sup>108</sup>Eden, p. 336.

this theme in the background, the assumption underlying all these writings is that there is a connection between "destructiveness" and "evil."

In their understandings of "destructiveness," they have many disagreements. Concerning its cause, some maintain it derives from innate drives (Freud) while others contend it is a product of social conditioning (Reich and Fromm). Similarly they foresee no common solution to overcome humankind's destructive tendencies. While some are bleakly pessimistic (Freud), others suggest that destructive urges will be lessened and transcended during humankind's evolution (Jung and Wilber).

The only other common assumption of all these theorists is that the cause of the difference between "good" and "evil" people cannot be accounted for by a difference that is inherent in the individual at birth. Even Erich Fromm, who limits evil to "abnormal" people, assumes that no one is born this way and that any person deprived of his or her existential needs might become similarly "destructive." Whereas such Christians as Martin Luther held that each person is born either "saved" or "damned," all of these psychologists see the evil "urge to destroy" as a possibility and potentiality in each and every person.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE EXPERIENCE OF EVIL IN LITERATURE

The Lord who prophesies at Delphoi neither speaks clearly nor hides his meaning completely; he gives one symbols instead.

— Herakleitos, Fragment 18

This chapter presents the perspectives of three writers who made the experience of "evil" central to their stories, poems, or allegories. Since a metaphorical language was an integral part of each of their communications, a solely logical or rational exposition of their main ideas cannot convey the power of their insights.<sup>1</sup>

#### Marquis de Sade

No aphrodisiac is so potent  
as the defiance of Good.

— Simone de Beauvoir<sup>2</sup>

The Marquis Donatien-Alphonse-François de Sade (1740-1814) was considered by many of his contemporaries to be an "evil" man. Imprisoned and eventually sent to an insane asylum both for his sexual habits and his writings, his very name became the root of "sadism."

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<sup>1</sup>In order to present these writers in their own words without weighing down the main text with quotations, some of their quotations have been placed in the footnotes.

<sup>2</sup>In her "Must We Burn Sade?" trans. Annette Michelson, p. 28. This essay serves as part of the critical introduction to The 120 Days of Sodom and Other Writings.

Most of the characters in the Marquis' novels are obsessed by the desire to do evil. In The 120 Days of Sodom, written in 1785 while the Marquis was imprisoned in the Bastille, four pillars of society—a Duc, a bishop, a banker, and a President—have kidnapped eight young boys and eight young girls in order to pleasure themselves with the bodies of their victims. The Duc tells his captives:

"Give a thought to your circumstances, think what you are, what we are, and may these reflections cause you to quake—you are beyond the borders of France in the depths of an uninhabitable forest, high amongst naked mountains; the paths that brought you here were destroyed behind you as you advanced along them. You are enclosed in an impregnable citadel; no one on earth knows you are here, you are beyond the reach of your friends, of your kin; insofar as the world is concerned, you are already dead . . ." <sup>3</sup>

Eventually each of the sixteen children is tortured and then murdered—each in a unique and special way. But before moving to this gruesome sacrificial finale, the pillars of society discuss their philosophies while, at the same time, they are engaging in a variety of sexual perversions.<sup>4</sup> In the following dialogue, Zéphyr, one of the kidnapped young boys, is being fondled by the Duc while the banker is expounding:

". . . my prick positively jumps when I do evil, in evil I discover precisely what is needed to stimulate in me all of pleasure's sensations, and I perform evil for that reason, for it alone, without any ulterior motive."

"Upon my soul," declared the Président, "I own I fancy nothing better than that taste. When I was in Parliament I must have voted

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<sup>3</sup>Marquis de Sade, The 120 Days of Sodom and Other Writings (New York: Grove Press, 1966), pp. 249-50. (Hereafter cited as Sodom.)

<sup>4</sup>Simone de Beauvoir notes about these philosophical dialogues: "The male aggression of the Sadean hero is never softened by the usual transformation of the body into flesh. He never for an instant loses himself in his animal nature; he remains so lucid, so cerebral, that philosophic discourse, far from dampening his ardor, acts as an aphrodisiac. We see how desire and pleasure explode into furious crisis in the cold, tense body, impregnable to all enchantment. They do not constitute a living experience . . ." See her "Must We Burn Sade?" p. 21.

at least a hundred times to have some poor devil hanged; they were all innocent, you know, and I would never indulge in that little injustice without experiencing, deep within me, a most voluptuous titillation: no more was needed to inflame my balls, nothing used to heat them more certainly. You can imagine what I felt when I did worse."

"It is certain," said the Duc, whose brain was beginning to warm as he fingered Zéphyr, "that crime has sufficient charm of itself to ignite all the senses . . . The man who is addressing you at this very instant has owed spasms to stealing, murdering, committing arson, and he is perfectly sure that it is not the object of libertine intention which fires us, but the idea of evil, and that consequently it is thanks only to evil and only in the name of evil one stiffens . . ."

"There are," said [Président] Curval, "but two or three crimes to perform in this world, and they, once done, there's no more to be said; all the rest is inferior, you cease any longer to feel. Ah, how many times, by God, have I not longed to be able to assail the sun, snatch it out of the universe, make a general darkness, or use that star to burn the world! Oh, that would be a crime, oh yes, and not a little misdemeanor such as are the ones we perform who are limited in a whole year's time to metamorphosing a dozen creatures into lumps of clay."<sup>5</sup>

In this discussion it is clear that all the speakers are dependent upon the moral code of the Judaeo-Christian tradition in defining what is "evil" and that their very pleasure in their perversions rests upon defying this code. What is original in de Sade is not his definition of "evil," but his character's exaltation in committing crimes that "society" condemns.

After the storming of the Bastille—where de Sade had his prison cell—in 1789, the Marquis became an enthusiastic supporter of the French Republic. Put in a position of authority at the beginning of the French Revolution, he eventually came into disfavor when he refused to support the guillotining of the enemies of the state. The Marquis' position was that although he could accept the killing of an individual in the heat of passion, he could not condone killing by the state when

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<sup>5</sup>Sodom, pp. 363-64.

it was justified by the abstraction of "virtue."<sup>6</sup> During the last days of the Terror in 1794, the Marquis was accused of "moderation" and was due for execution any moment. However, for some unexplained reason, his turn never came, and he was eventually released from prison six weeks after the guillotining of Robespierre.<sup>7</sup>

De Sade--having actually witnessed during the Revolution frenzied mobs mutilate and murder<sup>8</sup> on a scale that made his own characters seem like nursemaids--developed a new doctrine in his works written after the Revolution. The central idea was apathy--the absence of all feeling--not only, as he previously espoused, towards the groans and cries of the victims, but also towards one's own pleasure in witnessing such suffering. While pre-Revolutionary Sadean heroes enjoyed torturing and killing their victims, the later heroes commit their crimes just for the sake of the criminal act itself. Such heroes only feel totally realized when

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<sup>6</sup>In de Sade's famous plea for libertarianism entitled "Yet Another Effort, Frenchmen, If You Would Become Republicans" (1795), he upholds the right of the individual to murder others without being punished by the state: ". . . men have freely taken one another's lives, simply exercising a prerogative received from their common mother [nature]; but it is impossible for the law to obtain the same privileges, since the law, cold and impersonal, is a total stranger to the passions which are able to justify in man the cruel act of murder." The Marquis concludes, "Let us never impose any other penalty upon the murderer than the one he may risk from the vengeance of the friends or family of him he has killed." This plea is a section of Philosophy in the Bedroom in Marquis de Sade, Three Complete Novels (New York: Grove Press, 1965), pp. 310 and 317.

<sup>7</sup>This biographical information appears in the section entitled "Chronology" in Three Complete Novels, pp. 73-119.

<sup>8</sup>In 1792 the Marquis wrote a letter to his lawyer describing a massacre in which thousands of prisoners were slaughtered: "Nothing can equal the horror of the massacre. The former Princess de Lamballe was one of the victims. Her head, stuck on a pike, was shown to the King and Queen and her body, after being subjected to the most savage debauchery, was dragged through the streets for eight hours." *Ibid.*, p. 104.

they are free of all passion and spontaneity, and no longer feel any joy as they do evil for the sake of evil itself.<sup>9</sup>

The motives of these heroes in doing evil is dual. First, they believe that through doing evil they can gain total autonomy. They have a cause and a purpose, and as long as there are new victims to rape, torture, and murder, they are fulfilling their mission. As they are not doing this for pleasure, but out of a desire to renounce all feeling, even if they are caught and executed, they die thinking themselves to be omnipotent and invulnerable.

The second motive for such actions is a striving for immortality. Through the fear stirred by their crimes, these heroes hope to be remembered and hated forever.<sup>10</sup> In the Sadean universe, while virtue is always rewarded with misfortune and death, vice is the source of prosperity and possibly even eternal life.

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<sup>9</sup>In Juliette, first published in 1797, Lady Clairwil, an experienced courtesan who hates men, accepts Juliette as her apprentice in order to teach her how to become more apathetic in her crimes. In this speech, Lady Clairwil is criticizing Juliette in front of others who are rating her progress: ". . . whenever Juliette commits a crime, it's enthusiastically; but so long as her cunt is dry she might as well be paralyzed. One must proceed calmly, deliberately, lucidly. Crime is the torch that should fire the passions, that is a commonplace; but I have the suspicion that with her it is the reverse, passion firing her to crime. . . . I expect Juliette to do evil—not to quicken her lust, as I believe it is her habit at present, but solely for the pleasure of doing it." See Marquis de Sade, Juliette, trans. Austryn Wainhouse (New York: Grove Press, 1968), pp. 475-76.

<sup>10</sup>In this discussion, Lady Clairwil begins:

" . . . Juliette, I have perhaps imagined more that you, but I fear I have accomplished less—"

"Imagined more!" I exclaimed. "What the devil more can you have imagined?"

"I would like," Clairwil answered, "to find a crime which, even when I had left off doing it, would go on having perpetual effect, in such a way that so long as I lived, at every hour of the day and as I lay sleeping at night, I would be constantly the cause of a particular

De Sade is crucial to this study because he is the first writer whose interest in "evil" was not to support the moral virtues, but rather to commit a moral crime in the very act of writing. To do this, he describes the experience of "evil" from the viewpoint of the "depraved" person committed to his or her crimes. The way de Sade's characters reject all the values held sacred by the Judæo-Christian tradition holds up a mirror to the actual social reality of that civilization. De Sade forces a reader to think about the connection between sexual passion and heartless cruelty--and also about a world in which it often appears that the virtuous suffer and the wicked triumph. And he is logically consistent: after assuming that human nature is unredeemably vicious and violent, de Sade proposes that only by destroying the ability to feel will it be possible to put an end to pain and suffering. As Polonius observed about Hamlet, "Though this be madness, yet there is method in't."<sup>11</sup>

### William Blake

On the Euphrates Satan stood  
And over Asia stretch'd his pride.

He wither'd up the Human Form  
By laws of sacrifice for sin,  
Till it became a Mortal Worm,  
But O! translucent all within.

-- Blake, Jerusalem 27: 47-48, 53-56

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disorder, and that this disorder might broaden to the point where it brought about a corruption so universal or a disturbance so formal that even after my life was over I would survive in the everlasting continuation of my wickedness . . . "

At this point in the discussion, Juliette suggests she should try her hand at a moral crime of the kind that one commits in writing.

See Juliette, p. 525.

<sup>11</sup>Shakespeare, Hamlet 11.ii.222-23.

William Blake (1757-1827) also portrays cruelty and sadism all around him, but instead of seeing it as inevitable, he understands it as the necessary outcome of an alliance between a Church that emphasizes the moral virtues and a Science that only respects the evidence of the senses. Blake upholds an alternative path that applauds the innocence of the child, the imagination of the artist, and the vision of the prophet.<sup>12</sup>

Blake's outlook can best be grasped through an examination of what he means by "fourfold vision."<sup>13</sup> In this four stage model, the lowest stage is single vision and each higher stage indicates a greater ability to see. For Blake, single vision is a product of the tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and fourfold vision brings a person to the Tree of Life.

Single vision is a merely mechanical perception in which a person is spiritually asleep or blind. There is not the energy to transform the object into a living being. It is a type of analytical thinking

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<sup>12</sup>Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) held views on "evil" and its transcendence through imagination that were in almost every aspect identical to Blake's. Although they both wrote in London during the same years, there is no evidence that they knew of each other's existence. For a lucid comparative study of these two poets focusing upon their ideas on "evil," see Melanie Bandy, Mind Forg'd Manacles: Evil in the Poetry of Blake and Shelley (University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1981). The phrase "mind forg'd manacles," which encapsulates Blake's explanation of the source of "evil," can be found in his poem "London" (1794).

<sup>13</sup>Blake introduced the term fourfold vision and outlined four ways of seeing in a letter to his friend Thomas Butts dated November 22nd, 1802. (Hereafter cited as Butts letter.) This letter appears in William Blake, Blake: Complete Writings, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 816-18. All quotations from Blake are in the version presented in this edition; whereas quotations from Blake's longer Prophetic Books (such as The Four Zoas, Milton, and Jerusalem) are listed by chapter and verse, quotes from shorter pieces are listed by page number.





Harlot, is a symbol for a false religion of "holiness," Tirzah, the Pure, symbolizes the restrictions of moral law. Although Rahab indulges her sexual desires and Tirzah represses hers, neither has an accepting attitude toward sexuality.<sup>19</sup> It is Tirzah who directs her sister Noah in binding a male victim:

Go, Noah, fetch the girdle of strong brass, heat it red hot,  
 Press it around the loins of this expanding cruelty.  
 Shriek not so, my only love.  
 Bind him down, sisters, bind him down on Ebal, mount of cursing.<sup>20</sup>

As shown by the way Tirzah addresses her victim as "my only love," it is clear that she believes that she is binding this man for his own good. Tirzah advocates human sacrifice, but it is a sacrifice motivated only by the highest religious ideals.<sup>21</sup> During times of war,

Tirzah sits weeping to hear the shrieks of the dying; her Knife  
 Of flint is in her hand; she passes it over the howling Victim.<sup>22</sup>

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Instruction, because it rouses the faculties to act." Letter to Rev. Dr. Trusler, 23 August 1799, p. 793.

<sup>19</sup>A Blake scholar has written: "Rahab squanders her lust, but Tirzah, though her soul is 'seven furnaces,' withholds her lust, to use it as a weapon against man." See "Tirzah" in S. Foster Damon's A Blake Dictionary: The Ideas and Symbols of William Blake (Providence: Brown University Press, 1965), p. 407. Both Rahab and Tirzah are women in the Old Testament: Rahab is the harlot who betrays Jericho to Joshua (see Joshua 2:1-21 and 6:22-25), whereas Tirzah (renowned for her beauty) inherits property because she has no brothers (see Numbers 26:33 and 27:6-8, and Song of Solomon 6:4).

<sup>20</sup>The Four Zoas 8:312-315. Ebal was known as the "mount of cursing" since on this mountain (shortly after the Israelites occupied the Promised Land) Joshua pronounced the curses that would be incurred for breaching the Mosaic Law; see Joshua 8:30-34 and Deuteronomy 11:29, 27:4, and 27:13.

<sup>21</sup>The effect of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is to lead individuals "From willing sacrifice of Self, to sacrifice of (miscall'd) Enemies/ For Atonement . . ." (Jerusalem 24:23-24)

<sup>22</sup>Jerusalem 67:24-25

Blake's point is that the lack of respect for both the body and the imagination is the source of hatred and war; as long as single vision reigns, "Holy Love" can be nothing other than "Envy, Revenge & Cruelty."<sup>23</sup>

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Double vision contains both the outward sight (the object as usually seen) and inward vision (the imaginative meaning of the object for a particular observer):

For double the vision my Eyes do see,  
And a double vision is always with me.  
With my inward Eye 'tis an old Man grey;  
With my outward, a Thistle across my way.<sup>24</sup>

In double vision, perception is no longer passive, but involves the active participation of the observer.<sup>25</sup>

Blake expresses this shift from single to double vision by making a distinction between a "negation" and a "contrary." A "negation" attempts to divide a set of opposites while a "contrary" acknowledges a higher oneness.<sup>26</sup> Throughout his writings Blake reveals the unity of such "seeming" opposites as spirit and body, outer and inner, masculine

<sup>23</sup>Jerusalem 17:30      <sup>24</sup>Butts letter, p. 817.

<sup>25</sup>Blake's contemporary Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) made the same point when he asserted that "sensation itself is but vision nascent"; see his Biographia Literaria [1817], ed. George Watson (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1956), Chap. XII, p. 155.

<sup>26</sup>Negations are not Contraries: Contraries mutually Exist,  
But negations Exist Not; Exceptions & Objections & Unbeliefs  
Exist not; nor shall they ever be Organized forever & ever.  
If thou separate from me, thou are a Negation, a mere  
Reasoning & Derogation from me, an Objecting & cruel Spite . . .  
Jerusalem 17:33-37  
They take the Two Contraries which are call'd Qualities, with which  
Every Substance is clothed: they name them Good & Evil;  
From them they make an Abstract, which is a Negation  
Not only of the Substance from which it is derived,

and feminine, and joy and sorrow.<sup>27</sup>

Blake applies this theory of "contraries" to the problem of evil in his book The Marriage of Heaven and Hell:

Without Contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human Existence.

From these contraries spring what the religions call Good & Evil. Good is the passive that obeys Reason. Evil is the active springing from Energy.

Good is Heaven. Evil is Hell.

. . . . .

Energy is the only life and is from the Body and Reason is the bound or outward circumference of Energy.

Energy is Eternal Delight.<sup>28</sup>

What Blake is asserting is that if the "contraries" of good and evil are not separated, they can blend into a harmony wherein evil is the energy that makes the good happen. However, if the reasoning power upsets this

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A murderer of its own Body, but also a murderer  
Of every Divine Member: it is the Reasoning Power,  
An Abstract objecting power that Negatives every thing.  
Jerusalem 10:8-14

<sup>27</sup>Man was made for Joy & Woe;  
And when this we rightly know  
Thro' the World we safely go.  
Joy & Woe are woven fine,  
A Clothing for the Soul divine;  
Under every grief & pine  
Runs a joy with silken twine.  
"Auguries of Innocence," 56-62, p. 432

<sup>28</sup>The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Plates 3 and 4, p. 149. (Hereafter cited as Marriage.) Blake credited Jacob Boehme (1575-1624) for teaching him this theory of "contraries." In Boehme's world, there is a potential for conflict between the Dark Fire-World (Hell) of the animal impulses and the Light World (Heaven) of the reasoning power. Boehme held that both of these "contraries" exist in God and without them there could be no life. For a discussion of Boehme's theories and his influence on Blake, see "Behmen" in Damon, pp. 39-41. Gershom Scholem views Boehme's writings as showing the influence of the Kabbalah: "Boehme's doctrine of the origins of evil, which created such a stir, indeed bears all the traits of Kabbalistic thought. He, too, defines evil as a dark and negative principle of wrath in God . . ."; see his Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism (New York: Schocken Books, 1961), p. 237.

harmony of good and evil (as it does in single vision), evil becomes suppressed and the result is sadism and war. Only after evil is accepted as a "contrary" can the energy of the imagination be liberated. It is this explosion of energy that leads Blake to proclaim: "The tygers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction."<sup>29</sup>

Blake sees "true poets" as having an inner understanding of this unity of good and evil even when they think they are attacking evil. Blake's main example of this is Paradise Lost, in which John Milton (1608-74) tried to show the evil of Satan; Blake points out that what his poetry actually expressed was "the energy" of this evil force:

The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of angels & God, and at liberty when of Devils & Hell is because he was a true Poet and of the Devil's Party without knowing it.<sup>30</sup>

To be "of the Devil's Party" means to stop resisting evil while being aware of its energy.

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Triple vision combines the outward and inward aspect of double

<sup>29</sup>Marriage, Plate 9, p. 152. The same idea was expressed when Blake wrote: "Active Evil is better than Passive Good." Annotations to Lavater, p. 77.

<sup>30</sup>Marriage, Plate 6, p. 150. Shelley made a similar point when he wrote: "Nothing can exceed the energy and the magnificence of the character of Satan as expressed in Paradise Lost. . . . Milton's devil as a moral being is as far superior to his god, as one who perseveres in some purpose which he has conceived to be excellent in spite of adversity and torture is to one who in the cold security of undoubted triumph inflicts the most horrible revenge upon his enemy. . . ." Shelley took as wisdom what Milton had Satan exclaim upon being tossed into Hell:

The mind in its own place, and in itself  
Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.

Paradise Lost, Book I, 254-55.

For Shelley's remarks, see his "A Defense of Poetry" (1821) in The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. Roger Ingpen and Walter E. Peck (New York: Gordian Press, 1965), Vol. VII, pp. 129 and 137.

vision and adds a loving component. While in single vision others were sacrificed in the name of "holiness," here there is a mutual sacrifice for the other motivated by maternal and sexual love.<sup>31</sup> This is the gateway to eternity since "if a thing loves, it is infinite."<sup>32</sup> For Blake, love and forgiveness are the gateways to eternal truth.

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Fourfold vision is as close to the infinite as it is possible to be while still remaining in a world where the see-er does not merge with the seen. Whereas in Blake's "Eternity" there is a bursting of the time barrier between the subject and object--and time is annihilated--the individual who comes close to "Eternity" through fourfold vision is able to perceive a realm of unchanging "Eternal Realities."<sup>33</sup> All that exists is seen as being endowed with light and partaking of a life that is eternal and infinite.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>In Blake's cosmology, such compassion and love-making is located in a feminine land below and around Eden named "Beulah." In his letter to Butts, he places triple vision in "soft Beulah's night." (p. 818) For a description of this "moony" land, see Bandy, pp. 127-28. The word "Beulah" itself derives from the Old Testament, where it means "married" (Isaiah 62:4).

<sup>32</sup>Annotations to Swedenborg's Divine Love, p. 91.

<sup>33</sup>Blake believed that during the perception of these "Eternal Realities" a person experiences a different relationship to time:  
 Every Time less than a pulsation of the artery  
 Is equal in its period & value to Six Thousand Years  
 For in this Period the Poet's Work is Done, and all the Great  
 Events of time start forth & are conceived in such a Period,  
 Within a Moment, a Pulsation of the Artery.

Milton 28:62-63 and 29:1-3

According to Damon's interpretation of Blake's "Eternity," the annihilation of time reveals both "the reality underlying all temporal phenomena" and "the real Now"; see "Eternity" in Damon, pp. 129-30.

<sup>34</sup>If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, infinite.

With fourfold vision, there is a consummation of the blending and unification of humankind's four powers: imagination, feeling, sensation, and reason. Within such a harmony, reason no longer attempts to dominate the other three powers and, instead of creating "negations," now becomes a source of illumination. An individual whose powers can work in such a concord is ready to move to "the Tree of life." Near this Tree people:

are no longer talking of what is Good & Evil, or what is Right or Wrong, & puzzling themselves in Satan's labyrinth, But are Conversing with Eternal Realities as they Exist in Human Imagination.<sup>35</sup>

The Tree of life is the source of both imagination and art,<sup>36</sup> and those who eat of this tree's fruits can escape from Satan's realm:<sup>37</sup>

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For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things  
thro' narrow chinks of his cavern.

Marriage, Plate 14, p. 154

<sup>35</sup>A Vision of the Last Judgment, p. 613. In Blake's cosmology, these "Eternal Realities" exist in a land called "Eder"—the home of an intense "masculine" mental and artistic creativity. While "Beulah," the "feminine" land of threefold vision nourishes emotionally and sexually, Eden has no sexual activity since the love emanating from the feminine has embraced the masculine to create a new being who is "androgynous" and "human." Whereas in the Bible, both the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil are in the garden of Eden (Genesis 2:9), Blake placed "the double Tree" outside the gates of Eden—in the "fallen world" of single vision—where it will be destroyed in the apocalypse (Jerusalem 98:47).

<sup>36</sup>Art is the Tree of Life.

The Laocoon, p. 777

Near "the Tree of Life" both intuition and reason work in harmony to serve "Art" whereas in the "fallen world" the intuitive power refuses to be guided by reason and proclaims: "I will not Reason & Compare; my business is to Create." (Jerusalem 10:21)

<sup>37</sup>Satan is the State of Death, & Not a Human Existence.

Jerusalem 49:67

According to Blake, the "four iron pillars of Satan's Throne" are the moral virtues "Temperance, Prudence, Justice, Fortitude." (Milton 29:48) It is the emphasis on morality—empowered by "reason"—that creates the duality inherent in "the State of Death."

There is a Moment in each Day that Satan cannot find,  
 Nor can his Watch Fiends find it; but the industrious find  
 This Moment & it multiply, & when it once is found  
 It renovates every Moment of the Day if rightly placed.<sup>38</sup>

As such moments "multiply," a person learns how to live in the eternal present with a mind that clings to nothing:

He who binds to himself a joy  
 Does the winged life destroy;  
 But he who kisses the joy as it flies  
 Lives in eternity's sun rise.<sup>39</sup>

Blake is important to this study because of his clarity in suggesting a way of moving beyond the experience of separation and duality. He affirms the reality of "evil," but yet points to a way that its energy can be harnessed by the individual who has the will to imagine, to love, and to see.

#### Herman Melville

. . . speak not evil of the evil:  
 Evil and good they braided play  
 Into one cord.  
 -- Melville, Clarel, IV, iv, 27-29.

In his novel Moby Dick (1851), Herman Melville (1819-91) explores the source of "evil" in the mutually reinforcing influences of a man's psyche and his environment. Captain Ahab, the main character in Moby Dick, is obsessed by his self-imposed mission of destroying Moby Dick, the great white whale. Ever since Moby Dick bit off Ahab's leg when Ahab went whaling as a young man, Ahab has seen Moby Dick as the embodiment of all the evil in the universe:

The White Whale swam before him as the monomaniac incarnation of all those malicious agencies which some deep men feel eating in them, till they are left with half a heart and half a lung. That

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<sup>38</sup>Milton 35:42-45

<sup>39</sup>"Eternity" (1793), p. 179.

intangible malignity which has been from the beginning; to whose dominion even the modern Christian ascribe one-half of the worlds; which the ancient Ophites of the east revered in their statute devil; —Ahab did not fall down and worship it like them; but deliriously transferring its idea to the abhorred White Whale, he pitted himself, all mutilated, against it. All that most maddens and torments; all that stirs up the lees of things; all truth with malice in it; all that cracks the sinews and cakes the brain; all the subtle demonism of life and thought; all evil, to crazy Ahab, were visibly personified, and made practically assailable in Moby Dick.<sup>40</sup>

Although Ahab realizes his purpose is "mad,"<sup>41</sup> and his quest for vengeance may well destroy himself, his crew, and his ship,<sup>42</sup> he cannot call off the hunt. Starbuck, the first mate, a cautious man and the most reasonable member of the crew, tries to show Ahab his madness:

"Vengeance on a dumb brute!" cried Starbuck, "that simply smote thee from blindest instinct! Madness! To be enraged with a dumb thing, Captain Ahab, seems blasphemous."<sup>43</sup>

To which Ahab responds:

"Talk not to me of blasphemy, man; I'd strike the sun if it insulted me."<sup>44</sup>

Much of Melville's interest in writing about Ahab is trying to understand his motivation. It is clear Ahab is deficient in feeling, but highly intelligent.<sup>45</sup> Lacking the ability to enjoy life, he is totally

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<sup>40</sup>Herman Melville, Moby Dick or The White Whale (Philadelphia: Macrae Smith, no date), Chapter 41, p. 205. (Hereafter cited as Whale followed by chapter and page numbers.)

<sup>41</sup>Ahab "in his heart" glimpses that "all my means are sane, my motive and my object mad." Whale 41, p. 207.

<sup>42</sup>The name of Ahab's ship—Pequod—means "destruction" in Algonquin, the language of the Pequot Indians; see Harriet A. Todd, The Quest in the Works of Herman Melville, with Emphasis upon Moby Dick (Zurich: privately printed, 1961), p. 70.

<sup>43</sup>Whale 36, p. 184.      <sup>44</sup>Whale 36, p. 185.

<sup>45</sup>Ahab tells the carpenter who is making him a new ivory leg: "I'll order a complete man after a desirable pattern . . .; no heart at



obsessed by his goal. One evening, sitting in his cabin at sunset, Ahab says to himself:

" . . . all loveliness is anguish to me, since I can ne'er enjoy. Gifted with high perception, I lack the low, enjoying power; damned, most subtly and most malignantly! damned in the midst of Paradise!"

" . . . Swerve me? The path to my fixed purpose is laid with iron rails, whereon my soul is grooved to run. Over unsounded gorges, through the rifled hearts of mountains, under torrents' beds, unerringly I rush! Naught's an obstacle, naught's an angle to the iron way!"<sup>46</sup>

In describing the great white whale, Melville reveals him as possessing all the qualities of what Rudolf Otto calls the "numinous"—he is tremendous, fascinating, horrible, and utterly unknowable:

. . . in the great Sperm Whale, this high and mighty godlike dignity inherent in the brow is so immensely amplified, that gazing on it, in that full front view, you feel the Deity and the dread powers more forcibly than in beholding any other object in living nature. For you see no one point precisely; not one distinct feature is revealed; no nose, eyes, ears, or mouth; no face; he has none, proper; nothing but that one broad firmament of a forehead, pleated with riddles; dumbly lowering with the doom of boats, and ships, and men."<sup>47</sup>

The day before Moby Dick is finally sighted, Starbuck makes one last desperate plea to Ahab that he call off the chase; but "Ahab's glance was averted" and he only answers, speaking mostly to himself:

"What is it, what nameless, inscrutable, unearthly thing is it; what cozening, hidden lord and master, and cruel remorseless emperor commands me; that against all natural lovings and longings I so keep pushing, and crowding, and jamming myself on all the time; recklessly making me ready to do what in my own proper, natural heart, I durst not so much as dare?"<sup>48</sup>

The battle with the whale proceeds for three days. On the third day, Ahab sees the signs that a fortune-teller had told him would come on

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all, brass forehead, and about a quarter of an acre of fine brains . . ." Whale 108, p. 512.

<sup>46</sup>Whale 37, p. 189.

<sup>47</sup>Whale 79, p. 381.

<sup>48</sup>Whale 132, p. 585.

the day of his death.<sup>49</sup> Moby Dick is now just a few yards from Ahab's boat and Ahab cries aloud:

"Oh, lonely death on lonely life! . . . Towards thee I roll, thou all-destroying but unconquerable whale; to the last I grapple with thee; from hell's heart I stab at thee; for hate's sake I spit my last breath at thee. Sink all coffins and all hearses to one common pool! and since neither can be mine, let me then tow to pieces, while still chasing thee, though tied to thee, thou damned whale! Thus, I give up the spear!<sup>50</sup>

Ahab throws his harpoon, but seconds later, the harpoon line catches him around the throat and throws him out of the boat; he is carried off into the depths of the ocean still tied to the great white whale. In this manner, Ahab gives up his "spear" of vengeance. The story has come to an end.<sup>51</sup>

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Moby Dick's importance to this study is in the way it grapples with the question of what is actually "evil." Since Melville portrays characters who have different positions on the question of what is "evil,"

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<sup>49</sup>For the prophecy, see Whale 117, p. 539.

<sup>50</sup>Whale 135, p. 585. In Ahab's "lonely" obsession, he comes close to exemplifying what one writer has seen as the main characteristic of the "truly evil" person: ". . . the true evil has nothing to do with social life or social laws, or if it has, only incidentally and accidentally. it is a lonely passion of the soul—or a passion of the lonely soul— whichever you like. If, by chance, we understand it, and grasp its full significance, then, indeed, it will fill us with horror and awe." See Arthur Machen, "The White People" in his Tales of Horror and the Supernatural (London: John Baker, 1964), p. 122.

<sup>51</sup>Edward Edinger considers Moby Dick a "nekyia" (nek-ee-ee-ah), which is the ancient Greek word for the descent to the underworld; the word derives from the eleventh book of the Odyssey where the "nekyia" is the name of the sacrifice made by Ulysses when he conjures up the dead. In Moby Dick, all the members of the crew but the narrator meet with death in the battle against the great white whale. See the "Note" before the table of contents in Edward Edinger's Melville's Moby-Dick: A Jungian Commentary: An American "Nekyia" (New York: New Directions, 1978).

the only way for the reader to grasp Melville's own viewpoint on this issue is to fathom the meaning of his symbols. But to assign a definite meaning to Melville's symbols is as difficult as catching an "ungraspable phantom."<sup>52</sup>

However, since not to attempt the impossible would be cowardly, this researcher will present his own interpretation of Moby Dick. This researcher views the "white whale" as a symbol for a numinous dimension that is beyond both good and evil.<sup>53</sup> It is Ahab who, in an attempt to escape the bewilderment and pain of his own wound, gives himself a mission by labelling as "evil" a numinous being whose purpose he cannot grasp.<sup>54</sup> Melville's own viewpoint is that pure and absolute "evil"—totally separate from the "good"—is but a figment of Ahab's imagination.

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<sup>52</sup>This expression "ungraspable phantom" is taken from the first chapter of Moby Dick; Ishmael is talking about how man is always attracted by water and mentions "the meaning of that story of Narcissus, who because he could not grasp the tormenting mild image he saw in the fountain, plunged into it and was drowned. But that same image, we ourselves see in all rivers and oceans. It is the image of the ungraspable phantom of life; and this is the key to it all." Whale 1, p. 13. A phenomenologist who made a study of Melville cited this particular passage as an example of Melville's perspective that reality is as evasive as a "phantom"; see Paul Brodtkorb, Jr. Ishmael's White-World: A Phenomenological Reading of Moby Dick (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), pp. 128-29. (Hereafter cited as White World.)

<sup>53</sup>A "whale" of a symbol for "the wholeness" that is beyond good and evil was dreamed by Harriet A. Todd. In the "Preface" to her Jungian interpretation of Moby Dick, she tells how the idea of writing her work came to her after she had a dream in which there appeared "two whales linked very much in the fashion of the Chinese Tai-gi-tu,—the black whale with the white eye, and the white whale with the black eye." (What she calls "the Chinese Tai-gi-tu" [☯] is most commonly known as "the yin-yang symbol.")

<sup>54</sup>For a discussion of how Ahab "resolves his feelings" of ambiguity before "the numinous" by calling the white whale "evil," see White World, pp. 145-146.

### Conclusion

The following five themes relating to evil were noted among these three writers:

- a) sadism and destructiveness (de Sade and Blake)
- b) the creation of duality and separation (Blake)
- c) the wrong sacrifice (Blake)
- d) the ultimate unity of demonic forces and God (Melville)
- e) no evil from the vantage point of eternal realities (Blake and Melville)

As can be seen, there is no single theme shared by all three writers.

For de Sade, evil was a rejection of all the moral values—matrimony and sexual propriety, the protection of life and property—considered sacred by the Christianity of his day.

In Blake's perspective, evil was any pattern of thought or action that created separation and duality. While he agreed with Christianity in seeing murder and hatred as "evils," he believed that Christian restraints upon the free expression of sexuality and imagination created the need for the rituals of human "sacrifice" called warfare. Blake related to the power of evil with two different stances: whereas in the theory of "contraries" he viewed evil as the energy that made the good happen, he at other times became the righteous warrior battling against any energy he believed fostered dualistic thinking. Since Blake did adopt this latter stance of opposing the agents of "Satan," an argument could be made that Blake himself was singed by the fires of dualism.

Melville saw evil—separated from good—as an illusion of the mind. Although he wrote about characters who were sadistic and destructive, Melville never labelled them as being "evil." Unlike Blake who on occasions wanted to expose and battle "evil," Melville's sole interest lay in observing the way evil was intricately woven with the good.

Melville and Blake shared the view that humankind created "good and evil" by projecting a duality on a reality that in itself was beyond "good and evil." When each of them looked at reality with inner eyes that "saw" imaginatively and symbolically, neither made any "ultimate" differentiation between good and evil.

CHAPTER EIGHT  
METHODS AND PROCEDURES

One Law for the Lion, & Ox is Oppression.  
— William Blake  
The Marriage of Heaven and Hell

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methods and procedures used in this research; as all these methods and procedures are related to the broader context of phenomenological research, it will be useful to begin by discussing the phenomenological perspective. Although within phenomenology there are many "methods" and "schools," all phenomenological research has three common elements:

1. Bracketing (also referred to as epoché and the phenomenological reduction). "Bracketing" requires a suspension of judgment as to whether or not the phenomenon being investigated is "really real." It should be noted that the word "real" has two meanings—"authentic/genuine" and "truly existing"; it is the second sense, the question as to the ontological status of the phenomenon, its ultimate being or non-being, that is left out of account by the phenomenological reduction.

Bracketing also requires phenomenologists to detach and disengage themselves (to the extent possible) from their own assumptions and presuppositions concerning the phenomenon being investigated. When the young Edward Husserl coined his famous motto—"to the things

themselves"<sup>1</sup> —he was suggesting that bracketing was the way to free philosophy of idle speculations about what is real and what is not.

2. Descriptions of Phenomena. Just as the root pha in the ancient Greek word phainomenon is akin to phōs—meaning "light" or "brightness"—phenomena are viewed as "the totality of what lies in the light of day or can be brought to the light . . ." <sup>2</sup> The "ology" suffix of phenomenology is related to the Greek logos and suggests a "speaking" or "being spoken to" without the observer adding his or her own preconceptions.<sup>3</sup> Martin Heidegger's preference for letting a phenomenon "speak for itself" led him to define the goal of phenomenology as "to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself."<sup>4</sup> As one way of insuring that they are "listening to" all aspects of a phenomenon, phenomenologists commonly make precise descriptions of what is seen or experienced. Although such a concern for letting a phenomenon manifest itself in its own terms is not incompatible with scientific explanations, all phenomenologists are wary of any theory that "explains away" either a phenomenon or an experience.

3. The Search for Essences. After bracketing their presuppositions and describing a phenomenon, phenomenologists try to determine what the essential structure of that phenomenon is. The search for essences involves determining which explicit or implicit aspects of a particular description are present in all examples of that phenomenon and without

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<sup>1</sup>In the original German Husserl's motto was: "zu den Sachen selbst."

<sup>2</sup>See his Being and Time (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 51.

<sup>3</sup>Being and Time, p. 56.      <sup>4</sup>Being and Time, p. 58.

which the phenomenon would be either substantially altered or a different phenomenon. Since in almost all descriptions there will be a mixture and entanglement of the essential with the inessential, various procedures and methods have been suggested for isolating the essential structures. Phenomenologists generally insist such procedures and methods are necessary since the taken-for-grantedness of everyday language and belief—sometimes called "the natural attitude"—contains assumptions about such "essences" that are unconscious; the phenomenological viewpoint is that only after "the natural attitude" is bracketed will it be possible to make explicit what would otherwise be implicit, ignored, or masked.<sup>5</sup> At the heart of phenomenology is this attempt to "unearth" essences that have long been buried and hidden.

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The research design of this dissertation is an amalgam of two phenomenological methods. The first is one that has been developed by teachers at Duquesne University who colloquially refer to themselves as the Duquesne Group.<sup>6</sup> One of these teachers describes this method in

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<sup>5</sup>Maurice Merleau-Ponty has written: "It is because we are through and through compounded of relationships with the world that for us the only way to become aware of the fact is to suspend the resultant activity, to refuse it complicity . . . or yet again, to put it 'out of play.' Not because we reject the certainties of common sense and a natural attitude to things . . . but because, being the presupposed basis of any thought, they are taken for granted and go unnoticed, and because in order to arouse them and bring them to view, we have to suspend for a moment our recognition of them." See the "Preface" to his Phenomenology of Perception, trans. Colin Smith (New York: Humanities Press, 1962), p. xiii.

<sup>6</sup>The expression "Duquesne Group" is used by Rolf von Eckartsberg in his unpublished typewritten manuscript Psychological Research Methods at Duquesne (Duquesne University, 1977), p. 1. (Hereafter cited as Duquesne.)



terms of its central insight:

I start from the insight that any phenomenon is a personally experienced process. It is life as lived and experienced by unique people. In other words: Phenomena are experienced events!

PHENOMENA ARE EXPERIENCED EVENTS!

As experienced events they have to be told, and the telling occurs in the form of a story, a narrative of a personal experience. Description of experience, linguistically organized in the form of a story, this is the dialogal foundation of Existential-Phenomenological Research.<sup>7</sup>

Starting with this insight, the method involves formulating a question which focuses on a particular phenomenon. Data is then generated when "contributors"<sup>8</sup> respond to this question by telling stories of their experiences of this phenomenon. These stories may be either written down or recorded "live"; when a tape recorder is used, after the telling of the story there is often an open-ended dialogue between the contributor and the researcher. After gathering several such descriptions of experiences, various procedures are then used to find "the meaning code," the "psychological plot," or the "themes" of the stories. After these "themes" have emerged, there is an attempt to determine what are the essential elements of the phenomenon under study. Lastly, members of the Duquesne Group suggest that any conclusions about the essential structures of phenomenon be integrated with the "existential" experience of everyday life:

As the hyphen in Existential-Phenomenology indicates we have here a situation of mutual enrichment, not of the form of Either-Or but of Both-And. Proceeding narratively and descriptively from the everyday

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<sup>7</sup>Duquesne, p. 183. In the original version, the last sentence is entirely underlined.

<sup>8</sup>"Contributor" is the customary Duquesne term for those who are more commonly known as "subjects."

level of individual lived events our research has to be both  
Phenomenological and Existential.<sup>9</sup>

It would be accurate to describe the phenomenological method of the Duquesne Group as "existentially-oriented empirical research with an experiential grounding." The three fundamental assumptions of this method are that 1) there is an inherent structure to every phenomenon; 2) phenomena are experienced events; and 3) even with a limited number of in-depth descriptions of experiences of a particular phenomenon it will be possible to determine what are the essential elements of that inherent structure.

The second phenomenological method used in this dissertation was introduced by Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, who named it "free phantasy variation." Husserl's purpose in using this method was to determine the essence of any phenomenon. This method differs from the "Duquesne method" described herein<sup>10</sup> in that it in no way depends upon empirical data; however, both methods do share the assumption that all phenomena have an inherent structure. In the end this researcher decided that the two methods were highly complementary. As Chapter Eleven of this dissertation includes a more elaborate description of what Husserl meant by "free phantasy variation" along with several examples of how this researcher used this method, the remainder of the present chapter will be devoted to discussing this researcher's

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<sup>9</sup>Duquesne, p. 223.

<sup>10</sup>However, more recent publications by researchers associated with the Duquesne Group show how "free phantasy variation" can be integrated with the other elements of their method. See, for example, Frederick J. Wertz, "Method and Findings in a Study of Criminal Victimization" (in press).

application of the method of the Duquesne Group.

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In designing the actual study, the researcher's main purpose was to "dig out" everything about the phenomenon of "evil" that was hidden or buried. He noted that many researchers had suggested studying alien traditions and cultures as one way of revealing what would otherwise be unconsciously assumed:

. . . our most stubborn and pertinacious assumptions are precisely those which remain unconscious and therefore uncritical . . . The best and perhaps the only sure way of bringing to light and revivifying those fossilized assumptions, and of destroying their power to cramp and confine, is by subjecting ourselves to the shock of contact with a very alien tradition.<sup>11</sup>

As Buddhism had once challenged this researcher's assumptions about "evil," he decided it would be useful to interview several Buddhist contributors. This eventually evolved into a plan to interview contributors of Jewish, Christian, and Buddhist backgrounds. Besides looking for themes that were unique to each of these groups, the researcher would also see if any themes emerged that were common to all three groups.

The approach of the Duquesne Group to selecting contributors is not to attempt to interview a large number of people or even to choose the small number through a process of random selection. Contributors are often selected for such reasons as:

- a) their availability;
- b) their articulateness;
- c) a rapport with the researcher;
- d) a special experience of the phenomenon being studied; or
- e) an expertise in an aspect of the phenomenon being studied.

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<sup>11</sup>Harold Osborne, Aesthetics and Art Theory: An Historical Introduction (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1970), p. 13.

As for the last of these five categories, the Duquesne Group has coined the term "privileged observers" to refer to those people with particular expertise in the phenomenon being studied. One Duquesne phenomenologist sees the use of such people as

an adaptation of the scientific habit of relying upon the most highly trained and knowledgeable scientists as having greater authority in their specialties than laymen or amateurs.<sup>12</sup>

Since part of this researcher's study involved a comparison of the themes relating to evil in each of the three religious groups, it was decided that the privileged observers should have more than usual knowledge of their own religion. The term "folkpeople" was then coined to indicate all those other contributors who were not "privileged observers"; the term "folk" was not meant to imply that these people were less educated than the "privileged observers," but only that they had less "expertise" in their own religion.

In deciding how many interviews should be conducted in this dissertation, the guideline was taken from Duquesne University:

. . . it is usually required—although there have been some single-case-study dissertations—to collect descriptions from a small justified sample of subjects, or "contributors," as we prefer to call them. This ranges from 3-10. This has been justified in terms of the necessity to discover types of experiences within any particular phenomenon, a range of ways in which the phenomenon under investigation can manifest itself.<sup>13</sup>

Eventually this researcher decided to interview nine people according to

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<sup>12</sup>Donald W. Moncrieff, "Aesthetic Consciousness," in Existential-Phenomenological Alternatives for Psychology, ed. Ronald S. Valle and Mark King (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 363. In Moncrieff's study the "privileged observers" were all musicians since he was trying to discover the meaning of the word "one" in the phrase "I felt one with the music."

<sup>13</sup>Duquesne, p. 41.

the following categories:

	Jewish	Christian	Buddhist
Privileged observers	1	1	1
Folkpeople	1 woman 1 man	1 woman 1 man	1 woman 1 man

Among the "privileged observers," this researcher also planned to include contributors from both sexes.

The main criteria used in determining religious background among the "folkpeople" was the religious allegiances of parents and grandparents; such a criteria permitted the inclusion of those who did not themselves identify with any religion. After careful consideration, the researcher also decided to include those who had converted to a new religion; he felt that to exclude such contributors would be like excluding St. Paul from a study of Christianity. However, the researcher did decide to exclude any person who 1) had parents of two different religions and 2) did not identify with any religion.

The method of interviewing chosen was to begin with pre-set questions and, if it felt appropriate, to proceed to free-flowing open-ended dialogue. Eventually five pre-set questions were formulated:

1. Tell me as best you can your experience of a situation in which you were aware of "evil."
2. From what you experienced in that situation, what would you say made that an experience of "evil"?
3. Are you aware of that experience changing your life in any way?
4. What are your beliefs and attitudes relating to "evil"?
5. Tell me about yourself. (Ask about the person's religious upbringing and current religious practice.)

Although the researcher entered each interview with these questions neatly typed on an index card, he also expected that he might have to

rephrase these questions and/or spontaneously formulate new questions when it felt appropriate.

He "recruited" his nine contributors in five different ways:

A) This researcher sought out privileged observers and was given names by people he told about the research. Two of the privileged observers—the former Jesuit priest named Paul and Rabbi Rachel Fox—were first spoken to over the telephone; the researcher then met them for the first time at the interview itself.

B) People who heard about the research recommended people who they thought had unusual experiences related to evil. This researcher was first told about Daniel, the Auschwitz survivor, by a rabbi whom he unsuccessfully tried to recruit as a privileged observer. As Daniel was a member of the rabbi's congregation, it was the rabbi who asked Daniel if he wanted to be interviewed about his experiences of evil.

C) The researcher thought certain individuals whose books he had read might have unusual viewpoints and asked them if they wanted to be interviewed. For instance, this researcher had read a book of Luke's before he first met him after a lecture; as he felt a rapport even during this brief meeting, he telephoned to ask if he had any experiences of evil. Similarly, although the researcher never met Choko before telephoning her, he had read a book which reproduced her silkscreen drawings of Japanese Goddesses; as the book mentioned where she was living, he was able to telephone her.

D) Among the many people who told the researcher their stories of evil, the researcher chose those who were most intensely convinced that they truly had an experience of evil. In the months before the interviewing began, this researcher asked every person he met for more than a

few seconds if he or she had an experience of evil. The great majority responded to this question with another question: "What do you mean by 'evil'?" As the researcher's interest was in what others viewed as evil, he did not choose to interview any people who made this response. However, many people did respond with stories about their own experiences that were both fascinating and captivating. Among these people, some were disqualified because their parents were of two different religious backgrounds and they didn't identify with any religion. Eventually, from all these people who had stories of evil, this researcher chose two--Ruth and Maria--mainly because of the emotional intensity of their conviction that what they experienced was really evil.

E) This researcher asked people whom he had known for many years if they would consent to be interviewed. One of these was a teacher of Buddhism named Bishop Myōkōko and the other was a personal friend named Abe. When this researcher had taken Bishop Myōkōko's class, the Bishop had one day spoken about how "evil and the virtues are the same in the world of emptiness"; since the Bishop had also taught that all concepts, feelings, and experiences were delusions, this researcher knew that persistent questioning would be necessary if the Bishop were to tell of his own personal experiences of "evil." As for Abe, this researcher pondered carefully before including him as a contributor. As both of Abe's parents were Jewish and Abe now considered himself a Buddhist, Abe would be the only "convert" among the nine contributors; also Abe was beginning to gain an "expertise" in Buddhism that put him very near the category of "privileged observer." However, this researcher viewed neither his conversion nor his growing expertise as nearly as great an obstacle to his inclusion as the fact that Abe's intense interest in

Buddhism had led him to take classes with Bishop Myōkōko; as part of this study was to determine if there were any common themes in the various groups, any similarity between Abe's and the Bishop's viewpoints might be partially a result of this student-teacher relationship. However, countering this disadvantage, the researcher saw four benefits in interviewing Abe. First, Abe's "Western" background might aid him in "translating" into "Western" terms some aspects of the Buddhist viewpoint that might otherwise be incomprehensible to many "Westerners." Second, through a great deal of reading and an active meditation practice, Abe had developed his own perspective on Buddhism; he was of a different Buddhist lineage than Bishop Myōkōko and the researcher knew Abe did not "blindly" follow any teacher. Third, Abe was highly articulate and was known for the way he effortlessly put into words subtleties that seemed to be beyond the reach of language. Lastly, and most important to this researcher, the degree of trust and respect between this researcher and Abe meant that there already had been established a context for both honest communication and a free-flowing dialogue. Although this researcher realized that there was a real disadvantage in including a person who was a student of another contributor, he felt there would be an even greater disadvantage in excluding Abe's unique perspective.

This researcher was aware that several of the dissertations written at Duquesne University had involved interviewing each contributor more than once; in subsequent interviews of such dissertations the researchers had often been able to further explore the subtleties and intricacies of the contributor's experience of a particular phenomenon. However, as this researcher was more interested in the themes that would emerge from



the interviews than in the specific detailed descriptions of experiences, he decided he would begin with one interview with each contributor and then only conduct a second one if he had further questions.

Before beginning the interviews, this researcher also made the decision to try to use all his interviews rather than interview many people and then choose the "best" ones. Not only would this eliminate the need to find criteria for choosing which interviews to select, but it would also lessen the possibility that this researcher would unconsciously select interviews to support his own assumptions or presuppositions. However, the researcher did leave open the option of not using an interview if he discovered that the contributor was guilty of falsehood, fabrication, or fraud.

The interviews were all conducted between November 1981 and April 1982. Seven of the nine interviews took place at the homes of the contributors; as for the other two, Choko's was at a Zen Buddhist farm and Rabbi Fox's was at her office. After each interview was completed and the tape recorder was turned off, this researcher would ask the contributors to sign a "Statement of Release" that concluded with the question of whether or not they wanted to remain anonymous. As four contributors (Ruth, Luke, Paul and Rabbi Fox) expressed a desire for anonymity, this researcher decided it would be simpler just to create fictional names for all nine contributors.<sup>14</sup>

Only once did the researcher choose to conduct a second interview;

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<sup>14</sup>As for the other five contributor's position on anonymity, three (Daniel, Maria, and Choko) expressed no preference, one (Abe) preferred to have his real name stated, and one (Bishop Myōkōko) would neither affirm nor deny his desire for anonymity.

as discussed in the summary of Ruth's interview in the next chapter, this was because this researcher felt she was covering up an important aspect of her experience. This researcher telephoned several of the other contributors asking them either for help in making out a word that on the tape was incomprehensible or for clarification of specific details that were to be included in the biographical sketch. This researcher is still on friendly terms with eight of the nine contributors (the exception being Rabbi Fox) and would feel comfortable contacting them if the need for further clarification ever arose.

This researcher transcribed the first three interviews himself; as it was much more work than he had ever anticipated, he hired a person to do the last six. Eight of the nine interviews lasted between 35 and 55 minutes; when such an interview was transcribed, it would come out to be between ten and fourteen single-spaced typewritten pages. All the interviews together generated 100 pages of such transcribed data.

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One of the ways this researcher wanted to use these transcripts was to determine what were the themes in each interview. Only after the themes of each interview emerged would he be able to make a judgment about what was common to each of the religious groups or to make a comparison between the three different groups.

To increase the likelihood that the thematization of the interviews would be accurate, this researcher's first choice was to use a procedure that was developed by the Duquesne Group to increase the "reliability" of the thematization. This procedure requires the researcher to find other people (preferably familiar with the phenomenological

approach) to read both the transcripts and the thematization and then to comment whether or not the researcher's thematization has gone astray. Although the members of the Duquesne Group accept that each person who comes to the interviews would thematize them differently if he or she began with differing questions and/or assumptions, it is nonetheless seen as useful to get others' comments and perceptions. As this researcher was part of a Phenomenology Study Group of six people that had been meeting informally for over a year, he approached the group with this request; the result was three members of the group agreed to read all the transcripts and comment on both his summaries of the interviews and his subsequent thematization. To use a phrase borrowed from the Duquesne Group, it could be said that the "interjudge reliability" of the results is "high" once several people agree that a particular thematization accurately reflects what was meant by the contributors.

Before beginning his own process of thematization, this researcher wanted to become aware of his own assumptions and presuppositions. To do this, he looked at his reasons for doing the dissertation and what orientations he was bringing to the data. The results of this self-reflection can be found in the earlier chapter entitled "Self-Hermeneutics."

Once the researcher was clear on his own assumptions, he wanted to develop a set of procedures by which to thematize the transcripts. He was helped by two Duquesne Group articles—one written by Amedeo Giorgi and the other by Paul Colaizzi—giving actual examples of the procedures used as they moved from a description of an experience to a description of the "structures" of that experience at both a "situated" (meaning

situational) and "general" (meaning trans-situational) level.<sup>15</sup> The members of the Duquesne Group stress that they do not want their procedures for thematization to become like recipes in a cookbook; not only do they accept that differing procedures may be equally valid, but they emphasize that the most essential ingredient of any set of procedures is the researcher's own insight and intuition.

After studying the Giorgi and Colaizzi articles, this researcher realized that his procedures for thematization would have to be different from theirs for three reasons:

1) Unlike the experiences thematized by Giorgi and Colaizzi, "evil" is not predominantly an "experiential" category, but rather is an amalgam of "experience" and "interpretation." One indication of this is that two people can discuss an identical "experience" and only one will consider it "evil." It therefore would not be possible to describe why a particular experience was "evil" to a contributor unless there was a discussion of that contributor's "interpretation" of what he or she meant by "evil."

2) Since three of the contributors—Bishop Myōkōko, Abe, and Rabbi Fox—did not describe any experiences that they would presently consider to be "evil," it would not be possible to thematize such interviews by looking at "stories" or "descriptions." In two of these three interviews,

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<sup>15</sup>See Amedeo Giorgi, "An Application of Phenomenological Method in Psychology," in *Duquesne Studies in Phenomenological Psychology*, Vol. II, ed. Amedeo Giorgi, Constance T. Fischer, and Edward L. Murray (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1975), pp. 82-103; and Paul F. Colaizzi, "Psychological Research as the Phenomenologist Views It," in Valle and King, eds., pp. 48-71. Giorgi's data-generating question was about "a situation in which learning occurred for you" whereas Colaizzi's was about "something you read that made an impression on you."

this researcher would be required to extract themes from worldviews that did not consider the concept of "evil" to be applicable to any conceivable situation.

3) Whereas Giorgi and Colaizzi were developing their "structures" to accurately reflect only one description, this researcher was also interested in the commonalities between different descriptions. This meant that he wanted the themes not only to accurately reflect each contributor's experience, but also to reveal the commonalities between the contributors that might not be immediately apparent.

Although the procedural steps used by this researcher were influenced by the articles of Giorgi and Colaizzi, he found some of their steps unnecessary and developed other procedures not mentioned by them. In all, this researcher isolated eleven different procedural steps in his own thematization of the interviews:

1. Dwelling with what each contributor said and meant. This was accompanied by several additional readings of the interview and the researcher letting it all "sink in."

2. Marking all passages pertinent to either an experience or interpretation of evil. This was done by the researcher circling all passages that he considered related to "evil."

3. Composing a general summary of the interview focusing particularly on those stories and interpretations that seemed most crucial or important. Although such a general summary included biographical data about the contributor along with a brief account of how the researcher met the contributor, its main focus was meant to be what was actually said at the interview. In order to select which parts of the interview to include in the summary, this researcher went through the entire

interview and put a star [ \* ] next to all those passages where the contributor was expressing an important aspect of his/her experience or interpretation of evil. All these starred portions of the interview were either quoted in the contributor's own words or summarized in the researcher's words. (The results of this step comprise the first several pages of the summary of each interview in Chapter Nine.)

4. Making a "summary of the narrative" that particularly focused on any "stories" of evil told by the contributor. In this summary of just the story portion of each interview, this researcher tried to include only those events or facts without which the contributor might not have considered this to be an experience of "evil." (The results of this step appear after each "general summary" in a section entitled: Summary of the Narrative.)

5. Summarizing each contributor's interpretation of her or his experience of evil and/or of what she or he meant by "evil." This summary focused on the viewpoints and worldview that led the contributors to believe that they had an experience of "evil." In those three interviews where the contributor had no experience that was currently considered "evil," this section would present the reasons given by the contributor that she or he did not find "evil" to be a useful concept. (The results of this step appear in Chapter Nine in a section entitled either: Contributor's Interpretation of Her/His Experience or Contributor's Interpretation of Evil.)

6. Developing a one paragraph statement of the "salient features" of each interview. This statement was composed with the intention of including only the highlights of the previously written "summary of the narrative" and "interpretation of evil." (The results of this step

appear at the very end of each summary in Chapter Nine under the title: Salient Features.)

7. Before attempting to extract themes from each interview, this researcher dwelled with the summaries he had composed in the previously mentioned steps three through six. Such a "dwelling" included letting himself be touched by what the contributor really meant to say.

8. For each interview, he extracted those themes that he considered central to the contributor's experiences and/or interpretations of evil. He termed a theme "major" if he viewed it as an essential structural feature of either the story or interpretation of evil. In this process of thematization, it was necessary for the researcher to see patterns and interconnections between a great mass of data and then pick out that phrasing that best suggested the "essential structure" of such patterns. In letting themes emerge from these patterns he was aided by:

- a) his intention of seeing each contributor's meanings from the contributor's own perspective;
- b) his memory of such non-verbal messages as the contributor's voice, tone, and gestures; and
- c) his felt sense of what each contributor meant to say both in each sentence and in the interview as a whole.

9. Adjusting the phrasings of the themes to bring out a common meaning between two or more contributors. Often two or more contributors had an almost identical meaning, but the phrasings chosen by this researcher were in each case worded slightly differently. Since this researcher wanted to find a phrasing that would reveal the commonalities between contributors, he would try to find a common phrasing that would equally fit all contributors who he felt intended the same meaning.

Whenever he changed a word to bring out such a shared meaning, he would check back to the original interview to make sure this new phrasing had not lost any of its congruence with the original data. (The themes that emerged from this step appear in Table IV in Chapter Ten.)

10. Three members of his Phenomenology Study Group who read all nine transcripts also read this researcher's summaries and subsequent thematization (that resulted from the previously mentioned steps three through six plus nine). On several occasions they offered suggestions and changes and this researcher acknowledged that he had either been ambiguous or omitted a significant detail. On other occasions this researcher disagreed with the changes that were suggested and after subsequent discussion the person suggesting the change came to accept this researcher's point of view as one possible interpretation (although he or she may have written it differently or emphasized different portions of the interview). After several faculty members on this researcher's dissertation committee read only the summaries of the interviews (and not the transcripts), they made several useful suggestions concerning the wording of various themes. In the end everyone familiar with the transcripts and/or summaries of the transcripts was satisfied that the themes that emerged from the interviews accurately reflected what each contributor meant to say.

11. Dwelling with the final thematization. After this process was complete, occasionally this researcher would still find that a further change in the wording of a theme would make it more exactly "fit" what one or more contributors meant to say. He brought such changes in the themes to his Phenomenology Study Group and in each case there was a consensus that he had made an improvement. Finally a moment arrived



wherein this researcher felt satisfied with his themes.

Once the themes had emerged from each interview, it was possible to look for common themes among Jews, Christians, and Buddhists and then to compare the themes of the contributors in each of these three groups. (The procedures used both in looking for common themes and in making such a comparison are described in detail in Chapter Ten.)

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Several times in the course of this dissertation this researcher had conversations with people familiar with an "approach" to social science research modelled on the "scientific method" of the natural sciences.<sup>16</sup> After this researcher mentioned that his plan was to point out similarities and differences among the themes that emerged from interviews with Jews, Christians, and Buddhists and that the basis for his comparison would be three non-randomly selected people from each group, there would often follow a discussion about the validity of such conclusions. In these discussions this researcher would take the position that this was a phenomenological investigation that was exploring themes that arose in the three groups and was not meant to make statistically valid generalizations.

At the very beginning of this study, this researcher accepted that since his method did not involve a "random" selection of contributors, any findings that resulted from the comparison of themes could not be

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<sup>16</sup>The word "approach" is used here to signify the (often implicit) presuppositions and assumptions underlying any search for knowledge. This term is taken from Amedeo Giorgi who used it to distinguish between the "approach" of the natural sciences and that of phenomenology; see his Psychology as a Human Science: A Phenomenologically Based Approach (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), especially p. 126.

considered statistically valid.<sup>17</sup> However, this does not mean that this researcher believes that the findings are invalid. After reflecting upon the validity of the findings discussed in Chapters Ten through Thirteen, he arrived at the following four conclusions:

1) The generalizations about the similarities and differences among the three religious groups attempted in Chapters Ten and Eleven are all meant to be tentative and suggestive. Since it is not practical for this researcher to repeat this caution so many times, he would just like to state once that although he has faith that the themes that emerged from each interview accurately reflect what was said about "evil" at that interview, he considers all his generalizations about large groups—such as Jews, Christians, and Buddhists—as only suggestive and tentative.

2) This researcher sees no inherent incompatibility between the approaches of the phenomenologist and the natural scientist. In practice, he has noted that a conflict arise once those committed to a natural scientific approach fail to bracket their presuppositions and then attempt to "explain away" a phenomenon or an experience; however,

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<sup>17</sup>This researcher asked Dr. Newton Suter, the teacher of statistics at the California Institute of Integral Studies, to explain what would be required in a research design in order to make the findings of a study statistically valid. In response to this question, he made the following comments:

Although thirty is the usual size of a sample preferred for making a statistically significant generalization about a population, the calculation of variance only requires a sample of two. Once variance is known, it is possible to make a generalization about a population at a certain level of significance. However, this procedure is only applicable if the sample is chosen through random selection.

Since this researcher interviewed only three people in each group (rather than thirty) and even these three were not randomly selected, any generalizations about these three groups would not be considered statistically valid at any level of significance. Dr. Suter's comments were made during a conversation that took place on 7 April 1982.

since such "reductionism" is not an inherent component of the "scientific method," these two approaches can be complementary.

3) In relation to "evil," a phenomenological perspective is well suited to clarify the various connotations of both this term and its associated themes. Up to the present, those social scientists committed to the approach of the natural sciences have not shown any interest in studying the viewpoints and assumptions concerning "evil" among people of various cultures and religions. However, once the connotations and meanings of "evil" have been explored phenomenologically, a social scientist committed to the approach of the natural sciences could usefully attempt to complement the phenomenological findings.

4) Since the method used to determine the essential structures of evil (known as "free phantasy variation") is not inductive, its accuracy does not depend on randomly selecting a large number of "subjects." As "free phantasy variation" is widely accepted as one of the pillars of phenomenological investigation, this researcher would hold that it is as rigorous and valid as the "scientific method" of the natural sciences.

This researcher would like to conclude this chapter by saying that he views this entire dissertation as only an introduction to the phenomenological investigation of evil. Many of the methods and procedures are still in the exploratory phase. In particular, what to this researcher's knowledge is new to phenomenological research is the conducting of interviews among people of different backgrounds as part of an attempt to compare the themes that emerge from each of these groups.

If this investigation was compared to an archaeological "dig" that was to "unearth" a huge mound, this researcher's self-evaluation is that he has delved only into a single "trench." The stratified structures

apparent at this location may serve as a clue to the archaeology of the whole. Yet when more of the whole is "unearthed," the initial investigations may appear in a new light. The claim of phenomenology is not that the entire site will automatically yield the artifacts of the first; it is rather that what is genuinely essential to the whole will be present in the part as well.

## CHAPTER NINE

### SUMMARIES OF THE INTERVIEWS

Evil is the topic for today. Not, for the moment, the evil of social and economic injustice, not political evils that, in their abstractness, galvanize and reassure the spirit of reform. No. The topic is evil with a human face, singular and intimate, irreversible evil—what one person does to another and what happens next.

The Village Voice Literary Supplement  
Number One, October 1981, p. 1

In this chapter each of the nine contributors speaks for her or himself. One of the researcher's goals was to find a direct quotation from the transcript for every important point made by all the contributors. In summarizing both their experiences and interpretations of evil, the researcher tried to stay as close to the contributors' wording as possible.

To give the interviews a more "authentic" flavor, it was decided in most cases to leave the wording in the original grammar; the only exception to this was when "faulty grammar" would have confused the meaning of the sentence. Omitted most of the time were words that did not add to the meaning of sentences—such as "umm," "like," "I mean," and "y'know"—and hanging phrases that never evolved into a sentence. Three periods without spaces between them [...] are used to indicate a pause while the speaker is talking. On occasion, but not often, when the contributor referred to the very same incident or point in two different parts of

the interview, rather than repeat what was already stated, the researcher would combine the phrasing from both parts. In no case was even one word added by the researcher.

The interviews are arranged in the same chronological order in which they occurred.

BISHOP MYŌKŌKO

Religion:	Zen Buddhist
Father:	Buddhist priest
Nation of birth:	Japan
Arrival in America:	1951
Occupation:	Zen Buddhist priest
Age:	Seventies
Date of Interview:	19 November 1981

This researcher had taken a class on the philosophy of Nāgārjuna with Bishop Myōkōko. In this class, the Bishop had presented Nāgārjuna's teaching of śūnyatā as an alternative to the ordinary way of thinking.<sup>1</sup> At one meeting of the class the Bishop had mentioned that there is no difference between good and evil, but at the time had not elaborated upon this point. For his first interview, this researcher was still a bit fearful of questioning strangers, so he decided to start with a familiar face.

The interview took place at the Bishop's house in San Francisco on a Thursday afternoon. During the interview, the Bishop's wife served green tea and rice crackers, and the researcher was made to feel very welcome.

At the beginning the Bishop stated he had no stories about any experience of "evil" and he explained why he never could ever have such an experience:

Evil is only a relative term and a relative concept. There is no evil anywhere and there is no good anywhere. It is only relative...just like east and west—when there is no west, there is no east.

When I was very young, I thought evil and good existed each by itself, and good conduct is always good...permanently. And bad is evil...and is always evil. But not now...anymore...I understand they are relative existence or relative concepts...yea...so when good exists, evil exists at the same time. There is no evil without good, there is no good without evil. That is the real buddhistic point of view. This way of thinking is quite different from ordinary human thinking.

Most human thinking are realistic and dualistic. Most ordinary people understand evil exists by itself, good exists by itself—that is dualism. In Buddhism there is no such idea. So the good and the evil are relative existence...just like east and west—when there is no west there is no east, when there is no east there is no west—that is relativity...true relativity, yea.

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<sup>1</sup>For a discussion of this teaching, see pp. 51-53 of this dissertation.



We must go beyond this dichotomy...this dualistic world... otherwise we have no tranquillity. Yea, that is buddhistic way.

The interviewer asked if he thought murder was evil and received this response:

Even murder is not always evil—it is conditionally evil. And helping others is not always good—sometimes it's very bad.

For instance, if I give money to the idle person, that money poison him—it not help. Also we have many poisons—marijuana, narcotics—but when the time is right and the people right, I can give him and help him.

Poison and medicine are the same thing...fundamentally. Only conditionally their name are different. Just like evil and good are the same thing...conditionally different, yea...that is a buddhistic idea...

The Bishop as a young man did believe there was evil:

At that time I was so foolish—I hated bad conduct...when someone did something wrong, I hated him.

Other people was not evil—my judgment was evil.

Now I understand like this. There is no evil person, no good person. All this kind of discrimination or different judgment depended on me...depend on my point of view. So if I have pure state of mind, I can see everybody...just the pure...even if they are doing good or bad...their nature, their basic nature are not defiled...always pure and clean, yea. That is present point of view...my attitude...if I hate his conduct, that is my fault.

Bishop Myōkōko pointed out that both good and evil must be illusions since their existence is relative and based on a comparison:

Bishop: Both good and bad are just human concepts. Illusion. Both are illusion. In other words, good is a human evaluation, bad is a human evaluation too. When we evaluate good or bad, we must compare, but unfortunately comparison itself is impossible. We cannot compare one to the other. For instance, we cannot compare a horse with a cow because they are quite different things. But very foolish things can be done all over the world. For instance, people compare horse and cow and say, "This is horse, this is cow." If they do not compare them, they cannot discriminate horse from cow. They are quite different from the beginning. How do they compare them? It is very foolish.

Interviewer: So would you say that comparing good and evil is like comparing horses and cows?

B: Same thing. Same thing. Comparison itself is impossible. People feel that this is good, this is bad. There is no reason in it.

The Bishop also made the point that not only good and evil, but all phenomena are illusions:

Phenomenon is illusion. There is no phenomenon. But if I say it is a phenomenon, that is illusion.

All during the interview the researcher was pressing the Bishop to give examples of what he was saying about evil in the form of a story from his own experience—but never did the Bishop present even a glimmering of a story. Towards the end of the interview, the reason for the interviewer's failure became apparent—as the following dialogue makes clear, the Bishop does not believe that he has ever had any experiences:

Interviewer: What I was more interested in was what experience people would call evil.

Bishop: All experience is past experience. There is no present experience—even if it was good or bad. It was past—all gone. It is only a memory remaining in our mind. That was just a memory. So there is no actual things. The past is gone. Everything in the past that happened is gone. The future has not come yet. And the present is just between future and past. So there is no time now.

I: So there's no present either?

B: No present either.

I: Isn't this moment the present?

B: No (laughing).

I: (challenging) So what is happening right now? Isn't this the present.

B: No.

I: (surprised) No present?

B: No present, of course.

I: I understand the past is gone and the future is yet to come, but I feel there is a present, a being here now. Have you heard this expression? — "Be here now."

B: Yeah, I understand. There is nothing...because there is no

time now.

I: No time at now? So what's happening now?

B: Happening? I don't know (laughs). Nothing happens at now ...because there is not time at the present.

I: So if there is no time at the present, there's no experience.

B: No experience. All memories, all knowledge, are past memories.

I: But aren't memories happening in the present?

B: No, there is no present memories. All memories was past memories.

I: Is this moment remembering a past memory?

B: No. That is a past memory. All human knowledge are from the past, not present, not future.

I: So what you are really saying is that there is no experience.

B: (Nods in agreement)

At this point the interviewer realized that he definitely was not going to hear any "experiences" of evil, but still was curious to find out the Bishop's attitude to World War II. As the following dialogue makes clear, the Bishop believes that all wars are illusory:

Interviewer: Where were you living during World War II? In which country were you living?

Bishop: Oh, I was Japanese...so I lived in Japan. That is only the realistic point of view. Who was I? I was only a body and a mind at that time. So my body was only matter. What is matter? Matter is only particles...and those particles are made of smaller atoms. Who was I? I couldn't see "I" anywhere. So "I" is only a concept, a human delusive concept.

I: I understand. That delusive concept must have had different feelings about the war that was going on around about you.

B: War is also delusive concept, surely. There is no war anywhere. No one can kill others or can be killed by others.

Having heard the Bishop talk about "killing" previously when he was a student in his class, the researcher interpreted the Bishop's point that

no one can kill or be killed as meaning that since both the body and the self are delusions, neither of them is vulnerable to death.

The interviewer concluded by making an attempt to summarize what he thought the Bishop was saying:

Interviewer: So what I am understanding from this interview is that you...basically...deny that the phenomenon of evil exists.

Bishop: (interrupting) No, no, please...don't misunderstand my point...I don't like to deny anything because I don't like to affirm anything.

I: I see.

B: I am quite free from affirmation or negation. These are only conditional. The buddhistic attitude itself is that no one can deny anything...no one can affirm anything. Everything is conditional. That is real relativity. We don't need to deny anything.

I: (asking for confirmation) But yet you don't affirm that evil exists either?

B: That's right. We have nothing to affirm...evil or good...both. If someone affirms good and denies evil, he must be stupid.

I: I see. But it sounds like you are denying both good and evil. It sounds like you're denying the existence of both good and evil.

B: No, they are relative and conditional...so everywhere there is evil and good...conditionally. But evil and good are basically quite the same...no differentiation.

I: You would say that evil and good are the same and they both do exist?

B: No, not exist. Existence is relative...relative existence.

I: But they both have relative existence. And they exist at the same time and the same place?

B: That's right, that's right. There is no evil without good, there is no good without evil. They are relative existence. When one is missing, the other is missing too. When one exists, the other exists at the same time. That is relativity—there is nothing real in existence.

#### Summary of the Narrative

As a young man, before he understood Buddhism, the Bishop made

moral judgments about whether people were good or evil. He believed stealing and killing were evil, and would condemn and hate the person who committed such acts. From the Bishop's present buddhistic viewpoint—where good and evil are no different from each other—he now considers his previous judgments to have been defiled because his state of mind then was impure.

#### The Bishop's Interpretation of His Experience

The Bishop will neither affirm nor deny anything in any pair of opposites. Since he sees all comparisons as impossible, there is no way he can differentiate good from bad. Furthermore, the Bishop also does not believe that he or anybody else ever has had any experience, and places no value upon interpreting that which has no ultimate reality.

#### Salient Features

The Bishop sees all experience as taking place in a dualistic and realistic world that only has relative or conditional existence. Since this relative world has no ultimate reality, good and evil are arbitrary judgments that only reveal a person's ignorance. Just as from the vantage point of the unconditional, a poison can be a medicine and a medicine a poison, so good and bad cannot be differentiated.

LUKE

Religion: Calls himself "a religious person" who studies all religions

Parents' religion: Father--Roman Catholic  
Mother--Greek Orthodox

Nationality: American

Occupations: Writer, lecturer, therapist

Age: Mid forties

Date of interview: 8 December 1981

Luke is a well-known writer and lecturer in the field of comparative religion. This researcher, who had just been introduced to him, called him up on the odd possibility that he might have had an experience of evil. He was very friendly on the telephone and said that he had had two such experiences and would be willing to be interviewed.

At the interview itself, Luke talked rapidly and smoked cigarettes. In doing the transcribing, the researcher realized that what Luke said could (with just a small amount of editing) be good written English. As his experience of evil was conveyed in two separate stories, each story will be originally considered separately.

Luke started the interview with this narrative about an event that occurred in his apartment in New York City:

I temporarily harbored a woman who was a schizophrenic--had had schizophrenic episodes--in my house with my wife and we wakened in the morning--about six o'clock in the morning--to discover all the radios on, all the doors open, all the windows open, and she dancing around the apartment. So I didn't think much of that--until she saw I walked into the room where she was--and she responded well to me--and then she suddenly...and then she suddenly saw my wife in the background--and she was about five foot two, weighed about two hundred and fifty pounds--and suddenly she said: "THAT WOMAN...MUST DIE!" (laughs) And she started moving towards her and there was a point suddenly when her eyes just went totally blank--totally--there was no depth at all--there was no person there--and this woman ostensibly disappeared--and there was just this enormous demonic force moving through the apartment--very slowly--very very slowly--with me back talking to her as I am walking backwards--and not touching her. And it was at that time that I suddenly for the first time experienced--at least, a confrontation in a human being with evil. And the essence of that evil was that there was...there was no person there, no person at all, OK.

When asked about his wife's reaction to this situation, he responded:

She was absolutely terrified, and she was certain that indeed we're both going to die. She said, "I realized that the only way that you could stop her was to kill her--that's it." I mean, you could feel the presence of this person moving very slowly through this room...with certainty...barefoot--her image sticks in my mind. My wife was just breathless--she sighed, "I couldn't breathe through the entire...I was just plastered against the wall." And it was at

that particular end of the apartment—the only way out were the windows—no fire escape on the fourth or fifth floor—so it was a tricky situation, to say the least.

Later he elaborated on what he meant by his perception that "there was no person there!":

My feeling throughout the entire event was that I was not in the presence of a human being—the human being was gone ...(pause) ...totally. And that was the evil for me, not the person herself, but her absence, her total absence. There was just this body, but there was no person. That was the terrifying thing—that the person was totally gone. Until this day, I don't know what I was talking to...

Since then, I've worked in clinics and hospitals and I've been around people in psychotic states—and I've never seen even in the most psychotic positions—I've never seen that particular look, that particular energy...ever again.

He also described in more detail how the woman became a non-human force:

She was a big woman normally, but suddenly my experience of her wasn't just that she was solid, but that she was—it was—this thing was—a real force that had manifested itself in matter suddenly. I could see even the way she was putting her feet down on the ground, it was...it was just with such certainty—I mean, if this woman had said, "I want to lift this building off of the ground," she probably could have, that was the way she was in her possession. She wasn't gesticulating madly or anything—she was very calm through this thing. And, perhaps, I don't know, perhaps my moving into her space helped me get in contact with that calmness —(laughs)—but I don't know, that's another fantasy that comes up.

Without being asked, Luke described how this occurrence had assisted him as a therapist:

That experience with the woman has helped me enormously whenever I've worked with psychotic people...because I don't...I don't experience the fear that a lot of people say comes up or sometimes even show...it's perfectly reasonable for me to talk to them and to handle them...and I've been in situations in which normally people would use restraints and I...I would walk into the situation and restraints wouldn't be needed...but I think it had to do with this initial experience with this woman...because since that time I have never...I've never been afraid of psychoses in other people...because I have never seen anything like that...(laughs)...yeah.

Towards the end of the interview, Luke was asked what made this an "experience of evil" and he responded:



What made it an experience of evil in that particular instance for me was that there was no—even though she said. "I'm going to throw that woman out the window"—I had a distinct sense there was no intent behind it. It had no intent...it was a thing to be done—period—and nothing more... What was truly evil about it was that it was getting ready to perform a destructive act without purpose—without intent, at all.

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Luke's second experience of evil occurred in South America:

A much earlier experience—the fact of the matter, the experience that is cardinal in my life happened to me when I was about ...eight years old—I guess I was about eight years old—and for the life of me I don't remember where I got these things—and I forget what they're called—I'm certain my parents didn't give them to me—but they're these little cloth things—I once was told the name—these little cloth things..little rectangular things that Catholics wear that have a picture of Christ on one and a saint on another—one on the front, one on the back—made out of some kind of fabric. And I had one of these a very short period of time—I got into the habit when I went to bed I would take it off and—I say I doubt if my parents gave it to me because I wasn't raised any specific tradition—and there was a bureau next to my bedside and I would place it on the bureau with the two pieces hanging over the edge, as it were—and from time to time, I would reach over and touch it. Well ...(hushed voice)...it still sends chills over me—I reached over and—one night—I saw it hanging there—I reached over one night—and I touched it—and when I touched it, two things happened—I'll define the experience better, but what happened was that the thing flew off—what it was was a water bug. (Interviewer laughs)

However, I didn't realize it at the time—this is some time later that I saw possibly what it was—or perhaps my parents explained what it was. I spent the first five years of my life down in South America—and...where there are a lot of these things—and...when I touched it, thinking it was this thing, I immediately experienced—the first place it was cold—I experienced...the thing shot through me...as an enormous wave of cold—and I found myself—yeah, I was about eight, seven or eight—I found myself...in space—and I found myself in a thing I could only describe as blackest...(long pause as he searches for the right word)...blackest black, I don't know how else to define it. And there I was in the midst of—my experience of it was that I was in the presence of all the source of the evil of the entire universe—and it was somewhere in the universe where this is taking place—this took place within, I can't imagine it took more than milliseconds—but it lasted in my child's imagination a very very very long time.

And it stuck with me—so much so that when I first went into analysis in my twenties—one of the first experiences I related to my therapist who was a Jungian and we talked about it and...indeed the interesting comment she made that this was indeed the dark side

of God that I had emotionally experienced by the shock of not discovering the thing. That to me was an experience that to this day convinces me that I had once seen the heart—the real heart—the source of evil as it exists in the universe—at least in my fantasy that's how the experience comes back to me.

Later in the interview he had this to say about the moment he perceived evil:

The thing itself was cold...the sensation it gave me...put me into a situation in which I felt a bitter cold...an absolutely bitter cold...and I would imagine, perhaps, although it's never happened to me since—I imagine that I went into a fugue state in that...in that I left the room...I was no longer in the room...for ...for what seemed an eternity...but I knew was only a millisecond because it was from that time that I touched it, it flew off immediately (snaps his fingers)—it was in the touching that the entire event happened—and I found myself in the universe looking at this blackness where all the evil originates...at least, that was my understanding of the event at the time.

I guess I felt the cold first...an enormous extraordinary cold...that just shot through my entire body...and then the rest of the event was...was without bodily sensation—it was a seeing.

About the religious object that triggered this event he said:

My mind set was that this thing signified God in some way—and to suddenly discover, number one, that it was alive, and number two, that it was something really gross...(both laugh)...was absolutely terrifying.

When Luke was asked whether the "blackness" was a metaphor for a feeling state or whether it was an actual color, he responded:

There was an actual color. The only way I can describe it...um ...the only way I can describe it is that it was the blackness of black that came to me at the time.

When asked what made this "an experience of evil," he answered that it was "the coldness and the blackness."

When later in the interview Luke was queried about whether this experience changed his life in any way, he responded:

It still gives me a feeling of awe and apprehension. It really took the most effect on me in my early twenties when I talked it over with my therapist...the idea being that this was the other side of God that is never fully appreciated—that radic-ally changed my attitude about the reality of evil.

It's indeed an entity in its own right, a manifestation of which occurred in Germany, the most recent historical example ...World War II...and that to not recognize it as demonic or unconscious principle is to leave yourself open essentially... (pauses) ...um, to just think you can change things through political or social reform, to affect evil, is to me because of that experience dangerous, yeah.

After Luke finished telling about his experience, the researcher pointed out a similarity between the two experiences of evil and questioned the contributor if he had the same perception:

Interviewer: Now, what I'm understanding is that...is that for you evil is a force independent of persons, almost...and that when it manifests, the person disappears...in both of your stories...in the sense, the first story you strongly said that there was no person there. It almost seems like in your experience of evil, you weren't there...

Contributor: (nodding in agreement) It's almost as if the moment the person is not there, then evil can enter...from those two examples. I couldn't make a generalized statement about that—but for me, that was the experience.

#### Luke's Interpretation of His Experience

Luke was clear that both of his experiences had an aspect that could not be rationally comprehended:

I cannot comprehend the childhood experience. With the woman, she just wasn't...the personality wasn't there—that I can't comprehend. Where did that go?

In the following discussion Luke suggested that both of his experiences were a glimpse into a numinous<sup>1</sup> dimension:

Interviewer: I guess the only other thought I have about your two experiences is that it seems...and I want to make sure this isn't my own words...it seems that there was a sense of timelessness in them...there was a sense of going beyond the normal bounds of time.

Luke: Yes, yeah, in each instance. And I think this might just be the experience of a tremendum or what people used to call "religious

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<sup>1</sup>For a discussion of Otto's conception of "the numinous," see pp. 57-59 of this dissertation.

experiences."

Yeah, and it's interesting because I've never seen those two experiences...well, perhaps the childhood experience I came to intellectualize as a spiritual experience. But, now, with this conversation, I am starting to realize that perhaps in the case with the woman, it was also that type...a similar experience...it was that same force, that same tremendum, yeah.

I: Uhuh...uhuh. One of the books that I read doing my research was by Rudolph Otto, called The Idea of the Holy. He has one paragraph in it on "evil." The whole book, as you know, is about the holy side, then he has one paragraph in which he says, "Evil could be considered the negatively numinous."

L: O yes, absolutely, I agree. It's definitely numin...at least, in my experience, it was numinous... And the other thing I should mention is that the sense of personal terror is not present...at least wasn't present for me. The idea of my personality, of my person being in danger was not the issue. It wasn't that I wasn't experiencing fear, but it had nothing to do with fear of my person.

I: Uhuh...the image that I get is that your consciousness opened up to another dimension that you never knew was there before. And it wasn't like this fear level which is a bodily level...even when I was talking about the body sensations, I get that you almost weren't in your body.

L: Exactly, yeah.

I: There was a moment before when you were in your body and... then...

L: I experienced no bodily sensations...except for the childhood, that instantaneous coldness, but no palpitations or sweats or trembling or anything.

Evil for Luke is not a bodily experience, but a witnessing of a numinous dimension. Luke concluded his part in the interview by stating what he had learned through the dialogue:

I'd never seen this woman as an experience of a mysterium, but indeed it obviously was...and that's interesting.

Shortly before the end of the interview, the researcher told Luke about Bishop Myōkōko's position that evil was only a "conditional reality" and asked Luke how he related to such a "philosophical perspective."

Luke responded:

Um, I'd say that more than likely I would disagree with him...100%. I think historically we have, unfortunately, more than enough indication that there's evil. I mean...the newspaper any day...you can see its manifestation. He's essentially saying that it's not a force. My issue is that it is a force—it's a reality.

### Summary of the Narrative

Luke's first experience of evil was in the felt absence of a human presence. When he looked into the eyes of a woman who was calmly dedicated to killing his wife, he saw they were totally blank and without depth—which led him to the spontaneous perception that the person was totally gone. After the event, he came to the realization that this woman's total dedication did not come from a place of intention, but from a demonic force that was moving through her body.

Luke's second and cardinal experience of evil occurred after he touched an object that was to him a symbol of God and—to his amazement—discovered it to be both "alive" and "really gross." Along with the shock of this discovery, an extraordinary wave of cold swept through his entire body. In the same millisecond, he lost all body sensation and was left with a vision of blackest black. It was during the seeing of such blackness that Luke experienced himself as being in the presence of the source of evil in the entire universe.

### Salient Features

Luke's experience of evil was being in the presence of a force that had the power to move through a human body when the person was absent. When this force possessed another person, it was perceived as demonic; when it was observed inside his own being, it was seen as blackest black. In both cases, it was an experience of a numinous dimension that inspired feelings of awe, mystery, and horror.

RUTH

Religion:	Jewish
Nationality:	Israeli
Grandparents' nationality:	Yemenite
Arrival in America:	Two years before the interview
Age:	Late twenties
Dates of the interviews:	25 December 1981 5 March 1982

Note: Ruth only consented to let the researcher publish what is written here after he agreed to put the Hebrew letters "bet" and "hai"—meaning "with God"—in the upper right-hand corner on the beginning page of her interview. She feared that telling this story would bring "bad things" down upon her unless she was protected by the power of God's name.

Ruth is a practicing Jew who most appreciates the devotional forms of Judaism: praying, chanting, singing, and dancing. While travelling with her in a car to a Friday evening Sabbath service, this researcher asked her if she had ever had an experience of evil. Her expression immediately changed to one of fear: and after some hesitancy, she said that she had had such an experience with a "psychology woman who she once lived with." She was vibrating with emotion, but was reluctant to say anything more. Later that evening, while returning from the service, she agreed to speak, and an interview was arranged for the next Friday.

After having gotten together at her house on the day of the interview and before the tape recorder was turned on, Ruth several times asked the researcher in a hushed voice if he was "sure" he wanted to do this. Each time the researcher responded in the affirmative. Then, right after the tape recorder was turned on, Ruth asked the following questions:

Ruth: (with a concerned voice) How do you feel? How do you feel?

Interviewer: I feel great.

R: Yeah, even I talk about it? You don't feel something will come to you?

I: I feel great.

From Ruth's tone the researcher "got" that she had a long buried secret and that she felt this secret could possibly harm or curse whomever heard it.

The "evil" incidents that Ruth described occurred on two consecutive days after she had first arrived in San Francisco from Israel: first, she was beaten up by her new American "boyfriend"; and, then, her boyfriend ganged up with another couple living in the same house to

blame her for what had happened. The woman of the other couple was a practicing therapist and is referred to throughout the interview as "the psychology woman." This is how Ruth told about the evening when she was unjustly blamed:

Ruth: The three of them—my boyfriend, the psychology woman, and her husband—each person just spoke how I was wrong and how I'm bad and how everything that came here I am the responsibility. So that...uh, that was the...that was the real evil day and night... that was the real evil night when a person sit and hear exactly the opposite about him...and...don't answer even, just take it... (laughs) I was crazy too, I guess, but...that was the big evil thing...uh, after the evil, you go to hell...after evil, you go to hell.

Interviewer: Were you in hell about...?

R: (cutting in) ...for a few months. That's a real thing, Elliott.

This is how she described her feelings on the night of the unjust accusation:

Ruth: That night what I can remember is that she [the psychology woman] asked me just one question: "How do you feel?"...so, I said, "I feel pressure"...and then I cry a little bit without let them like to...I mean, I just cry a little bit...

I: You didn't let them know you were crying?

R: (laughs) No, I cry really...I really cry because I was in the middle and they see me...but like...I just remember that I start crying and I really wanted to cry, but it's not the place to cry... it's not...and...and...and what I felt is...except pressure, yeah, kind of wondering in life, "What's happening?"..."How come these things happening?" I didn't understand...I mean, like the justice wondering in life (laughs)... "Where is justice?" I believed so much that everything comes from God that it's hard for me to say something wrong, something bad, y'know...because it's happened from God.

Shortly after these two incidents, Ruth concluded that "the psychology woman" had hurt her for the pleasure of having power over her. She also broke up with her boyfriend and moved out of the house that they were all living in together. Although she now rarely saw any of the people who had treated her so unjustly, this experience left her in a burning



hell:

For a few months, I was in kind of burning. I don't know how to speak, what to do, what to say, what to see people and be shocked ...and I was never shocked from people...and...and...for a few months, from this word evil, I...every day, every minute...for a few months, I felt like something is burning here and...and something cuts you (puts both of her hands over her heart)...and every minute...

Later in the interview Ruth was asked about this experience of "burning":

Interviewer: Now the last thing I'd like to ask you about your experience is that you mentioned these "burning sensations." Did you have them every day after this experience...or was it just something that happened every once in a while? Do you remember how often these burning sens....?

R: Every day.

I: Every day!

R: Every minute (said with a heavy tone).

I: Every minute! Of every day? You feel in your heart a burning? Could you describe that a little bit more? Was it like your whole body was a-fire?

R: (long pause and then a sigh) No, it's my heart...I felt my heart kind of burning and kind of...a kind of cutting with knife...and when I...and when I heard about this situation again ...or when I spoke about it, then from my heart it's come to all my body...like...like burning...like from this fire...I felt like from this, if I spoke about it, then it come to my body, I felt like I could just go...even up...with this power...fire.

Although these incidents had occurred two years previously, it was only two months before the date of this interview that the burning had gone away "almost" completely. On this day, while out walking in her neighborhood, she had accidentally met "the psychology woman" and her husband, and although they indicated a willingness to stop and chat with her, she had gone right past them. Then, an hour later, still by accident, she had met the same old boyfriend who had beaten her. She did stop to talk with him and after a while

he asked me...he asked me if I would like to go to Israel because if I would like to go to Israel, he will pay me. So I heard "pay" ...I felt he wanted to pay...so I took from him a little money to go to Israel...yeah, yeah, so for me it seemed this guy wants to pay. And when I left my boyfriend, I felt very very high and then I came home and I was (gasps aloud) amazing...I knew that...I knew that it came from God...and that start open me...like it show me I was OK.

After the old boyfriend showed her attention in this way, the burning sensations "almost" totally went away.

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After the completion of the interview, this researcher realized that what most intrigued him about Ruth's story was the contrast between the intensity of Ruth's burning and the magnitude of the original offence. Even considering that she had just arrived in a strange land and was speaking a foreign language, it still was not clear why these incidents had the power to affect her so deeply. Then, one day, the researcher received the results of a computer search relating to articles about "evil," and his attention was drawn to an article that appeared in an Israeli journal about the widespread belief in "the evil eye" among Jewish Israeli's of Yemenite ancestry.<sup>1</sup> Realizing that all of Ruth's grandparents were Jews from Yemen, immediately it clicked that possibly the intensity of Ruth's response might be due to a belief that "the psychology woman" had given her "the evil eye." At this point, the researcher chose to arrange a second meeting to check out this possibility.

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<sup>1</sup>The article was Phyllis Palgi's "Persistent Traditional Yemenite Ways of Dealing with Stress in Israel," Mental Health and Society, 5 (1978), 113-40. The author concluded that among Israeli Yemenites there was no incongruity perceived between the existence of "the evil eye" and the teachings of the Talmud. For a discussion of the folklore surrounding "the evil eye" in a wide variety of cultures, see Lawrence Di Stasi's Mal Occhio [evil eye]: The Underside of Vision (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1981).

At the second interview, the researcher asked Ruth if she had any belief in "the evil eye" and immediately she revealed a silver hand-shaped amulet that she always kept around her neck to ward off this evil power. Asked if "the psychology woman" had given her "the evil eye," she expressed the belief that "the psychology woman" had intended to take away her soul and that she herself had let her do this by giving away her own power. Asked whether she felt possessed, she responded that there was not "something coming in," but a "going out of her soul."<sup>2</sup> She still believed in the power of "the evil eye," but now she felt if she owned her own power, it would no longer be able to dominate her life.

The interviewer perceived that Ruth was more relaxed and less fearful than she had been at the previous interview, and concluded by asking Ruth if she would still call this an experience of "evil." She responded:

Um, I think there is something with evil here. I just can see it now with different eye, with different view. We always can fight against it, like maybe "evil eye" sound like hate. There is something that can come and really do something wrong to you...but "No"—you can fight with it...I mean, you can let it not be, you can stop it. Because, yeah, there is always something good open if you want it.

Although "the evil eye" could once take away her soul, Ruth's present faith both in herself and in the good is now strong enough to ward off its destructive power.

#### Ruth's Interpretation of Her Experience

Ruth's understanding of evil comes into focus in this dialogue:

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<sup>2</sup>At one point in explaining what she meant by "soul," she used the Hebrew word neshamah (נִשְׁמָה).

Interviewer: Now you mentioned two incidents that happened to you that were really destructive...the first was when your boyfriend started beating you and the second was when the three of them together were criticizing you...did you see both of these things as evil?

Ruth: Yeah.

I: Both of them.

R: Of course, the higher level was the second one, but both of them anyway for me is evil because nobody should hurt each other.

Thus evil to Ruth is present whenever one person hurts another person.

#### Summary of the Narrative

Ruth was physically beaten by her boyfriend and then unjustly blamed for this incident by people who claimed to be her friends. This inexplicable injustice led Ruth to believe that the woman involved had actually given her "the evil eye." The effect of her belief in this curse was to create painful sensations of burning and cutting in her heart that, when she spoke or heard about these incidents, would be accompanied by a feeling that there was a fire burning throughout her body. Two years later, after her old boyfriend expressed a willingness "to pay" for her to go to Israel, she again felt "OK"—and on that same day the burning sensations "almost" totally went away.

#### Salient Features

Evil for Ruth was the experience of being hurt by people whom she trusted. After this hurt, she believed that she had been given the evil eye and her soul had gone out of her. This belief created an inner hell in which she was constantly tormented by painful burning sensations that had their center in the region of her heart.

PAUL

Religion:	Catholic
Parents' religion:	Catholic
Nationality:	American
Previous religious affiliation:	Member of the Jesuit Order for 14 years Jesuit priest for 4 years
Present occupations:	"Teaches spirituality" Conducts meditation retreats
Age:	Early thirties
Date of Interview:	14 January 1982

When the researcher mentioned to a friend that he wanted to interview a Christian minister or priest, he was told of a man named Paul who had been a Jesuit priest and was presently teaching courses in Christian mysticism. When the researcher telephoned Paul and asked whether he had ever had an "experience" of evil, it was as if the researcher had unleashed a torrent. Paul declared that he had had exactly such an experience during his long agony about whether or not to leave the Jesuit Order. Rather than hear more over the telephone, an appointment was set up for several weeks hence at Paul's home.

Before the interview itself began, Paul told the interviewer how he had gotten married a little over a year ago just after leaving the Jesuit Order and how both he and his wife were searching for ways to integrate their spiritual interests into their vocations. Once the tape recorder was turned on, Paul began by describing an experience of evil that he had not mentioned on the telephone:

The one that seems the sharpest and clearest was just about two months ago—my wife and I lost our child two hours after she was born, and we had no previous notice. Apparently the causes were genetic abnormalities...and I was faced with the decision of whether to try to do extraordinary measures or not, or have the doctors do that, or whether to let the child die. And I decided to let the child die—as it would have caused my wife more suffering for the sake of our expectations rather than what seemed to be the reality of the situation. But what became clear particularly that night—that was about three o'clock in the afternoon—and something that both my wife and I went through was a very profound experience of awareness of evil—not so much in physical death—but in ourselves. And I think what it revealed—sometimes people talk about at the moment of death of having a life review—it was something like that. I think for both of us in a way it was a kind of spontaneous life review, and also an alternation of our mental states, our emotional states...which revealed both good and evil. It revealed, I think, our own fears, doubts, our own selfishness and false expectations and...options for hope or despair, anger or gratitude, kind of on and on, you know, struggles in the relationship. And to me, the way that it came most clearly was that in that short time of about an hour and a half, it was like an extreme condensation of human experience. What I felt was that all our

child Ariela needed was to be loved for the brief time that she was here, and yet even in that brief time there was both love and not love. There was inattention, self-concern, institutional insensitivity—all the things that prevent one from being lovingly aware in the moment. And I guess the difference between being lovingly aware in the moment and everything else is something of what I mean by evil. The "everything else," whether it's well intentioned or explicitly bad or evil, it all seemed to be the same—in that it was the lack of the one thing necessary. I think the sharpness of that in those moments was revelatory of...those states and conditions throughout our whole life. And the same preoccupations, insensitivity, lack of attention, irresponsibility, fear, clutching were there at other times and all of them were revealed as somehow superficial, beside the point, and terrible in their effects—when I saw it condensed in that situation.

Asked about how his body felt that night, Paul responded:

I think I was in a state of extreme excitability—a very emotional state which was both maybe more tense than usual, and yet also more spontaneous than usual too—in that weeping or other emotions which normally would be more under control were flowing freely, and—the other thing was—just a state of wakefulness, extreme wakefulness. I could not sleep. So there was like a hyper-awareness going on where I was extremely alert and yet...in another way physically exhausted at the same time.

He made a contrast between such a state of "hyper-awareness" and what might be called normal everyday "inattention":

Inattention itself blinds us to the effects...of "evil of average evil." Uh...there's a line from Auden that "the average of the average man is the dread Leviathan"—and I feel that's something about what I'm trying to say...is that just the ordinary routines or habitual lack of consciousness or loving responsiveness can have big effects, that in some moments it becomes critical, and something very visible might happen. And yet in most moments, I think it's not so visible...and yet it may be having effects on those who you live with.

Paul then went on to describe how the two or three years he was debating whether to leave the Jesuits was an experience of evil:

In that process too, because it was a situation of a major choice, I think the same kinds of factors came up—the issues of self-concern and seeking one's own security—if you want, in terms of the Gospel: "trying to save one's own life and then losing it." I felt that that was something of what was at stake in that decision. And I think what might make it an interesting example is that...the very condition that I was labelling as evil was a formerly religious one. I guess it would be the situation of hypocrisy or living

under the law rather than living according to the spirit of love. Its again the same issue where one can be faithfully observing even a religious law or seeking a religious ideal and yet it is still in the interests of preserving one's own life (laughs) rather than surrendering it in the moment in love.

He quoted a line from Kahlil Gibran as characterizing his mental state in trying to decide whether or not to leave the Jesuits:

"The kiss of the beloved separates doubt which beguiles the spirit and saddens the heart from certitude which fills the inner self with joy."

I guess what I was feeling was that one of the evil aspects was the "beguiling of the spirit" with endless rationalizations that were not really true, like a religious justification that was false or hypocritical, a kind of mental obsession.

The interviewer asked if what made this experience "evil" was all his doubts and Paul answered:

It was definitely connected with doubt. There's a kind of doubt that's behind rationalizing, a certain kind of cynicism or skepticism or rationalizing that is coming from fear and insecurity. And that kind of doubt doesn't let you go forward—you're stuck.

Paul mentioned that his present experience of evil was different from the evil he had experienced during adolescence:

In adolescence evil was judged more according to whether I was faithful to a moral law...in a way that was more of a kind of super-ego type morality. It was fidelity to an abstract precept, but largely of my own imagining too...and kind of measuring myself by my own standard or by parental standards or religious standards—without really getting to the source of what a real religious standard would be. So I think of from my own Catholic background, issues of sexual morality...the guilt I would feel about sexual feelings and experiences.

He explained that presently he no longer scrupulously follows the letter of the law or fears punishment for any wrongdoing, but is trying to uphold a "fidelity to the experience of God." Rather than asking, "Am I doing what I should be doing?" his present question is: "Am I really living in a state of love and freedom?"

After hearing each of these three experiences of evil, the



interviewer questioned Paul about where in his body the experience of evil was centered. About his first experience, the night after his child died, he said:

I feel two things—like some relating to the head and some relating to the heart. I think the sense of closure of the heart is often behind what I mean by the inattentiveness and lack of openness. I can be like mentally aware, but not really lovingly conscious if my heart and feelings are shut down. Physical tension or preoccupation can put me in a mental state...like a mental haze. Frequently one of my own favorite ways of avoiding being in the moment is excessive thinking, rationalizing of a kind that misses awareness in the moment, which is not thinking necessarily—I feel it like a tension in the back of the neck where my head is really cut off from the rest of my body, or a tension where I don't feel a kind of relaxed sense in my heart area.

In his second experience, the endless rationalizations about whether or not to leave the Jesuit Order, he again located the evil in his head and heart. He saw that his "mental obsession" left him with "a saddening of the heart—a sense of bitterness or despair or fear." Only in Paul's childhood was his sense of evil not located in his head:

As a child I think it was in my stomach (both laugh). I think it was like a tension and anxiety there. I don't think the tension up here (points to his head) came until about twelve years old, and then I think it was like a decision to get control as I moved into adolescence.

When asked if any of these experiences of evil changed his life,

Paul responded:

The decision to leave did, like seeing more clearly the evil elements in that led me to reconstruct my whole life—to leave a whole context and set of situations and begin to build another way. So that was a major revision. And the more recent experience of a couple of months ago with our child, I think also has affected me—there's a new determination to open my life further. I think it just deepened some relationships, and made a number of concerns I had about other people's opinions seem irrelevant. It just seems to kind of pull things deeper down and some other things seem to be less important. The two experiences are consistent with each other—the same understanding has deepened in both.

At the conclusion of the interview, Paul mentioned that he was brought

up in a family where

there were implicitly very high standards of behavior and achievement and intellectual competency. I'm not quite ever sure how they were communicated, but they were there (laughs).

He also related how the meditation he did as a Jesuit made him more

"discerning" of the negative aspects of his personality:

The Jesuits were rediscovering "privately directed retreats"—it was eight days of meditation really, where you would see a Director for half an hour or an hour a day, but the rest of the time you were working with your own experience and recording your own thoughts and feelings and emotions as they came up. And at the core of those was this whole process of "discernment"—"discerning" those inner thoughts and feelings that are leading to a sense of peace, joy, faith, hope, love—and those that are filled with agitation and turmoil and fear.

It is such emotions as "agitation and turmoil and fear" that Paul now calls "evil."

#### Paul's Interpretation of His Experience

Without even being asked, Paul volunteered this interpretation of his two adult experiences of evil:

In both examples, what I'm talking about ultimately in evil is an alienation from that kind of spiritual consciousness or God consciousness, a consciousness that is simply lovingly aware, trusting, grateful, open, in the moment—that's what it means to be in harmony with God or living in God. And anything that lifts us out of that—whether it looks good or bad (laughs)—is in some way evil.

Later in the interview he expanded upon what made these two experiences evil to him:

I'd say ultimately it's the experience of being alienated or cut off from "reality"—that means what's simply there in front of me, in experience, it means from my own reality, my own capacities to humanly respond to situations—that I'm kind of shrinking those—from that state of consciousness that I'm calling spiritual consciousness or God consciousness. In all of those, it's like being removed from it, somehow shutting it down, cutting it off, controlling it—and existing instead in anxiety, fear, anger, or a reduced mental world.

When the interviewer tried to determine whether Paul saw the force creating evil inside or outside himself, this is the dialogue that followed:

**Interviewer:** Do you feel that there is an outside force sucking you into this experience of evil—or do you feel that it's coming from within?

**Paul:** Well, in a sense it's neither one nor the other...or both—it's outside and yet it's also something that I am in a sense choosing to be (laughs). It's not always a conscious choice to me—it's almost the assumed condition. You know, in Christianity we call that "original sin"—the sense of collective evil, the conditions that you're born in, and the screwed-upness of society.

**I:** Uhhuh.

**P:** Before you even become aware of it, it's already there. You're not starting neutrally, you're starting in that condition. It is what we are created to be as human beings. Maybe ten or twelve years ago—again through some retreat experiences when I was in the Jesuits—when I just let go, it became very clear to me that the divine presence and consciousness is always there. It's me who's somewhere else.

**I:** So is the evil the inability to let go?

**P:** To let go and to be in that, yeah.

Paul assumes that the source of his evil is "original sin"—which is both the condition in which he was born and the "screwed-upness" of society. He can only experience the divine presence when he lets go of his habitual modes of dwelling in negative emotions and a "reduced mental world."

#### Summary of the Narrative

All three of Paul's experiences of evil involve a failure to uphold a religious standard. In adolescence, Paul experienced evil when he was not being scrupulously faithful to the external standards of moral law. His two adult experiences of evil center around whether he is upholding an internal "real religious standard" of being lovingly aware in the

moment. During the years of debate about whether to leave his religious order, he experienced the failure to uphold this standard when his mind became obsessed with "endless rationalizations." In his more recent adult experience, his turmoil the night his child died, he had a clear vision of how he was lacking in love when he was caught in self-concern, inattention, insensitivity, irresponsibility, fear, and doubt. During both of his adult experiences, he has felt cut off from his feelings, and has noted this closing of the heart is accompanied by a perception that his head is cut off from the rest of his body.

#### Salient Features

For Paul evil is the experience of not upholding a religious standard. In his adult experiences, the crucial religious standard is to be "lovingly aware in the moment." During those moments when he was lacking this loving awareness, he has felt cut off from his feelings—as if there were no connection between his head and the rest of his body.

DANIEL

Religion:	Jewish
Nation of birth:	Greece
Arrival in America:	After World War II
Occupation:	Department store division manager
Age:	Sixties
Date of interview:	25 February 1982

This researcher telephoned a rabbi in Oakland to ask if he would want to be interviewed about his experiences of evil. The rabbi was friendly, but suggested that a better person to interview was a member of his congregation named Daniel who had been an inmate in Auschwitz. The rabbi also informed the researcher that just several months ago Daniel's only child, a son, had died of a heart attack. The researcher asked the rabbi if he would talk to Daniel first to find out if he would want to be questioned about his life.

Several weeks later, on a Thursday evening, the researcher found himself sitting in the living room of Daniel and his wife, Lily. Before the cassette tape recorder was turned on, Daniel told of his childhood in Salonika, Greece and how his father was a wealthy businessman who had exported wine. In April 1943, when Daniel was 23, his life had changed dramatically when he and his father and mother and brother were told that they were to be sent to a labor camp in Poland. After changing much of their Greek money into Polish zlotys, the family traveled ten days in a crowded cattle car that had no water before arriving at Auschwitz. Unbeknownst to Daniel until the war ended, both his parents were gassed during their first hour at Auschwitz.

The researcher explained that for this interview his interest was not in the facts of life at Auschwitz, but in what Daniel experienced as "evil." Daniel began the interview itself by describing what he felt was an experience of evil. He told how the Germans one night entered his barracks at Auschwitz and after waking everybody up, started selecting human subjects for a scientific experiment to be conducted by German and Polish doctors. His brother was chosen and soon discovered the experiments involved testing whether a certain radiation directed upon the

testicles could kill the sperm. His brother

was radiated six or seven times and after that they took him into the hospital and extracted one of his testicles without any anesthesia or anything. In fact, he was sent back to camp. He probably could have survived that if he wasn't taken again in order to extract the second testicle.

After his brother was taken for the removal of the second testicle, Daniel never saw him again and only learned from others of his death. Daniel noted that if this experiment had had a genuine scientific purpose, the Nazi doctors could have gathered the necessary data without castrating his brother:

They could very well have had their specimens in vivo—which means that they could have taken the sperm and examined the sperm, examined the outflow to see if there was any live sperms left—and not just extract the whole testicle...there was no reason for that.

Daniel was eventually assigned to the "Canada" Commandant whose purpose was to sort the possessions of those who had been shipped to Auschwitz and stripped of all their belongings. They called it "Canada" since Canada was a rich country and they were often able to steal a little food found among these belongings without being seen by their German guards. One day, while doing his daily sorting, he witnessed this scene:

One time there was about two hundred...um...babies, Jewish babies that came and...um..instead of sending them to the crematoria to be gassed, they had a pit open...because, I guess, the transport were very many—they were from Hungary and there were about 500,000 Jews that were gassed and burned in less than a month—so they were very busy and they opened a pit—a shallow pit—I don't think it was five feet deep. And they started a bonfire in there with the gasoline and started throwing the kids—still alive—in there. And the smell was horrible. And, of course, the crying—I had to take my eyes away. But that was very vivid.

Asked about how he felt watching the babies burn, he responded:

I was horrified. I thought I was crazy. I really couldn't believe my eyes. It was very hard to believe.

Questioned about what he felt the people throwing the babies into the

fire were feeling, he answered:

I think most of them enjoyed it. I think that killing is like...hunting. I think people get a certain pleasure out of it...as you get high on drugs, you can get high on killing too. My experience is that people like it.

Because the same people that were killing--you talk about being evil--were the same people that when they went at night into the barracks--I am a witness to that too--they played Beethoven. And they raised little birds in cages and raised flowers and were very responsive to their own children, actually very cuddly to their own children.

In the interview, Daniel had many other stories of evil. Among them were acts of brutality that had no apparent motivation--such as watching a dog obedient to an SS guard tear a woman to pieces in front of his eyes or being beaten to a pulp himself by another inmate who was acting under orders from a German guard. A more regular event which Daniel considered particularly evil was watching his fellow inmates collapse and die whenever the time taken to count the inmates was extended to last several hours; such an extended count was done either as a punishment or whenever an escape was suspected. In the winter this meant standing outside for several hours with no blankets or warm clothing--in the deep snow and freezing winds.

At this point Daniel asked if the interviewer wanted more stories of evil. It seemed he was just warming up to his topic and mentioned he would be glad to go on all night. The researcher felt he had more than enough stories and pursued a different direction by asking how living in Auschwitz changed his life. The question brought forth a startled look of incredulity that said: "How can you ask me such a question considering that my family was murdered and my whole world destroyed?" But, after thinking a moment, Daniel responded:

You are nothing for two and a half years--people keep on telling you that you are a sub-sub-human. You are angry, they can beat you



anytime they want to. You've got pain, you cannot do anything you like, you can't read, you can't sleep, you can only do very heavy manual work and you are at the mercy of some animals.

When you get out of there, you are never normal again. You get dreams. You are highly nervous. Time will atone all these things, but still they are always there. Every time you run a temperature, you get depressions, reviving dreams...

Daniel later explained that the dreams he referred to were exact duplications of certain incidents that really occurred while in captivity. He would often wake up in the middle of the night to find himself screaming, shivering, and soaked in sweat—only to realize that the exact same nightmare had recurred again.

In concluding, the interviewer commented that it seemed to him that Daniel had suffered more in those two years in a concentration camp than most people did in their entire lives; Daniel nodded his agreement and exclaimed:

I certainly did. It was a concentrated...(laughs) concentrated suffering (both laugh).

Well, it's also not the worst thing, I want to add—there is no hope. None of us will ever hope that we will come out of there alive. You see, it's worse when there is no hope. They say, "Hope makes people stronger." When you know there is no hope, you suffer more actually.

The interviewer asked whether while in Auschwitz he was in a state of depression and he replied:

Well, no. I was more depressed after the concentration camp than during the concentration camp...because you're always nervous trying to escape, nervous trying to survive. But the depression comes after, when you are liberated and you are free and you have no fear anymore.

While at Auschwitz, Daniel did begin to question God's justice:

...at the camp I thought, "How can there be a God when those things happen?" And we lost our son a few months ago—again I said, "There can't be a God if those things happen."

Daniel still has not forgiven his captors although in the last ten years he has learned how not to hate them. It was only after he stopped

hating them--thirty years after entering Auschwitz--that he was first able to tell the story narrated here.

### Daniel's Interpretation of his Experience

Daniel believed that the Germans who were in authority in Auschwitz were sadistic:

They enjoyed giving pain or even death to somebody else. Sadism, the meaning is giving pain to somebody else. The more pain they could create, the more pleasure it would give them.

In the following dialogue, Daniel made it clear that sadism has a central place in his own view of what made his experience "evil":

Interviewer: Looking at all those stories, I wonder if you could pinpoint what you see made those experiences evil?

Daniel: The fact that a man is killing somebody else for the pleasure of it, for no apparent reason, I can't think of anything more evil than that.

I: And would you say also the fact that they had no feelings at all while doing this...?

D: (cutting in) Well, actually they had feelings because they were enjoying themselves (laughs).

I: So that made it even more...

D: ...evil--the vilest.

### Summary of the Narrative

Daniel's experience of evil involved witnessing the doctors and guards of a concentration camp "getting high" on killing and inflicting pain. In this particular environment, where thousands of human beings were gassed each day, Daniel himself was often the victim of brutality and cruelty. While in the midst of his suffering, Daniel lost all hope for his own survival and began to question God's justice.

Salient Features

For Daniel, the most intense experience of evil was witnessing people being killed for no purpose except the pleasure experienced by the killers. He saw these killers as sadists who--whenever possible--"got high" on mutilating, beating, and destroying their human victims.

MARIA

Religion: Raised Christian, but "never took the leap"  
where she "really totally believed in it"

Grandparents' religion: Mormon, Protestant, and Catholic

Spiritual Practice: "Trying to lead a good life"

Nationality: American

Occupation: Professional artist

Age: Thirties

Date of interview: 1 March 1982

This researcher met Maria while she was driving him to a t'ai chi ch'uan class in Mill Valley. When he asked her whether she ever had had an experience of evil, she became animated and told a story of a man named Caesar who had taken LSD and gone beserk. Several months later the researcher telephoned her and asked if she would be willing to be interviewed. After she agreed, a meeting time was arranged before another t'ai chi class.

Maria's experience of evil occurred ten or eleven years ago in the house she owns in Marin County, California. At the beginning of the interview, she told the entire story in considerable detail:

A mutual friend of a good friend of ours came by one weekend after having seen us the weekend before and having a wonderful time. This weekend when he came, he...umm...ended up trying to kill himself and was very negative, he was all negative. I guess the most noteworthy thing was when he first arrived in a car, I was in the house--I could see him across the yard arriving in his Volkswagen about fifty feet away, and I mentioned to my daughter, who was about three, who really had a wonderful time with him the week before, I mentioned that he had arrived. She was out on the deck on the other side of the house and could not see him and she immediately started screaming hysterically, and I could not calm her, so finally she just cried herself to sleep which took about 25 minutes of intense screaming and crying.

Umm...meanwhile I wasn't with him but my husband was and he had kind of decided he wanted to come out and take LSD at our house because he had on previous occasions and had a really good time. This time, however, his girlfriend had just left him and he was being a bit strange. He was, I think, just really feeling badly about himself. Just the fact that my daughter Beatrice was screaming and crying, it made kind of a weird situation for him to come into. Here he was coming into this household that was calm and peaceful and everything was going on just fine and all of a sudden there were hysterics, and...ah...I guess he proceeded to take the LSD anyway, even though none of us wanted to, and he was a little upset that none of us wanted to, but we were having quite a good time just as we were, so he was taking this kind of personally that we did not want to do this with him--which we had done with him probably two years before once, and...um...I think he resented that.

After he took it he just seemed to get more and more withdrawn and...ah...finally he just started mumbling things by himself and he went out and he got into his car, he had a Volkswagen, and he just gunned it and drove right across our yard and smashed into one

tree and knocked it over and ended up on a hill on the other side of the yard, completely across the lawn, you know, smashed up into a tree, you know, just sort of sitting there dazed in his car. That's finally when we realized that something was really not... ah—I mean we knew he was, we kept trying to tell him not to go anywhere in his car because he didn't look like he should be going anywhere, but this got it down to that other level that you knew that something was really not right.

So when we finally got him out of the car and he just would lay there on the ground, and it was kind of this gravel driveway I think that he ended up on because I remember he kept rolling around on it and throwing gravel in his mouth trying to break his teeth and then he just started ranting and raving and it was mostly directed at himself—he was feeling very bad about himself and everything was sort of becoming a failure in his life, but then he also started turning it out on us. I guess we were just like the picture of you know, bucolic happiness or whatever, sweetness and light, and he started sort of cursing at our daughter Beatrice who was a really cute little three year old with long blond curls, you know, the sunlight in her hair and I made her all her clothes and her long little dresses, I means she was just lovely, right. So he started saying things like your creepy yellow-headed daughter, and all of a sudden all this negative stuff started coming out at her. Like she was, like this image of the opposite of evil, she was just goodness and light. And here he was having thoughts quite the other direction.

And...uh...it was a look in his eyes...a look in his eyes to me of how I would conceive of someone being...evil...of having an evil presence in them. It almost seemed like something coming from outside, but you know that's in you, but it was very strange to see that all of a sudden come out so strongly and it's something that I'd never seen in him before—I hadn't been really close, but I had known him...for years.

So what we did—he seemed to keep getting worse and worse and worse and he wouldn't get off the ground—he wasn't violent, all the violence was inner-directed, but he was just spewing out this stuff. It just kept coming out non-stop...or he would stop for a while and then he would start gushing out again. Finally I...uh...thought of one man that—I don't know—he sort of came to me as the image of calm and serenity, but a strength that say my husband did not have in dealing with the situation. Someone that could calm him and pull him out of it, and...uh...I went, and in fact I took my daughter—she woke up from the nap—to his house. I had to wait a while for him to get home, but then he immediately came up and he was able to do that. He's just sort of a big, strong kind of a biker type, but very...almost sort of kind of wise and calm in a very real way, so he was able to calm him down. I mean I knew he'd do it and he did it, he calmed him down and we were able to carry him, we wrapped him up in something and carried him into the house. I mean he was unable to walk or anything, he just really couldn't move. So we carried him into the house and finally got through to some of his friends in Berkeley which is where he lived and they came and picked him up. And that was that.

After this day Maria never saw or spoke to Caesar again, but she did hear from their mutual friend about how he met his end:

Things kept happening to him and he finally ended up killing himself, driving off a free-way ramp in LA, about two years later...

Maria also described her husband Joseph's reaction to this incident:

Ah, my husband, who's quite a sensitive creative type person was really upset by it. He had a hard time dealing with him. He really couldn't deal with him because it really terrified him. A very strange thing happened—his eyes started getting freaked out like Caesar's were, and they lasted that way I think for about a day or two.

Interviewer: Your husband's eyes?

Maria: My husband's eyes. He got so upset, we just packed up and left and went down to see my parents for a week. He couldn't stand being in the house. He could hardly make it through that night.

Maria noted that whenever she had told this story, she had found "the most significant thing" to be the facts relating to her daughter Beatrice's psychic attunement.<sup>1</sup> She told why her daughter's screaming was so startling:

It was even before he started walking up...because he was still in his car. She had no way of seeing him. I just saw the car drive up because I could see out the window that it was quite away—it was on the other side of the meadow, because he was parked quite away away and my daughter was on the other side...she just picked up right on it. I mean she'd never done anything like that in her life and she never has with such an intensity and it was just, you

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<sup>1</sup>Maria's observation about Beatrice's attunement has a reflection in the literature of the occult where children are seen as more receptive to demonic energy. For example, in a short story of the supernatural, this dialogue occurs concerning the ability to perceive evil:

"But shouldn't we experience a certain horror . . . in the mere presence of an evil man?"

"We should if we were natural: children and women feel this horror you speak of, even animals experience it. But with most of us, convention and civilization and education have blinded and deafened and obscured the natural reason."

See Arthur Machen's "The White People" in his Tales of Horror and the Supernatural (London: John Baker, 1964), p. 120.

know...she knew. She was tuned in. She was open enough that she could pick that up, being just younger and more receptive.

The interviewer asked Maria about the look in Casear's eyes, and

Maria answered:

I see it now in people that I know that have done a lot of drugs, like cocaine or something. To me they look dead inside. They look cold, they look dead, they look like their soul's gone. Cold. Just not there. It did seem like he was not there. I felt evil being there. I really felt evil being there. Because you could see it going away from him when my friend was able to call him out.

Later in the interview, Maria had this to say about what she meant by

"soul":

It would be that thing you can't tell what it is (laughs)—that little spark that makes you you. It's that little life, that something that when your body rots away, it's still there.

She continued her story by explaining how she felt when she realized

that Caesar's soul was gone:

He was not there. Very uncomfortable to have to look at someone like that. It's like you're confronted with this...um... incredibly negative aspect of life, and if you don't generally look at life that way, it's sort of really unsettling. It's like it's opening up another window to a way of perceiving the world...which you're usually trying to avoid. This is so intense you cannot just put it out of your mind—especially when it's right there in front of you.

That's the first time I'd ever seen that, so it made a big impression on me. I never understood that force, like it clarified something to me...devils and why people believe in all that stuff. It made sense and I went, "Ahh! That's what they're talking about—right there. There it is."

The interviewer also probed Maria about how she perceived Caesar's

motives:

Interviewer: Did he want to stare at you...?

Maria: Oh, he wanted to—it's like he wanted us to get all this.

I: Did you almost feel he was trying to curse you?

M: He tried to get...get it going at you!

I: What do you think he would have wanted to hook you into? What



would have been the response that he most wanted? To terrify you? Or...?

M: I bet he would have loved to have terrified Joseph, my husband.

I: Ahah, ahah.

M: Because it was mostly directed at him. It wasn't too much directed at me.

I: Ahah. Why do you think he picked on Joseph particularly?

M: (smiles) He would be an easy one to get going (both laugh). He just hates those kinds of situations. Maybe he knew he was an easy one to get.

Maria was questioned about what part of Caesar's body she felt the evil coming from and she answered:

Well, I guess it looks like eyes because to me that's where you open up. That's where you can see inside, you can't see inside someone's stomach or anything.

And when asked where she received the evil, she responded:

(pause) Usually when something upsets me, it tends to go in my gut. And that's where...I mean I know in t'ai chi, that's where I hold everything...is in my stomach. And I bet that's what I did...I would have felt it in my stomach.

In concluding, Maria was questioned about what made this "an experience of evil" and she answered:

Well, I'd say just seeing him. You know, all I had to do was look at him (laughs). It was real visual.

Asked if this experience changed her life in any way, Maria replied that it

brought a little depth to it, probably (laughs). I felt actually it was good. I probably figured it was good for me, because I led a very sheltered life, my parents wanted to keep all evil stuff away from me. So when you do see one, you go, "Ahah!--that's it!" It makes you re-evaluate your life. It did do that. I think that was one of the things that was so unsettling, we all just packed up and went down to LA. And we discussed really important things about life--right--rather than the usual table conversations... I think it was one of those good experiences, but it's too bad it had to be...one of those intense...that are probably very good for you...make your life richer.

In closing, Maria volunteered a few words about her memory:

I was thinking about it all today and yesterday trying to get ready because you said to think about it to see all you could remember...and I realize how much you really forget after about ten or eleven years...(laughs).

When I think of it, I remember scenes, just like movies...all there. I remember just exactly how he was laying, where my husband was, and where I was looking at him...(laughs). I guess that must be when real intense things happen... It's like, "Bong, you got it."

I remember when he first came and I went and Beatrice freaked out, being on the deck with her in the sunshine...you know, it was just one of those springtime glorious days... It's like the full dark cloud came...

#### Maria's Interpretation of Her Experience

In the following dialogue Maria tells how she explained this experience to herself at the time:

**Interviewer:** So what would evil be in this situation? What was the evil that was there?

**Maria:** You mean how I explained it to myself at that time? To try to make sense out of this?

**I:** Right.

**M:** Well...I came to the conclusion that that's something that is in everybody, both good and evil, and...um...we were seeing that full force with everything else gone. No balance. No wholeness. Just a pure evil coming out.

Maria went on to surmise that the evil that is within everybody has its source in real demonic forces:

**Interviewer:** Does it seem that it was a negative part of his personality that was coming through.

**Maria:** I think it's more than just a negative part, I think it's just the same as of a whole way...I think of God—it's the same thing that's in everybody, it's in everything. And I think it's more than just negative—it's real—it seems to be real forces.

**I:** Forces. Ahhuh.

**M:** I don't know if that's really an accurate word for it, but it's like it's very intense and those are very real...they happen, you know...religious experiences or demonic on the other side.

She went on to state her conviction that there was an interdependence between these demonic forces and the forces of good:

Interviewer: What are your beliefs and attitudes relating to evil?

Maria: Ummm, I guess same as what the absolute good or God. I really think that's in everything. And that's in you. I think people can decide to put it in something else out of them, but I think it's really in you.

I: It sounds as if you're saying that the same force that is good is also evil?

M: Well, it's all part of it. I don't think you can have one without the other, it doesn't make sense.

I: So God would manifest...ah...

M: The good and the demonic or whatever...

I: But the demonic is also a part of God?

M: It would have to be. Because it really doesn't make sense if you don't have the evil. What kind of stories would there be? (both laugh). Think how boring it would be. No good movies... (laughs)

Maria is suggesting that on some ultimate level that the good and the demonic are just different forms of one energy.

#### Summary of the Narrative

Maria's experience of evil commenced when her daughter became hysterical even before seeing an acquaintance who had just driven up to the other side of the house. Shortly thereafter this acquaintance ingested LSD and smashed his car into a tree. He then began cursing both himself and the daughter and succeeded in terrifying Maria's husband. Upon looking into this person's eyes, Maria was shocked to see they were cold--as if his soul were gone and the person she knew was not there. Instead of her acquaintance, she perceived a real intense demonic force and just a pure evil coming out.

Salient Features

Evil for Maria is a real energy that can be perceived immediately by those who are as attuned and receptive as children. When Maria herself was confronted with this energy, she perceived it as a force coming through the eyes of a person whose soul was gone and who was no longer there. She conjectures that this force, which is inside all people, is usually joined with the good, and its appearance as "a pure evil" shows a momentary splitting of this union.

ABE

Religion:	Vajrayāna Buddhist
Cultural background:	Jewish
Parents:	Jewish
Nationality:	American
Occupation:	Teacher of English to Japanese Teacher of Buddhism for three and a half years
Age:	Mid-thirties
Date of interview:	2 March 1982

Abe was brought up in a Jewish family in New York City, and a decade ago he developed an intense interest in Buddhism. Although he is still culturally a Jew, his life is now centered around his commitment to the path of the Buddha. The researcher knew Abe through his graduate school and chose him as a contributor with the thought that his background as both a Jew and a Buddhist might give him a unique perspective.

The interview took place at Abe's house over the dining room table. Abe began his description of his own personal experiences of evil by mentioning two childhood "transgressions." The first, which occurred when he was six or seven, was after having a dry orgasm while looking at a brassiere commercial in a magazine, he connected his own sexual energy with the female form. The second happened a year later when, after he deliberately yanked his fishing line to hook a perch, he realized that it was his own willful activity that had killed the fish. He associated these experiences with a "loss of innocence" and a "skirting with evil":

So I think for me my experience of evil has often been...uh... stepping across a boundary that previously I had not stepped across, and it evoked almost a primitive fear of reprisal, as if I had disobeyed some sort of primitive contract that I had made with the universe...

As a child he never used the word "evil" to describe these experiences, but his feeling was of having crossed a forbidden boundary.

Abe told this anecdote to illustrate the way he perceives "the subjective experience of evil":

I remember reading out of the book, Zorba the Greek, where... ah...the narrator of the story, who's Kazantzakis, is questioning Zorba and he says: "Zorba, you're a Greek and you've fought the Turks, and your grandfathers fought the Turks and your grandfather's grandfathers fought the Turks, tell me something—with all that fighting and plundering and killing and raping and pillaging the villages—is there anything that you regret?" And Zorba said: "You know, boss, no, but just one thing—as a young boy, I remember being out in the field and I saw a caterpillar in its chrysalis

and...uh...the butterfly was very visible, the butterfly to be. The wings were fully developed, but sort of sewn together and in my haste and in my impetuosity, my wanting to see that caterpillar become a butterfly, I eased the wings apart a little bit—and I broke one of the wings—that was the greatest evil I've ever committed.

After the interviewer asked him to say more about "the subjective experience of evil," the following interchange ensued:

Abe: It depends on how we're defining evil. I think that there's two different attitudes that you can come out of. The teachings often fall into two categories, absolute and relative. "Absolute truth" is absolute—it's absolutely true, but there's nothing you can say about it. "Relative truth" is only partial truth, but there's a lot you can say about it (laughter from interviewer)—so it's caught somewhat on a paradox, but the Buddha often spoke in terms of "relative and absolute truth"—and he said that wisdom was knowing one from the other and not confusing the two. And if you do traffic between one and the other, to know that you're doing so and to not confuse them or else you'll commit...great evil.

Interviewer: Uhhuh. Uhhuh.

A: So in this respect, I think, the evil we're talking about is relative evil—the willful and conscious intent to hurt, to maim, to deprive, to negatively affect anyone's well being in a conscious way, so therefore from a Buddhist perspective we say that's "Karma inducing"—it creates further reaction, further effect.

I: And is there any meaning of good and evil in "absolute" terms?

A: No, none whatsoever.

Referring to "relative evil," Abe talked about how he explained a person's feeling "delight or accomplishment" in inflicting pain upon another:

From the Buddhist perspective, rather than seeing it as evil, I see it as being a manifestation of one of the saṃsāric realms. There are six basic realms, the realms are simply preoccupations, hallucinations, so people that are caught in what we might call "a hell realm" are suffering from tremendous claustrophobia and aggression. They feel victimized, they feel trapped, and their only breath of fresh air may be—for one kind of hell realm inhabitant—to have control, absolute control and manipulation over someone less able. Rather than see that as evil, I see that as a manifestation of severe neurosis or psychosis—it's sickness. It's a disease...from the human condition...so I don't feel a heavy moral connotation, rather a distortion of our energy.

To demonstrate how from the vantage point of "absolute" truth" there is no meaning to "good and evil," he proceeded to give several examples of how events he initially thought of as "bad" turned out to be "good." An instance from adolescence was how being beat up led him to begin working out with weights and studying karate—with the result that he now has great confidence in his own strength. A more recent example was being stopped by a patrolman who ordered him to fix a broken windshield immediately. At the time he was extremely busy and he said to himself, "Why now?" But in selling his car, the repair turned out to have added several hundred dollars to its value. This same perspective shaped Abe's understanding of the Holocaust:

The Holocaust is very close to me because my grandparents in Austria and Hungary were killed—on one hand, absolutely horrendous and evil, undoubtedly. As a Jew I feel that very very profoundly and very very deeply. On the other hand, that point that was made in history by that...uh...there's something that the human psyche can never forget. Something happens to a collective psyche on the planet—it's almost genetic in terms of the way it gets carried down. In that respect, when we talk about good and evil, we have to see it beyond the context of time, limited time. From a very very broad perspective, good and evil go hand in hand and an absolute atrocity turns out to be...um...a fever that the planet goes through. And it burns and you do feel sick, but then what emerges is health after a fever.

Abe presented the gist of his philosophical position in these words:

When I feel good or evil I try to...um...see it in the context of just...temporary, conditional good or evil. As Buddhists, we say so much of it depends upon perspective. If our perspective is limited, good and evil become solid—no ventilation in there, we become caught in dualities. From a more liberated point of view, good and evil do exist, but they're not solid, there's lots of ventilation and traffic between the two.

So what was bad then—is good now. Good turns to evil, evil turns to good. Therefore we say from an "absolute" point of view—no good, no evil. So it should be seen very much like night and day or winter and summer. Winter is cold, things die or lie dormant and the sense of drawing inward, harsh foreboding landscapes. In summer everything is growing and fresh, moving towards harvest when we can eat—luxuriance. You can't cling to summer and reject winter. That's just the cycle, just the movement, so also from the



context of higher truth, one has to see these things as alternating cycles. During the darkest hour, which is just before dawn, dawn is already here.

The interviewer asked for an experience from his own life where his

"darkest hour" had a light side. He answered:

Well, yeah, my brother's death. He was my best friend...uh...who was the person that I loved most in my life. He died eight years ago--suddenly--in a construction accident. That was like being thrown in alternating boiling water and ice--but the paradoxical thing about that was that his death liberated me. It was the most pain that I've ever felt...I abandoned myself to feel the pain because I didn't care, and giving fully to that--I began to understand that this thing is real, this whole thing is real, that life and death is very very real, everything is extraordinarily real. It's not a concept--it's absolutely vividly, you know, almost brilliant, and from that point onwards I never indulged in depression, I never indulged in too much negativity. I feel negativity very profoundly, but it doesn't stay because I don't have time, and my brother's death was...on one hand, the most horrendous thing, painful heart-wrenching thing that ever happened, and I think it's opened me towards life and compassion. So what's good and what's evil? And what's death and what's life?

Abe surmised that from a conventional point of view his brother Rob's death could be considered "evil"--as this person who was most cherished and loved was forcibly taken away. But Abe now sees his suffering served to make him more awake:

Rob's death kind of jolted me out of neurosis in that it felt like I got smacked in the face very very hard...and as if drunken with my own discursive gossip, my own conflicting emotions, my usual state of affairs..uh...that stopped me in my tracks and made me open my eyes and listen, look, and feel, so it was sort of some sense of interruption in my normal perceptual flow of hallucination. So it was almost anti-samsaric--that's why I regard it as an enlightening experience.

Shortly after Rob's death, Abe was comforted by a letter he received from his cousin:

My cousin wrote me and said, "Abe, two sets of twins are in their mother's womb and they've had a friendship for nine months, which for them is their whole life as fetuses--the mother begins to have labor pains, one twin must be born before the other, but from the perspective of inside the womb, that's definitely a death. But for expectant mother and the obstetrician on the other side of the

womb, it's a birth." What's birth, what's death?

Towards the end of the interview Abe philosophized that the "question of evil is a question of ego":

Often the notion of evil is based on...uh...essentially striving for some sort of highlight in experience, some sort of perverse form of entertainment, somewhat like popping a chocolate chip cookie in your mouth when...uh...things are kind of flat or dull, or putting a stick of chewing gum in your mouth or turning the dials on the TV.

Very often what we do--coming from the base of ego--is to look for a relationship with something outside of me--any kind of stimulus, idea, sensation, or experience that appears to be continuous and solid--then ego is convinced that it too exists in like fashion.

How much are we willing to open to our pain and our alienation? When people are courageous enough to experience their loneliness, their sadness, to admit and acknowledge and work with hollowness and emptiness, evil is almost an impossibility...because we're starting from the ground up. But through denial of our existential condition--by seeking relief from that basic bewilderment and uncertainty, then we commit all kinds of wrongdoing. We try to protect and perpetuate our safety...we latch on to meaning and structure.

When we're unwilling to accept an ever-changing dynamic and flowing universe, we attempt to freeze little portions of it--so some people freeze portions that are heaven (laughter from interviewer), some people freeze portions that are hell--same thing. It's basically an effort to freeze--and maintain and manipulate a situation. So some societies call one kind of manipulation evil and taboo, other societies call other kinds of freezing taboo. Essentially it's really a mechanism of ego, rather than good and evil I'm talking about.

The interview concluded with Abe discussing his current relationship to both Judaism and Buddhism:

Well, I am Jewish. No question about it. I mean at the end of my meditation, I say Kaddish for my father in Hebrew. Judaism for me is who I am as a cultural being and as a social being. So my identity as a male, my relationship with food and money and sex and power (laughter from interviewer) is very very Jewish in many many ways. Judaism was a very important cultural phenomenon. Buddhism has become my lifestyle and my practice and my spiritual path, and Judaism has become a cultural phenomenon. I still feel a strong identity as a Jew...ah...personally I don't feel a contradiction between the way that I've been affected and the way that I've manifested Judaism and Buddhism in that they're not competing with each other. They each have their place.

The interviewer asked if he had converted to Buddhism in the way that

Paul on the road to Damascus had left Judaism and converted to Christianity. Abe answered:

Well in some sense--I have taken refuge vow and bodhisattva vow. In some sense, there is a quality of conversion. Refuge vow means that you become a refugee--that you've given up your attachment to name, country, family, friends, personal identity. There is a quality of having assumed a different identity. At the same time, one can live very much in the world and not have to reject their roots. One just cuts the psychological umbilical cord. So it's conversion inwardly, but not really an external conversion--in that you see me wearing a polyester shirt and not a saffron robe (interviewer laughs).

#### Summary of the Narrative

In childhood, Abe's loss of innocence felt like a "skirting with evil." He associates this loss of innocence with two "transgressions": the realizations that his own sexual energy was connected to the female form and that it was his own willful activity that killed a fish. In both cases he felt he had crossed a forbidden boundary and feared reprisal. In his adulthood he never had an experience he would consider "evil" since he can always see the way good turns to bad and bad turns to good. His most dramatic example of this principle was how in the midst of his terrible pain after the death of his brother, he let go of neurosis and depression and for the first time woke up to the vivid, brilliant reality of each moment.

#### Abe's Interpretation of His Experience

Abe sees that there are both relative and absolute levels to reality. On the relative level, the greatest evil is the willful and conscious intent to hurt and destroy another person--particularly when this is done to engender a feeling of "delight and accomplishment." On this same relative level, unintentional evils are often committed by

people who confuse these two levels of reality. On the absolute level, there can be no evil since from this vantage point there is no difference between destruction and creation, life and death, good and evil.

#### Salient Features

Abe only experiences evil as being temporary, conditional, and relative. Just as day follows night and summer follows winter, good and evil are part of a natural cyclic rhythm. He sees himself as living in an ever-changing dynamic universe where all that might appear to be evil has within it the potential for good. Thus, ultimately, good and evil cannot be differentiated.

CHOKO

Religion:	Zen Buddhist
Spiritual practice:	Zazen
Parents' religion:	Nicheren Buddhist
Nation of birth:	Japan
Arrival in America:	1966
Occupation:	Professional artist
Age:	Early forties
Date of interview:	14 March 1982

This researcher had heard about Choko through a book that she had written filled with reproductions of her silkscreen drawings of Japanese Goddesses. As the book said that she was connected to a Zen community in Marin County, the researcher telephoned this community and succeeded in getting her home telephone number. Choko was quite friendly on the phone, but said her house had just been flooded in a big rainstorm and asked to be called back later. It was a couple of months later that an interview was finally arranged--the agreed meeting being at her Zen community after the regular Sunday morning service.

At the service, it was not difficult for the researcher to identify Choko since she looked much like the picture on the back of her book. She found a quiet room for the interview, and she started off by saying she had two emotions that she identified with evil--

one is something to do with fear, and one is something to do with anger. And fear is more like receptive side of my evil--I feel it something outside, the evil. And anger is something evil inside of me acting out.

Choko began by describing her most significant experience of fear:

When I was growing up, a lot of times I slept in a room which had a Buddhist altar. If the door [of the altar] wasn't closed, I couldn't go to sleep. It was a kind of dark room and it had a very little window and right next...the corner was altar--and had people, [photographs of] dead relatives among sutras and incense and all that.

You see they used to have flowers inside, so flowers need a little bit air, so they keep the [altar] door opened, and I really made sure that it's shut when I go to sleep so that no evil would come out from altar.

We are Nicheren sect--we didn't have a Buddha figure inside [altar]--the figures were all dead people.

At this point the interviewer questioned Choko about the nature of her fears:

Interviewer: OK, so you were in this room, so you closed the door of the altar and then you felt more...

Choko: ...comfortable—that they can't come out at least.

I: I see. And if they did come out, what did you feel they might do?

C: Devour you! (Both laugh) I had a sense of something—it was just sort of touching and choking me to death.

I: Ahah. And who do you think would be the one that would be choking you to death?

C: I never really imagined as some kind of figure, but of some substances. I don't particularly see as a material, but like a chi—"key" we say. It was complete substance to me.

I: Uhuh, so by complete substance—does that mean a force too?

C: Yeah, yeah. And I kind of felt it.

I: Uhuh. So it was a reality to you.

C: And sometimes people say "ghost" and a lot of times ghost in my culture is associated with dead people's soul that doesn't have a place to go and it's floating around. And uh, they believed in how it takes certain days to go over the river to the other land, and they are still floating around.

I: Uhum.

C: It's not a figure... For instance, if I don't like the person, I see this aura—like energy which is kind of...negative.

I: I understand.

C: And it really affects me physically. And I knew it as a child.

I: So you would say you still feel this energy sometimes?

C: Now—absolutely I do, and it's to me very real—as real as you are here. (Both laugh)

Later in the interview when Choko was asked whether there was a Japanese word for evil, she responded:

There's a ghost. They use ghost much more. A ghost is more like you were something else before then—because of this event, you like to revenge and you become something other. So it's called "honorable changed one"—it's called obake.

Such a definition of evil reveals how words acquire their meanings in a particular culture. Choko also connected her fear of the altar with

folk beliefs prevalent in her society:

If I eat and I lie down, my grandfather will say that you will become a cow in next life (both laugh).

Reincarnation is sort of worked out as the child's moral--and as a child I feared that.

They use evil as a threatening device to make us better kids (laughs)--if you're not good, evil will come and devour you or take you--this Thunder God which is up in the cloud--very angry--will take your navel out and eat it.

So altar was not really very positive to me, it was very scary, and of course as a child I feared quite a bit of death and quite a bit death of my parents.

She described the connections between these childhood fears and the unknown:

As a child the things that are not known to me was very very fearful which to me was a vastness--that I somewhere can't conceive--was something associated with evil. And I think at the age of two or three I started to think about the number that I cannot count, the space that I cannot conceive, and that was very very frightful and that was somewhere that evil popped out.

Choko concluded her description of her experience of the altar by elaborating on how these childhood fears changed her life:

I kind of worked hard not to feel it--and that's why I developed ideas more like a positive side--to conquer that fear I started to visualize the opposite side--which is a Goddess. And now I feel that evil and the Goddess are different sides of the same coin.

For Choko, her artistry in drawing Goddesses is her way of expressing a positive side to "balance out" the negativity in her fears.

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Choko's second experience of evil involved an anger inside of herself:

I'd been having acupuncture treatment because I had kidney trouble--the kidney concerns a lot of anger. After the treatment, it was a very small occasion and in other times I wouldn't have reacted so much, but I became absolutely...absolutely angry and I bit the person (interviewer laughs) completely...and I wouldn't let go. And I never experienced this before, and it was like animal inside of myself came out, and or...complete evil. And after that, I felt a tremendous relief in my body, and...actually an amazing amount of stuff went through my body in terms of physical material



too. So relief and release in the same time.

When the interviewer asked about the "stuff" that went through her body, she answered:

When the kidney releases, a lot of accumulated toxins goes into your urine. I urinated an amazing colored brown urine. I see evil as a substance too inside of my body which I can act out like that.

About the acupuncture treatment she said:

They're just completely dealing with your body energy and try to straighten it out, trying to center you or balance you, and what comes out is this unbalanced side, which I experienced as my evil.

Asked if she was angry at anything in particular, she said:

Yes, it was something—unreasonable justice. And it's not really so important what I was angry at—because it's a very, very minor thing.

Asked if in this experience of anger, she felt possessed by something outside herself, she said:

No. Absolutely not at all. It's myself done it to myself. But it was accumulated in my body that it had to come out.

She believed her practice of zazen freed her from this accumulated anger:

In zazen I try to get free from this accumulated stuff. Once you take this path which I think is kind of cleansing path, these things will eventually come out. Some people can keep it, they like to have it, they like to be evil (interviewer laughs)—but that's not my experience.

Asked if this second experience of evil changed her life, she replied that although this was her most powerful experience of anger, it was just an example of her ongoing experience with this emotion:

To me, it's like endless experience. I just took it as one thing... sometimes it comes with the meditation, or just comes itself... because life is continuous meditation. And it is changing myself, absolutely.

#### Choko's Interpretations of Evil

Choko sees fear and anger as part of a larger whole. By being

aware of these emotions whenever they arise, she hopes to lessen their power over her. She sees fear as an expression of her negative side and to "balance out" this energy with a positive side she visualizes Goddesses. Taken together, evil and the Goddess make up a whole.

Choko concluded the tape recorded portion of the interview with these words:

Evil is not something that I have outside. I experience it inside of myself too. Knowing I have it in me, I really try to balance it.

Even the thief has a reason to steal—maybe he stole [for his] children's meal. That's really the Buddhist experience—to see as a little more whole. If you see it inside of yourself that you can be evil, you see others in a little more perspective...as a whole.

Choko is pointing out that moral judgments about the "evil" behavior of others often lack a holistic perspective.

After the tape recorder was turned off, the interviewer told Choko about Bishop Myōkōko's point of view that it was impossible to differentiate between good and evil. Her nods while the interviewer was still talking indicated her familiarity with this perspective. Although she said that she had no disagreement with the Bishop's point, her tone of voice in saying this suggested to the researcher that although she could conceive of another level of reality where there was neither evil nor the Goddess, her interest was in discovering more about the Goddess Herself.

#### Summary of the Narrative

Choko's first experience of evil was a feeling of fear before the unknown. Although this fear has appeared in many forms, its most intense expression was Choko's childhood fear that ghosts might come out of an altar and devour her or choke her to death. She now associates ghosts

with chi which for her is a real emotional and visual experience.

Her second experience of evil was the feeling of intense anger. Although such anger does appear frequently in her life, its most powerful expression was when she became like a wild animal and bit a person. Expressing this anger led to a relief and release throughout her body, thus confirming her belief that this evil is accumulated and stored in her organs.

### Salient Features

For Choko, experiences of evil are to be used as aids in increasing her awareness. Her own experiences of evil involve intense feelings of fear and anger. She experiences fear as the energy of a negative chi coming towards her from without and anger as the same negative energy firing up inside her body and acting out.

RABBI RACHEL FOX

Religion:	Reformed Judaism
Parents' Religion:	Reformed Judaism
Nationality:	American
Occupation:	Fund-raising for Israel "Officiates at life cycle events as a rabbi"
Age:	Late twenties
Date of Interview:	20 April 1982

For the last interview—in order to balance the number of men and women contributors—the researcher chose a woman rabbi. Of the four main movements of Judaism—Orthodox, Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Reformed—only the latter two have begun (just recently) ordaining women as rabbis. Since the ordination of women rabbis is such a new practice, there are still only a few in the entire country.

The researcher had received Rachel Fox's name from another rabbi who told him that she had recently graduated from Rabbinical University and presently was working as a fund-raiser for Israel. The researcher telephoned her at the office where she worked raising funds and explained he was making a study of people's "experiences" of evil. Before he had a chance to explain more fully, Rabbi Fox said she "understood" and agreed to the interview. An appointment was set at Rabbi Fox's office.

When the interviewer arrived and explained that he was interested in her experiences of evil, she was shocked and offended. She said that she thought this interview was going to be about how the Jewish religion has historically understood evil and not about her own experiences. She proceeded to say that for her "evil" was associated with negative psychic forces, and that she didn't believe in such forces. The researcher told her that he had interviewed a Buddhist Bishop who had no experience of evil, and asked if she would consent to state her position in an interview. She agreed, but without enthusiasm.

In response to the first question of the interview asking for an experience of evil, she responded: "As I said, I'm not aware of evil." The interviewer then told her about the Jewish contributor who called the sadism he experienced in Auschwitz "evil" and asked her how she would understand those types of experiences. She responded:

I don't know that I would call it "evil." I think perhaps it comes as close to "evil" as my perception of what "evil" would be, but I think it's more sickness...

"Evil" connotes "negative forces" in the world—I think you have to be a lot more psychically-oriented to believe in evil.

She never clarified what she meant by "negative forces" or "psychically-oriented," but it seemed to the researcher to involve a contrast between psychological and psychic explanations of "evil"; the psychological way to explain such a phenomenon as "sadism" would be as a "sickness" while the psychic way would involve a belief in "negative forces" like demons or devils.

The interviewer asked her what she had originally intended to say about Judaism's historical attitude to evil and she replied:

There is within Judaism a belief and sometimes that's translated as "the evil inclination" and "the good inclination." But a better translation for the word "ra"—which could be "evil"—would be "bad." We're all born with both inside of us, and how one utilizes those things or how they're nurtured determines how things turn out.

When the interviewer asked her to say more, she continued:

I'll give you an example of something out of the text. When you read the story of Jacob's struggle—in his dream with the angel—it's a man against himself. I think we all go through those struggles—and which prevails? In Jacob's case, he became "Israel"—the better prevailed.<sup>1</sup>

He's a very good character to study because I follow him—as a man that's not a good man to begin with. I think the thing that really determines which prevails is how weak or strong someone is.

Asked whether she felt the determining factor in which prevails depends

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<sup>1</sup>Rabbi Fox is referring to this story from the Old Testament (which does not mention it was a dream): "And Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. When the man saw he did not prevail against Jacob, . . . he said, 'Let me go, for the day is breaking.' But Jacob said, 'I will not let you go, unless you bless me.' And he said, 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Jacob.' Then he said, 'Your name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed.'" Genesis 32: 24-28 (Revised Standard Version). In Hebrew, the word "Israel" has the meanings both of "He who strives with God" and "God strives."

upon a person's own free will or is necessitated by God, she replied: "It's free will." The interviewer also asked whether she felt such a "bad inclination" was constant and she responded:

I don't think that's a permanent state. There's always the ability to change and redeem.

At this point there was a long pause in the conversation and the Rabbi said, "OK?"; the researcher interpreted this as meaning, "It's a busy day and I want to get back to work--am I released from this obligation?" Even though the entire interview had only been fifteen minutes, the researcher agreed to this conclusion and told the Rabbi he appreciated her taking out time from a busy day.

Leaving the building where the interview took place, the researcher observed that his own body felt drained and depleted. To conduct this interview had been for him a totally different experience than the previous eight. Throughout the interview he had perceived himself as being nervous and uncomfortable, and he never had felt any rapport with the contributor. His experience of Rabbi Fox was that she wanted no emotional involvement in the topic--he thought of how her voice had become almost inaudible and the way she had leaned back on her chair so that she was as far away from the interviewer as possible. Rabbi Fox had less interest in exploring the phenomenon of "evil" with this researcher than in completing the interview so she could return to her work.

The researcher considered just discarding the interview, but then remembered his research design proposed using all interviews unless the contributor was guilty of falsehood, fabrication, or fraud. Also, his intuition told him that the Rabbi's absence of emotional involvement in

the topic might be a clue to the nature of the phenomenon of "evil."<sup>2</sup>

In addition, the researcher knew that the Rabbi's philosophical position was not untypical.<sup>3</sup>

Exactly six months after the day of the interview when the researcher was trying to summarize the Rabbi's position, he realized that she had been even more vague than he had remembered. Hoping to get some clarification from the Rabbi herself, he telephoned her office, gave his name to the secretary, and learned the Rabbi was in. The secretary put the researcher "on hold," and after a long pause, she came back on the line saying that the Rabbi had stepped out. The researcher left his name and telephone number, but the Rabbi never called back.

#### Summary of the Narrative

Rabbi Fox has never had an experience of evil. She feels such an experience would indicate there are malevolent psychic forces that cannot be understood psychologically.

#### Rabbi Fox's Interpretation of the Bad

She does feel that all people are given free will and that they can

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<sup>2</sup>For where this clue led, see the section on "The 'No Evil' Contributors" in Chapter Ten, pp. 227-30.

<sup>3</sup>The researcher had previously talked informally to another rabbi who also had no "experience" of evil and who held that...

- a) there is no force of evil in the universe;
- b) God has given us free will and the choices are made by us;
- c) we can either take advantage of what God has offered us or not;  
and
- d) if we make bad choices, we will have to live with the results of our actions.

This other rabbi had summed up his argument by saying that although such bad choices could be called "evil," there is no force of evil impelling us to make those choices.



choose between "the bad inclination" and "the good inclination." This is an inner struggle and even if the bad prevails, this is not a permanent state and redemption is always possible.

### Salient Features

Rabbi Rachel Fox has never experienced evil. She is aware both in herself and in others of a struggle between bad and good inclinations. Rather than use the term "evil," she prefers to talk about "the bad inclination"—this to her has no connotations of psychic forces, but rather implies that the choice for good or bad is made by a person's own free will.

## CHAPTER TEN

### INTERPRETING THE THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM THE INTERVIEWS

The purpose of this chapter is first to state the central themes of "evil" found in the contributors' interviews and then to look for patterns among these themes.

#### The Themes of the Interviews

After reflection upon the interviews, the researcher found twelve themes that he felt distilled the essential structure of the contributors' experiences and interpretations of evil. At times the phrasing of these themes was taken directly from the contributor's wording and in other cases it was necessary to do a translation into a more psychologically-relevant language.

In Tables I through III, contributors who shared the same religious affiliation have their themes stated on the same page (in each case, the "privileged observer" is listed first). In composing these tables, two choices were made. First, it was decided to leave out the themes distilled from any part of the contributor's narrative that referred to experiences that he or she no longer considered to be "evil"—even if at an earlier time they were experienced as "evil." The reason for this choice was to avoid cluttering the upcoming comparison of themes with various "childhood" and "adolescent" experiences that were no longer

personally meaningful to the contributors. A good example of such an early experience is Paul's feelings of "guilt" when he was not being scrupulously faithful to the external standards of moral law. As Paul explicitly stated that he no longer experiences "guilt" in relation to external standards, this adolescent experience was not included.<sup>1</sup> An example of a childhood experience that was included (in Table III) was Choko's fear of ghosts in the altar. In her case, as she stated that she still feels ghosts are a "real energy," this experience was used to distill several themes.

The second choice was that it was found useful in composing the Tables to distinguish between major, minor, and binding themes:

A theme was called major if it was an essential structural feature of the story or the interpretation. (All themes not otherwise qualified in Tables I through III are to be considered such major themes.)

A theme was termed minor if it appeared in the interview in a lesser role and also was a major theme for another contributor.

Lastly, a theme was called binding only if this theme was the core idea around which the rest of the interview crystallized. (Such a binding theme appeared in only four of the nine interviews.)

(Before proceeding, in order to gain a better understanding of the other methodological choices discussed below, it would be useful for the reader to peruse Tables I through III on pp. 215-17.)

In developing these themes, the researcher's goal was to be sensitive to the unique qualities of each contributor's experience while

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<sup>1</sup>The themes that were omitted from the Tables for this reason were:  
 -- Guilt over breaking external moral codes (Paul as an adolescent)  
 -- Morally judging other's conduct (the Bishop as a young man)  
 -- Stepping across forbidden boundaries (Abe's childhood "transgressions")  
 -- Superstitious fears (Choko's fear that if she lay down after eating, she would turn into a cow)

## TABLE I

## THE THEMES OF THE JEWISH CONTRIBUTORS

Rabbi Rachel Fox

Denies the validity of any viewpoint that holds that demonic forces are real (the binding theme)

Ruth

An inner hell (the burning sensations)  
 Another's pleasure in inflicting pain (Ruth concluded that the "psychology woman" had hurt her for the pleasure of having power over her)  
 A psychic attunement to malevolent forces (she sensed that "the psychology woman" had given her "the evil eye")  
 The presence of a demonic force (the evil eye)  
 The destructive power of demonic forces (when she gave away her own power under the influence of the evil eye, she experienced an inner hell)  
 A going out of one's own soul (this is how she experienced her powerlessness when affected by the evil eye)

Daniel

Inner and outer hells (life in Auschwitz)  
 Another's pleasure in inflicting pain and death (he found this characteristic in both the doctors and guards at Auschwitz)

## TABLE II

## THE THEMES OF THE CHRISTIAN CONTRIBUTORS

Paul

A self-alienation from loving awareness (the "reduced mental world" in which he is cut off from both consciousness of God and his own feelings--the binding theme)

Luke

A psychic attunement to malevolent forces (he was able to move into the psychic space of the schizophrenic and contact her calmness --a minor theme)

The presence of a demonic force (in the schizophrenic woman)

The destructive power of a demonic force (the same woman's dedication to killing his wife)

A felt absence of another person's presence (the same woman)

A vision of evil itself (he called the "blackest black" his "cardinal" experience of evil)

An awe and fear before the inconceivable (his vision gave him "a feeling of awe and apprehension"; the fear had nothing to do with a fear of either harm or death to his own person)

The ultimate unity of demonic forces and God (he saw the woman as "an experience of a mysterium" and accepted his therapist's interpretation that his vision was "the dark side of God")

Disagrees with those who hold there is "no evil from what they say is the vantage point of another level of reality ("evil is a force--it's a reality")

Maria

A psychic attunement to malevolent forces (in her daughter's screaming)

The presence of demonic forces (in Caesar)

The destructive power of demonic forces (Caesar's attempts to destroy himself and terrorize Maria's husband were seen as expressions of the power of the demonic)

A felt absence of another person's presence (she felt that Caesar's soul was gone)

The ultimate unity of demonic forces and God (she sees God manifesting both in religious and demonic experiences)

TABLE III  
THE THEMES OF THE BUDDHIST CONTRIBUTORS

Bishop Myōkōko

No evil from the vantage point of absolute reality (the binding theme)

Abe

An outer hell (the "evil" of the Holocaust is considered conditional and relative—therefore a minor theme)

Another's pleasure in inflicting pain and death (this is again cited as an example of a conditional and relative evil—therefore another minor theme)

No evil from the vantage point of absolute reality (the binding theme)

Choko

A psychic attunement to malevolent forces (she can see and feel the "energy" of the negative chi)

The presence of demonic forces (she saw demonic forces as one expression of negative chi)

The destructive power of demonic forces (her belief that the ghosts in the altar might "devour" her and also that the anger accumulated in her body could hurt others)

An awe and fear before the inconceivable (a "vastness" that could not be conceived from which "evil popped out")

The ultimate unity of the demonic forces and the Goddess (her statement that "evil and the Goddess are different sides of the same coin")

No evil from the vantage point of absolute reality (although this is possibly implicit in her use of experiences of evil as aids in increasing her awareness, she also confirmed that this was her viewpoint after the taped portion of the interview was completed; as she never brought up this theme herself, it was classified as minor)

at the same time to respect the commonalities that might not be apparent in such diverse experiences. This two-sided goal met its greatest challenge in relation to the contributors' diverse notions of "demonic forces." While two of the contributors had stories in which the "demonic forces" were psychic, two other contributors had stories where there was a mixture of both magical and psychic elements. To use Ken Wilber's definitions of these terms,<sup>2</sup> in a magical experience of "demonic forces," the subject would not be able to perceive a clear differentiation between ego and environment, whereas in a psychic experience of such "forces," there would be an already formed ego that would perceive such forces as being outside the self. To make this difference clearer by giving examples of each, if a voodoo practitioner hexes a person who feels powerless before the force of the hex, this is magic; if another person was the target of a similar voodoo hex, but yet had an ego strong enough to resist the power of the hex and could "read" the negative energy directed at her by the voodoo practitioner, she would be psychic. Similarly, for the contributors, to the extent that they become engulfed by forces beyond their control, their experience is magical; to the extent they have integrated the magical experience, but yet have a choice to operate out of an ego, their experience is psychic.

To apply this rule to the actual contributors, both Luke's and Maria's experiences of "demonic forces" were psychic in that these "forces" were seen (by an egoic self) as taking over another person. On

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<sup>2</sup>For the clearest Wilberian distinction between magical and psychic, see the section "The Magical Bodyself vs. Actual Psychic Ability" in his Up From Eden: Transpersonal Views of Human Evolution (Garden City: Doubleday, 1981), pp. 54-56. (Hereafter cited as Eden.)

the other hand, Ruth's experience of "the evil eye" and Choko's childhood experience of "devouring ghosts" both contained magical elements since each--at moments--lost her sense of self and felt helplessly at the mercy of an all-powerful force. However, for both Ruth and Choko, the situation is more complex: though at the moment of the experience the magical element predominated, by the time they were being interviewed, there was a developed ego able to distance themselves from their fears and observe the psychic forces at work. Although the researcher saw that in both Ruth's and Choko's stories there was an intricate weaving of both magical and psychic elements, it was felt to be more useful to stress the commonality of perspective with Luke and Maria by not creating one category for "the mixture of magical and psychic forces" and another for just "pure psychic forces."

The questions still remained as what to call these "forces." This is how they were actually talked about by five of the contributors:

Ruth -- the "power" of the evil eye  
 Rabbi Fox -- psychic "negative forces"  
 Luke -- "a demonic force"  
 Maria -- "demonic forces"  
 Choko -- the "force" of negative chi

Although these different words were used, the researcher followed through on his perception that there was a shared meaning among these five contributors by adopting the common phrase "demonic forces."

A lesser obstacle appeared in relation to the theme called "no evil from the vantage point of absolute reality." Although this was the binding theme of both Bishop Myōkōko's and Abe's interviews, the researcher "intuited" that whereas the Bishop was actually experiencing this state of awareness, it was still more of an aspiration for Abe. The researcher considered making two separate themes--one emphasizing



the aspiration and the other the realization—but in the end it was felt to be more useful to stress their similarity of perspectives by only creating one theme.

#### Comparing the Religious Groups

In order to compare the themes that appeared in the different contributor's interviews, Table IV was constructed. This diagram lists all the themes found in Tables I through III and shows which contributors (grouped according to religious affiliation) had which themes. (At this point the reader should peruse Table IV which appears on p. 221.)

In composing this Table, the choice was made to include those themes that emerged from the contributors' experiences in the same chart as those that emerged from the contributors' interpretations of evil. Whereas the first ten themes (A through J) mostly emerged from the "experiential" stories, the last two themes (K and L) derived entirely from the "interpretative" discussions.

It should also be noted that the themes listed in Table IV are predominantly those which were spontaneously brought up by the contributors themselves. Since only on a few rare occasions would the interviewer be the first one to mention a particular theme, what a contributor did not bring up him or herself would not appear on the chart. For instance, the Christian contributors might have held the view that "another's pleasure in inflicting pain and/or death" was morally evil, yet because none of them mentioned such an experience or spontaneously brought up such a moral judgment, this theme was not listed next to their names in Table IV.

Looking at the themes in each of the three religious groups, it was

TABLE IV  
 DIAGRAM SHOWING THE MAJOR AND MINOR THEMES OF EACH CONTRIBUTOR

THEMES	CONTRIBUTORS								
	JEWISH			CHRISTIAN			BUDDHIST		
	R a b b i *	R u t h	D a n i e l	P a u l *	L u k e	M a r i a	R i s h o p *	A b e	C h o k o
A. Hells (inner and/or outer)		M	M					m	
B. Another's pleasure in inflicting pain and/or death		M	M					m	
C. A self-alienation from loving awareness				M					
D. A psychic attunement to malevolent forces		M			m	M			M
E. The presence of demonic forces	X	M			M	M			M
F. The destructive power of demonic forces		M				M			
G. A felt absence of another person's presence						M			
H. A going out of one's own soul		M							
I. A vision of evil itself									
J. An awe and fear before the inconceivable						M			
K. The ultimate unity of demonic forces and God/dess						M			M
L. No evil from the vantage point of absolute reality					X		M	M	m

M = a major theme for this contributor  
 m = a minor theme for this contributor  
 X = contributor specifically denied the validity of any viewpoint that contained this theme  
 \* = a privileged observer

apparent to the researcher that each group had stressed different themes. Among the Jewish contributors, these were the two most accentuated themes:

- Inner and/or outer hells
- Another's pleasure in inflicting pain and/or death

For the Christian contributors, there was a clustering around these five themes:

- A psychic attunement to malevolent forces
- The presence of demonic forces
- The destructive power of demonic forces
- A felt absence of another person's presence
- The ultimate unity of demonic forces and God/dess

Lastly, for the Buddhist contributors, the focus was upon only one theme:

- No evil from the vantage point of absolute reality

However, in both the Jewish and Christian groups, these similarities appeared among only two of the three contributors in that religious group while the third contributor in that group had not even a minor theme in common. Only among the Buddhists—where the third contributor had the same emphasis as a minor theme—did all three contributors in one religious group even touch upon the same theme.

But similarities appeared not only within each group, but also between contributors in different religious groups. With reference to Table IV, the only themes present in all three religious groups were D, E, and F—all of which involved "malevolent" or "demonic forces." Since these themes were distilled from the stories of Ruth, Luke, Maria, and Choko, they were the only ones to emerge in as many as four of the interviews. Another possibility of a common theme between contributors in different groups was fraught with ambiguity. Although both Ruth and

Maria saw evil in a "soul" that had left a person, Ruth was referring to her own experience whereas Maria was talking about how she perceived another person being "not there." After the researcher concluded that these experiences were more different than similar, he did not place their experiences in the same theme.

In order to determine whether a common theme of "evil" appeared in any of the groups, it was necessary for the researcher to assess if the similarities between contributors within a group were greater than the similarities between contributors who were in different groups. The researchers judgment on this was that within both the Jewish and Christian groups there was no common theme whereas in the Buddhist group one common theme did emerge.

The reason for making this judgment about both the Jewish and Christian groups was that in each group the "privileged observer" shared no theme in common with the other two contributors. By contrast, among the Buddhist contributors, there was a much greater commonality surrounding one particular theme. Not only did two contributors (one of whom was the "privileged observer") have as their binding theme the emphasis on "no evil from the vantage point of absolute reality," but this was also a minor theme for the third contributor in this group. As none of the Jewish or Christian contributors ever themselves brought up this particular theme, the researcher concluded that there was a significant difference between the Buddhist contributors and those that were either Jewish or Christian.

So, to summarize the results of this comparison of the themes of the three religious groups, the absence of a common theme from within either the Jewish or Christian group makes it appear that members of

each of these groups do not have a common experience of evil. However, the existence of a theme unique to the Buddhist group—the way evil disappears from the vantage point of the absolute—suggests that people of this religious affiliation have a common way of focusing upon the phenomenon of "evil."

### Comparing the "Privileged Observers" and the "Folkpeople"<sup>3</sup>

An unexpected finding became evident to the researcher after he looked at Tables I through III: he found that all three of the "privileged observers" had just focused on one theme for the entire length of each of their interviews. Whether the "privileged observers" presented an interpretation of evil (as did the Rabbi and the Bishop) or stories (as did the former Jesuit priest), each began with a clearly worked out conception of what he or she meant by "evil" and remained focused on that conception throughout the entire length of the interview. Although in each of these interviews the actual content of the theme was different, the style of approaching that different content was quite similar.

After reflecting upon the way each of the "privileged observers" had focused upon a particular theme, this researcher developed the concept of the "binding" theme, which he defined as "the core idea around which the rest of the interview crystallized." Looking at all nine interviews, a clear difference emerged between the "privileged observers" and the "folkpeople": while all the privileged observers had binding themes, only one of the six folkpeople had such a theme. The one folkperson with a binding theme, Abe, was unique among the

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<sup>3</sup>For a discussion of what is meant by "privileged observer" and "folkperson," see p. 127 in the chapter on "Methods and Procedures."

folkpeople in that he was teaching others about the principles of his religion. The role of teaching about their religion was also an ongoing role for two of the privileged observers (the former Jesuit priest and the Buddhist Bishop) and indicates that Abe was well on his way to becoming a privileged observer.

The free-flowing self-expression of both Ruth and Maria are good examples of a "non-binding" style of presentation. Although both of these women had a powerful experience of "evil," neither had yet determined its meaning or had any particular teaching to present to the interviewer. Both of their stories went in many directions and explored many byways--as if they were still seeking more insights into what had happened to them; in determining the essential features of these two interviews, the researcher found a wide variety of themes, all of which appeared to be of equal importance.

To summarize the results of this section, the researcher observed that the "privileged observers" had a much more focused style of presenting their stories and interpretations of "evil" than did the "folkpeople."

#### Stages of Moral Development

Two of the themes--"another's pleasure in inflicting pain and/or death" and "a self-alienation from loving awareness"--were consistently linked (by the contributors who used them) to a failure to live up to a moral standard. Another theme--"no evil from the vantage point of absolute reality"--was assumed by two of the contributors to relate to the highest level of moral development. This researcher referred to Lawrence Kohlberg's theory about the "stages" of moral judgment to see if any of his "stages" could be related to the various moral judgments made by the

contributors.

It was found that three of Kohlberg's seven stages closely corresponded to the "orientations" toward moral judgments adopted by the contributors:<sup>4</sup>

Stage 1 — Punishment and Obedience Orientation (This was found both in Paul's adolescent experience of attempting to live up to an external standard and in Bishop Myōkōko's experience as a young man of "hating" those who did wrong.)

Stage 3 — "Good Boy-Nice Girl" Orientation (This was found in Ruth and Daniel's condemnation of those who didn't follow the "Golden Rule" of treating them the way they would have treated others.)

"Stage 7" — Cosmic Law-Agape Orientation (This was found in Paul's internal standard of being "lovingly aware" in the moment.)

However, this researcher also concluded that Kohlberg's theory had no "stage" that adequately corresponded to the orientation of the two Buddhist contributors who found the highest moral level to be "empty" of any differentiation between "good" and "bad." Kohlberg writes that at the center of "Stage 7"—what he views as the highest stage of moral and ethical development—are "religious experiences of union with deity, whether pantheistic or theistic."<sup>5</sup> Since Bishop Myōkōko viewed all concepts—whether of the Deity or of any other ultimate Reality—as "delusive," he could never reach Kohlberg's highest stage. But an even greater difference between Kohlberg and Bishop Myōkōko is that whereas

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<sup>4</sup>For a description of each of these stages, see Lawrence Kohlberg, The Philosophy of Moral Development, Vol. 1 of Essays on Moral Development (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981). The salient features of the first six stages are described both in the text on pp. 17-19, 147-68 and in the Appendix entitled "The Six Stages of Moral Judgment" on pp. 409-412. "Stage 7" is described both in Chapter Nine and in the Epilogue and is most succinctly summarized on pp. 368-72.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 370.

for Kohlberg those people who reach "Stage 7" still maintain an ethical orientation, Bishop Myōkōko saw good and bad as part of the same whole and refused to support any ethical orientation or make any moral judgments; as the Bishop said during his interview, "If I have pure state of mind, I can see everybody...just the pure...even if they are doing good or bad...their nature, their basic nature are not defiled...always pure and clean, yea." This researcher concluded that Kohlberg's theory is grounded in the moral and ethical assumptions of the Judaeo-Christian tradition and it therefore must be used with great caution in classifying those individuals who have grounded their "ultimate" moral values in other traditions.

To summarize the results of this section, Kohlberg's theory of the "stages" of moral development usefully described types of moral orientation in contributors of all three religious backgrounds. However, the theory was found to deal inadequately with a Buddhist moral orientation that made no "ultimate" differentiation between either right and wrong or good and bad.

#### The "No Evil" Contributors

Three of the contributors—the Rabbi, the Bishop, and Abe—said they had no experience that they would presently call "evil." Although Abe did talk about childhood "transgressions" and the Bishop mentioned that as a young man he had judged other people's conduct as "evil," neither any longer considered the category of "evil" useful in understanding their experience. The Rabbi's position was that "evil" had the connotation of "negative forces" of a "psychic" nature and that, as she didn't believe a "psychic" orientation was valid, she did not find



the concept useful.

The interviewer's "intuitive feeling" upon being with these three contributors was that the Bishop was experiencing a state of awareness in which there was "no evil," that Abe was aspiring to such an experience, and that the Rabbi was suppressing and/or out of touch with negative aspects of her own experience. It was intriguing to the researcher that this same category of "no evil" could indicate such diverse relations to one's experience.

After the researcher saw that it was possible to have such different ways of being related to one's experience, he tried to relate this to a theoretical model. At that point the researcher came across an article by Ken Wilber that presented a model that there are three levels of awareness of evil:<sup>6</sup>

- Stage 1: non-recognition of evil (no evil) —  
UNCONSCIOUS (pre-egoic)
- Stage 2: recognition of evil (evil is real) —  
SELF-CONSCIOUS (egoic)
- Stage 3: transcendence of evil (no evil) —  
TRANSPERSONAL (transegoic)

To further clarify his point, Wilber defines "sin" as "alienation from Spirit" and writes:

Nature is asleep in sin, and God is awake without sin—but man is caught in the middle: awake with sin.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Although the schematic diagram does not appear in Wilber's article, all the terms are taken from his "The Pre/Trans Fallacy," Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 22, No. 2 (1982), 8-12. This identical article originally appeared in Revision, 3, No. 2 (1980), 51-72. (Hereafter cited as "Pre/Trans" with all page references to the JHP reprint.) By "pre/trans fallacy," Wilber is referring to the confusion of a pre-ego state with a trans-ego state. He had more to say about this same muddle later in Eden, pp. 322-28.

<sup>7</sup>"Pre/Trans," p. 11.

Upon reading further about Wilber's developmental "stages" of evolution, the researcher noted Wilber's point that there would be a particular type of relationship to evil that might be dominant in each "stage":<sup>8</sup>

- Uroboric -- unconscious identity with instinctual drives (no evil)
- Magical -- a feeling of powerlessness before mysterious hostile forces
- Mythic -- an experience of an "angry God" who is appeased through the ritual sacrifices of either humans or animals
- Egoic -- an experience of injury to something cherished by an ego
- Psychic -- a perception of the energy in demonic forces
- Archetypal -- a vision of wrathful deities or evil itself
- Spirit -- all is right that seems most wrong (no evil)

Within this stage model of development, a particular contributor's position of "no evil" could actually be the denial of the existence of the "evil" perceived in a specific "stage." For example, the Rabbi's position could be interpreted as denying the existence of a "magical" evil--which she labels "psychic."<sup>9</sup> Alternatively, the position of "no evil" could be the actual transcendence of all "evil" in the above developmental stage called "Spirit."

Wilber's argument is that the only way to be free of the "evil" of any particular developmental stage is not through suppression or denial, but through transcendence. Wilber echoes Freud's insight that if a person is repressing a particular experience of "evil," he or she will

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<sup>8</sup>The descriptions of what a person's relationship to "evil" might be in each "stage" closely follows the presentation in Eden; however, the specific words and phrases describing each stage are more this researcher's than Wilber's. It should be noted that these seven stages can be considered an expanded version of the just mentioned three levels of awareness wherein the uroboric corresponds to the pre-egoic, spirit to the transegoic, and the egoic is the vantage point both from which "stages" are perceived and from which experiences are labelled as "evil."

<sup>9</sup>Wilber tirelessly reiterates that in current discourse among both laypeople and scholars the categories of "magical" and "psychic" are continually confused and jumbled. This is for Wilber one of the most common forms of "the pre/trans fallacy." See "Pre/Trans," p. 38.

be stuck at that stage indefinitely.<sup>10</sup> Wilber's conclusion is that only after a person transcends all the evils of a particular stage can the experience of "no evil" in that stage further that individual's development.

To summarize the results of this section, it was found that the experience of "no evil" could result from a contributor's . . .

- a) either suppressing or being out of touch with her or his negative experiences;
- b) denying the existence of the "evil" perceived in a particular "stage";
- c) aspiring to a state of transcendence; and/or
- d) being in a state of transcendence wherein she or he experiences no evil.

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<sup>10</sup>Wilber gives a particular example of this in relation to the "magic" stage when he discusses how "the failure to outgrow, transform, and integrate" magical processes will leave a person fixated, obsessive, and neurotic. See Eden, p. 82.

CHAPTER ELEVEN  
RELATING THE THEMES OF THE INTERVIEWS  
TO THOSE OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

My work is not that of building but of  
digging, of digging in that which is most  
obscure and of uncovering problems that  
have not been seen or if seen have not been  
solved.

-- Edmund Husserl<sup>1</sup>

The purposes of this chapter are threefold: to relate the themes that emerged from the interviews to the themes that appeared in the review of the literature (in Chapters Four through Seven); to note which of these relationships seem most significant; and to list those themes of evil which occurred most frequently in both the interviews and the review of the literature.

Religious Contexts

The highest degree of thematic congruence between the contributors of a particular religious group and the literature pertaining to a particular religious tradition is in the Buddhist notion that there is "no evil from the vantage point of absolute reality." This was the

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<sup>1</sup>This was Husserl's personal communication to Dorion Cairns, an American who was a student of Husserl's during the 1920's and 1930's. See Dorion Cairn's essay "My Own Life" in Phenomenology: Continuation and Criticism, ed. Frederick Kersten and Richard Zaner (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), p. 10.

central focus throughout the section on Buddhism and also appeared as the dominant theme for two of the three Buddhist contributors. However, it should be noted that Choko, one of the Buddhist contributors, had views about "the Goddess" that were not mentioned in the review of the literature as being of central importance in the Buddhist tradition; a good case could be made that her idea that "evil and the Goddess are different sides of the same coin" has a theistic element analogous to the Kabbalistic notion that Lilith (the force of evil) and the Shekinah (the indwelling God) are merely different aspects of the same Goddess.

In the standard Christian texts discussed in the review of the literature, there was an emphasis on the opposition between God and the devil. Among the contributors, Paul had the most in common with this viewpoint; although he never mentioned the devil, he did believe that "original sin" was the "assumed condition" that best described his state at birth. In the other two Christian contributors, there was not the same total opposition between God and the forces of darkness. Although they both had an experience of "demonic forces," their interpretation of these "forces" was that they were part of God. In this shared view that God has a "dark" or "demonic" side, they depart from traditional Christian theology and have more in common with the ideas found in the esoteric traditions of Kabbalah and Gnosticism.

Among the Jewish contributors, none shared the view of those ancient Jewish texts that viewed evil as part of God. A more modern form of Judaism was propounded by the Rabbi who held that there was "no evil" and that the one God was totally good. The two Jewish contributors who were the victims of sadistic actions did have great difficulties in comprehending why a good God would permit them to undergo such hellish

suffering. Since neither of them had yet found an answer to this question, both were still pondering the nature of God's justice. In their doubting, they are part of an honorable Jewish tradition that stretches back at least as far as the Book of Job.

### The Modern Scholars

Rudolph Otto's concept of "the numinous" is similar to the theme that emerged from the interviews of "an awe and fear before the inconceivable." This is relevant in three of the interviews:

1) Luke's vision of "blackest black" is very similar to the type of experience that Otto discussed in his book; Luke himself also chose Otto's notion of "the numinous" as his own way of interpreting the dimension he glimpsed during his vision. During the course of the interview, Luke came to see that his experience with the schizophrenic woman also had the "numinous" elements of mysterium and tremendum.

2) Maria's tone of voice in describing her daughter's screaming implied that she considered such a psychic attunement to be both "eerie" and "uncanny"; as these two terms are used by Otto to describe the historical "starting-point" out of which "numinous" feeling eventually developed, Maria's experience may have a relationship to "numinous" feeling. A similar "eeriness" appears to have been experienced the moment Maria perceived her acquaintance's soul to be gone; both of these experiences are more similar to the historical antecedents of "the numinous" than to a full-blown "religious experience" of "the numinous" itself.

3) Lastly, Choko's childhood fear of a "vastness" that she could not "conceive"—from which "evil popped out"—has aspects of mysterium,

tremendum, and horrendum. If such a fear is considered "numinous"—"the numinous" being defined as "the felt experience of what is holy"—it becomes more comprehensible why she would view "the Goddess" as being its "opposite side."

As noted earlier in this chapter, Luke's and Choko's shared view that "demonic forces" and "God or Goddess" are different "sides" of one energy is not the "orthodox" view in either of their religious traditions. The fact that the only two contributors with "numinous" experiences of evil expressed a similar viewpoint (that was "outside" of both of their religious traditions) suggests the possibility that this way of interpreting reality might be related to what was "seen" during their "numinous" experiences.

Of Paul Ricoeur's three layers of the experience of "fault"—defilement, sin, and guilt—only two appeared in the interviews. A defilement (the breaking of a taboo) was evident in Abe's description of stepping across forbidden boundaries in his two childhood "transgressions." Sin (a collectivity going astray) did not appear in any of the contributor's stories or interpretations. However, five of the contributors had experiences of evil that involved guilt (accusations directed against either the self or other individuals). The only contributor who had an experience in which the accusations of guilt were against the self was Paul: in his adolescent attempt to obey "external" moral standards, he exhibited a "scrupulousness" that Ricoeur would view as typical of such experiences. Four of the other contributors related evil to the "unworthy" conduct of others: both Ruth and Daniel implied that those who treated them with cruelty were deficient in their moral behavior;

Bishop Myōkōko said that as a young man he "hated" those who "did something wrong"; and, lastly, Abe implies an accusation when he calls the Holocaust "horrendous and evil." As will be recalled from the review of the literature, Ricoeur concluded that in the modern world, defilement and sin would be less frequent experiences of evil than those involving guilt. Since among the nine contributors there was only one who had an experience of defilement, none who experienced sin, and five who had an experience of guilt, Ricoeur's generalization accurately predicted the greater frequency of guilt. It should be noted, however, that Ricoeur does not discuss "demonic forces"—the single most popular theme among the nine contributors.

After studying texts over 1500 years old, James Boyd made a comparison between the way early Christians perceived Satan and the way early Buddhists perceived Māra. As none of the nine contributors had an experience with either Satan or Māra, it is not possible to relate his comparisons to the interviews. However, Boyd also made two other comparisons between early Christians and Buddhists that are relevant to the interviews. Boyd's most dramatic conclusion was that in describing the "numinous" aspect of evil, Buddhists emphasized the fascinosum whereas Christians would dwell upon the horrendum. Looking at the interviews, it is clear that all nine contributors assumed evil was more related to the horrendum than to the other three elements of "the numinous." Although the only contributor who even mentioned evil's fascinosum was a Buddhist, Abe's discussion centered around how "evil" itself can become a "highlight" for the ego in search of "some sort of perverse form of entertainment." This point is quite different from the early Buddhist



texts that saw evil in a fascination with life that kept a person bound to the world of sense desire. To conclude, it can be said that whereas modern Buddhist contributors did not emphasize that humankind's fascination with life was an evil, modern Christian contributors did assume that evil was most related to the "numinous" element of horrendum. (However, so did the Jewish and Buddhist contributors.)

Boyd was also concerned whether the source of evil was internal or external. He generalized that for early Buddhists evil was seen as stemming from the "internal" impurities of the mind, whereas for early Christians evil derived from an "external" hostile power. If this criterion is applied to each of the three religious groups, the following patterns emerge:

1) In the Buddhist interviews, two of the contributors were unambiguous in viewing evil as having an internal origin. One of these, the Bishop, explained that the reason he saw evil as a young man was because his mind was impure; now that his mind was "pure" he no longer saw evil anywhere. The other, Abe, talked about how unwholesome thoughts and actions were the "karma inducing" cause of an individual's suffering. Abe also assumed that a person who was free of ego would also be free of evil, and went on to locate the origin of "wrongdoing" in the ego's attempt to perpetuate itself. Choko's experiences of "fear" and "anger" at first glance appeared to be of internal origin. However, both "fear" and "anger" were viewed as having their own origin in a negative chi, and the source of chi was never discussed. Since she did interpret chi as manifesting externally in "ghosts," "substances," "auras," and "forces," it does not appear to be solely of internal origin. Without asking Choko more questions about chi, all that can be said is that Choko seemed to

view evil as having both an internal and external source.

2) In the Christian group, each of the three contributors appeared to see evil as being both internal and external. When asked by the interviewer about the source of evil, Paul stated that he saw its source in "original sin," and this was "the assumed condition" both inside and outside himself. As for Luke, he believed that during his vision of "blackest black" he was "in the presence of all the source of the evil of the entire universe"; such a statement implies that this "source" is equally within him and in external reality. Luke also believed that the "demonic force" which manifested through a specific schizophrenic woman was the same "entity" which had once manifested historically in Nazi Germany and whose presence could still be noted by reading "the newspaper any day." Maria's position was similar to Luke's; although the interviewer never specifically asked her about the origin of "demonic forces," she did volunteer that they are "in everybody, it's in everything." None of these Christian contributors expressed the view that evil stemmed solely from the mind's impurities or that it might disappear through an internal self-purification. If each did view evil as coming through individuals, this was interpreted as just one manifestation of a more all-encompassing evil whose source is both within the individual and equally in external reality.

3) The Jewish contributors had two different positions on this issue of the source of evil; whereas one saw an internal origin for what was called "the bad," the two other contributors told stories where "the evil" was located externally. It was the Rabbi who viewed "the bad" as the consequence of an "internal" misuse of "free will." Among the two other Jewish contributors, Daniel was the most vehement in viewing evil

as solely external—it was the Nazis who were evil and he was their victim. Similarly, Ruth saw both those who hurt her and "the evil eye" as having an external origin; her only difference with Daniel was that she had come to see that if she owned her own power, she could fight the external evil.

To summarize these results, it could be said that among these nine contributors, there was a tendency for the Buddhists (two out of three) to see evil as solely internal, for the Christians (all three) to see it as both internal and external, and for the Jews (two out of three) to see it as solely external. Referring these results back to Boyd's conclusion (which did not include Jews), it can be seen that the modern Buddhists interviewed were similar to their historical predecessors in their view that evil stems from the mind's impurities; however, the modern Christians differed from their more orthodox predecessors in that they did not see evil as emanating from an external hostile power, but viewed it as having an origin that was both internal and external.

#### The Psychologists

Only one of the five main themes of the psychologists—the wrong or substitute sacrifice—failed to emerge as a major theme in the interviews. It was, however, briefly hinted at by one of the contributors; Abe's point that "to confuse" a relative truth with the absolute truth may lead a person to "commit great evil" is analogous to Rank's theory that the substitute sacrifice derives from "confusing the values" of "this material world" with those of the perfected "beyond." However, Abe neither elaborated upon this point nor gave an example from his own experience.

The other four main themes of the psychologists were each a major theme for more than one contributor. The first theme, sadism and destructiveness, which was common to all the psychologists, could be considered analogous to the shared theme of two of the Jewish contributors: "another's pleasure in inflicting pain and/or death." The psychologists' theme of possession by demons and the daimonic is relevant to those four contributors who had an experience involving "demonic forces." Although only one of the contributors actually refers to "possession"--the word was used by Luke to describe the mental state of the schizophrenic woman--all four experiences would fit what Jung called "a psychological complex" and what May called "the daimonic." It should be noted that although there are documented "case histories" of a type of "possession" in which a demonic being with his or her own separate identity takes over a person,<sup>2</sup> this was not experienced by any of the contributors nor was it the main meaning of "possession" in either Jung or May. The next theme of the psychologists, the ultimate unity of demonic/daimonic forces and God, appeared among two of the Christian and one of the Buddhist contributors. The last theme of the psychologists, no evil from the vantage point of actual transcendence, was found only in Wilber; as he specifically related it to such Buddhist terms as "prajñā," "śūnyatā," and "Dharmakaya," it can be considered similar to the Buddhist viewpoint that there is "no evil from the vantage point of absolute reality."

Relating the themes of the contributors to those of the psychologists,

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<sup>2</sup>See Martin Malachi's Hostage to the Devil: The Possession and Exorcism of Five Living Americans (New York: Reader's Digest Press, 1976).

it could be said that the Jewish emphasis (in two of the three contributors) upon "sadism" was most pronounced in Freud, Reich, Fromm, and Becker (all of whom had Jewish parents); that the Christian emphasis (in two of the three contributors) upon "the ultimate unity of demonic forces and God" was most prominent in Jung and May (both of whom had Christian parents); and that the Buddhist viewpoint (found in all three Buddhist contributors) that "evil does not exist from the vantage point of absolute reality" was echoed by Wilber (who was unique among these psychologists in attempting to integrate the assumptions of the Hindu-Buddhist worldview into a model of the mind.)

#### The Writers of Literature

The moral outrage felt by two of the Jewish contributors at "another's pleasure in inflicting pain and/or death" had most in common with Blake's similar attitude toward such behavior. The Jewish contributors—and Blake—differed from the Marquis de Sade in that each in his or her own way was searching for an alternative to sadism.

The theme that emerged from two of the Christian and one of the Buddhist interviews relating to an "ultimate unity of demonic forces and God" was best expressed by Melville. Like Melville, these contributors viewed God as being inextricably related to the demonic forces.

Blake and Melville's imaginative "inner seeing" that did not differentiate between good and evil was most analogous to the viewpoints of the Buddhist contributors who saw "no evil from the vantage point of absolute reality." Another similarity between both Blake and Melville and the Buddhist contributors was that all believed their words and symbols were mere "pointers" toward an "ultimate" reality whose nature

was itself both ungraspable and unfathomable.

To summarize, two of the three Jewish contributors shared with Blake a desire to find an alternative to sadism, two of the three Christian contributors shared with Melville the viewpoint that there was an ultimate unity between the demonic and God, and all the Buddhist contributors shared Blake and Melville's common assumption that there was an "inner seeing" that did not differentiate between good and evil.

### Conclusion

The "diggings" of this chapter that the researcher considers most significant are as follows:

1) The only two contributors with a full-blown "numinous" experience of evil both interpreted "demonic forces" as being the "other" or "dark" side of God/dess. As this viewpoint was "unorthodox" in both of their religious traditions, this opens the question whether people with "numinous" experiences of evil tend to develop similar interpretations of evil independent of the teachings of their own religious tradition.

2) Accusations of "guilt" directed against either the self or others were the most frequently occurring experience of "fault." This would tend to support Ricoeur's conclusion that other experiences of "fault"—such as "defilement" and "sin"—have in our historical era been transmuted into experiences of "guilt."

3) There was a tendency for the Buddhists to see the source of evil as solely internal, for the Christians to see it as being both internal and external, and for the Jews to see it as being solely external. Such a tendency suggests that people who are in the same religious group may bring forth ideas that seem incompatible, but yet they may have a similar

orientation to the question of the source of evil. (As noted, even among the nine contributors, there were two exceptions to this tentative generalization.)

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The researcher noted five themes relating to evil that occurred frequently in both the review of the literature and the interviews. In this listing below, these overlapping themes are presented with the name they were given in the review of the literature (in the left column) followed by the name that emerged from the interviews (in the right column):

sadism and destructiveness	— another's pleasure in inflicting pain and/or death
the <u>horrendum</u> as an element of "the numinous"	— an awe and fear before the inconceivable
possession by demons and the daimonic	— the presence of demonic forces
the ultimate unity of demonic/ daimonic forces and God	— the ultimate unity of demonic forces and God
no evil from the vantage point of actual transcendence/ eternal realities	— no evil from the vantage point of absolute reality

Though the name for the themes may vary, each pair of related themes does seem to belong to the same "cluster" or "family" of meanings.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF EVIL

There are a thousand hacking at the  
branches of evil to one who is striking  
at the root. . .

— Henry David Thoreau<sup>1</sup>

Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, introduced a method whose purpose is to determine the "essence" (eidos) of any phenomenon. This method is neither purely inductive (empirical) nor deductive (as is formal logic), but involves the use of intuition. Husserl called this method "free phantasy variation." Here "phantasy" retains the "ph" of the German phantasie to emphasize its relation to the Greek root "phaino"—meaning "to bring to the light of day"—from whence the word "phenomenology" derives.

The heart of this method is examining various possibilities of what may be examples of the phenomenon in order to determine what are its essential elements. These variations need not be restricted to the factual or the possible, but may be purely imaginative. To give a simple example, if one were trying to find the essence of a book, the possibility might arise of whether a book could be a wooden block with a title on the front of the block—but without any pages to be read. Most

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted from the chapter on "Economy" in Walden in Walden and Other Writings, ed. Brooks Atkinson (New York: Random House [Modern Library Edition], 1950), p. 68.



observers would agree that such a block was not a book and that therefore "pages to be read" is a necessary component of "bookness." To apply this method to determine the essential elements of evil is the purpose of this chapter.

"Free phantasy variation" is a strategy to be applied creatively and appropriately in each situation. It cannot be adequately conveyed by a single set of "rules." However, in one key passage, Husserl provided the following helpful hint:

We can draw extraordinary profit from what history has to offer us, and in still richer measure from the gifts of art and particularly of poetry. . . .

Hence, if anyone loves a paradox, he can really say, and say with strict truth if he will allow for the ambiguity, that the element which makes up the life of phenomenology as of all eidetical science is "fiction," that fiction is the source whence the knowledge of "eternal truths" draws its sustenance.<sup>2</sup>

Even if a phenomenon does not exist except in imagination, one can still legitimately apply this method for determining its essence.<sup>3</sup> For instance, it would be possible to research the essence of what is "hallucination" or even of a particular image--such as "the Prince of Darkness"--that is "hallucinated."

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After this researcher reflected upon both his own personal experience and that of others, he came to the conclusion that the first

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<sup>2</sup>Edmund Husserl, Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology, trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson (New York: Collier Books, 1962) in §70, p. 184.

<sup>3</sup>A thorough description of this method is presented by the modern Husserlian Richard M. Zaner in his article "The Art of Free Phantasy in Rigorous Phenomenological Science," in Phenomenology: Continuation and Criticism, ed. Frederick Kersten and Richard Zaner (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), pp. 192-218. Zaner's discussion is an elaboration of Husserl's own description of the method in Ideas, §70, pp. 181-84.

essential element of evil is that it is experienced as real. The word "real" is used here to imply what is vivid, intense, living, immediate, and undeniably present.

Of the nine contributors to this dissertation, only six had an experience that from their present viewpoint they explicitly categorized as "evil." In addition, another experience of evil was described by this researcher in his chapter on self-hermeneutics (pp. 17-18). In looking back through these seven descriptions, the researcher found that all talked about the "realness" of what they saw, while in the midst of experiencing evil:

Luke (describing the woman dedicated to killing his wife): . . . it was--this thing was--a real force.  
(interpreting his vision of "blackest black"): That was an experience that to this day convinces me that I had once seen the heart--the real heart--the source of evil as it exists in the universe.

Ruth (about her being hurt by those she trusted): . . . that was the real evil day and night.  
(about her inner "hell" after being hurt): That's a real thing, Elliott.

Paul (describing the night of self-doubt after his child died): It was like an extreme condensation of human experience . . . The sharpness of . . . those moments was revelatory . . . I was in a state of extreme excitability . . . and wakefulness.

Daniel (watching the Nazis toss live babies in the fire): . . . that was very vivid.

Maria (about the destructive energy coming through her acquaintance): . . . it's more than just negative--it's real--it seems to be real forces . . . it's very intense and those are very real.

Choko (about the negative energy of chi she felt coming from the altar): . . . it's to me very real--as real as you are here.

Elliott (about Justin's intentions to kill people for sport): He realized that Justin "really" meant what he said.

Another indicator of "realness" was that all seven people also felt their

experience of evil had an effect upon their lives. By contrast, it may be useful to mention the interview of the Zen Buddhist Bishop who held that since there was "nothing real" in either experience or existence, there was "no evil anywhere."

But just the fact that "realness" appears in all the "given variations"—a phenomenological term for the existing examples of a phenomenon<sup>4</sup>—does not demonstrate that it is an essential element of evil. In order to show that "realness" is essential, it would be necessary for the researcher to do many "free phantasy variations." Such variations would entail the researcher constructing a slightly "varied" story that deprived the experience of "realness." If, with the "realness" gone, evil was still present, then "realness" could not be considered an essential element of evil.

The researcher performed several of these variations and in each case discovered that when the "realness" was taken away, the "evil" disappeared. One of the variations done by the researcher involved the story of Ahab's confrontation with the whale named Moby Dick. As will be recalled from an earlier chapter,<sup>5</sup> Ahab had his leg bitten off while trying to harpoon the whale and came to the conclusion that Moby Dick was "evil" incarnate. In this free phantasy variation, it is assumed that Ahab is actually a young sailor going off on his very first whaling voyage. One night, after getting into his bed, he dreams that he is

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<sup>4</sup>The term "given variations" is taken from Bruce Wilshire who uses it to signify "actual cases"—as contrasted to "imaginative variations"—in his Role Playing and Identity: The Limits of Theatre as Metaphor (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), p. 20.

<sup>5</sup>For a more elaborate summary of Moby Dick, see pp. 114-117 of this dissertation.

trying to harpoon Moby Dick and that the great white whale bites off his leg. In the dream he feels an immense pain while his leg is being crunched off and breaks into a cold sweat and screams aloud, "Evil whale, I vow to destroy thee!" A moment later Ahab wakes up, sees that he is covered in sweat and immediately looks under his bedcovers to see if his leg is still there. On finding his leg intact and that he is totally unharmed, he exclaims, "By golly, that dream felt really real!"

The question that the researcher then posed to himself is whether when Ahab was awake he would feel either that he had had an experience of evil or that the real Moby Dick was an embodiment of evil. After the researcher reflected upon this "varied" story, he concluded that unless Ahab believed his dreams revealed a hidden or deeper reality, he would not feel he had had an experience of evil or that the real Moby Dick was "really" evil. This (and other) free phantasy variations suggested to the researcher that the experience of evil necessitated a view of reality in which feelings and perceptions were taken as "real."

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After this researcher reflected upon both his own and others' experience of evil, he came to the conclusion that the second essential element of evil is that it is experienced in the last analysis as being beyond rational comprehension. The phrase "beyond rational comprehension" is meant to imply that it is "unfathomable" or "cannot be explained by rational categories." The phrase "in the last analysis" implies that whatever happened does not "explain away" what is perceived as being "incomprehensible."

Possibly this element will come into clearer focus by giving examples from the seven "given variations" of the experience of evil

described by the six contributors and the researcher. In all of these descriptions, it was either implied or stated that there were aspects of their experience that were "beyond rational comprehension":

Luke (referring to his vision of "blackest black"): I cannot comprehend the childhood experience.

(referring to the woman dedicated to killing his wife):

. . . the personality wasn't there--that I can't comprehend. Where did that go?

I'd never seen this woman as an experience of a mysterium, but indeed it obviously was, and that's interesting.

Ruth feared that if she shared her story something bad would "come to" either herself or the interviewer.

(upon being unjustly accused she wondered): How come these things happening? I didn't understand, I mean, like the justice wondering in life (laughs). Where is justice? I believed so much that everything comes from God that it's hard for me to say something wrong, something bad, y'know, because it's happened from God.

Paul's night of self-doubt occurred in a situation where it is implied (but never made explicit) that he was questioning why his daughter had died only six hours after her birth.

Daniel (upon seeing the Nazis throwing live babies into the fire): I thought I was crazy. I really couldn't believe my eyes. It was very hard to believe.

(upon seeing Nazi murderers in the evening in their homes): They played Beethoven. And they raised little birds in cages and raised flowers and were very responsive to their own children, actually very cuddly to their own children.

(telling about his self-questioning while in the camp): I thought, "How can there be a God when those things happen?"

Maria found "the most significant thing" in her story to be the way her daughter started screaming even before she could in any way see the acquaintance who was bent on destruction.

Choko (about her fears): . . . as a child the things that are not known to me was very very fearful which to me was a vastness--that I somewhere can't conceive--was something associated with evil. And I think at the age of two or three I started to think about the number that I cannot count, the space that I can't conceive and that was very very frightful and that was somewhere that evil popped out.

(after biting a person like an animal): I urinated an amazing colored brown urine.

Elliott (about his initial disbelief that Justin meant what he said):  
 I didn't have a category in which to place Justin's  
 intentions . . ."

But although both these contributors and the researcher found their experience "in the last analysis" incomprehensible, each of them did have an explanation for what happened:

Luke-- a numinous experience of "the dark side of God"  
 Ruth-- she had succumbed to the power of "the evil eye"  
 Paul-- "original sin" is the assumed condition of humanity  
 Daniel-- the Nazis were "sadists"  
 Maria-- real demonic "forces" were working through her acquaintance  
 Choko-- the "force" and "energy" of negative chi affects her physically  
 Elliott-- Justin was motivated by "powerful destructive intentions"

But, to use a mineral metaphor, amid the ore of all their explanations, there lay a golden nugget that made each see his or her experience as ultimately incomprehensible and unfathomable. By way of contrast, contributor Rabbi Rachel Fox who had no experience of evil had explanations for the "bad" that made it rationally comprehensible--for instance, the sadism of the Nazis was a "sickness." Similarly Abe, who also explained sadism as a "sickness," developed a viewpoint that "comprehended" his own suffering (such as after his brother's death) as part of a natural cyclic rhythm--much like summer turns into winter. To use the same mineral metaphor, since neither Rabbi Fox nor Abe had a "nugget" of incomprehensibility amid the ore of explanation, they could see no "evil" amidst the "bad."

This conclusion that a necessary element of evil was that it was "beyond rational comprehension" was only arrived at by this researcher after many free phantasy variations. Initially, the researcher felt this element partially lay in the "mystery" of what was being experienced. He had been led in this direction after reading this quotation from Alan Watts:

The depiction of utter and abysmal evil is immensely difficult. Once I sat for hours with an artist friend attempting to draw perfectly evil faces, but all turned out to be merely angry, sad, or comic. The face of evil is actually as unimaginable as the face of God, and it is thus that the only way of suggesting it is to use masks or veils such as those worn by the Spanish Inquisitors or the Ku Klux Klan—pointed and featureless head coverings with slits for the eyes.

. . . the final point is that the Mystery of Iniquity is as indescribable as the Vision of God.<sup>6</sup>

Only after a close examination of the "given variations" and doing several "free phantasy variations" did the researcher see that the universal element of "evil" did not lie in an outer "mystery" of what was seen or experienced, but in the subject's ultimate inability to give a total explanation for what happened. To use Alan Watt's own example, it would be possible for a psychologist to explain the "masks" and "brutality" of the Inquisition and the Ku Klux Klan as due to the "aggression" of "sadists" and not to see any "mystery" or "evil." Once the researcher realized that "mystery" depended upon a subject not "explaining away" what was experienced, he began looking for phrases to suggest this "willingness to accept mystery." Eventually, he let go of the word "mystery" altogether because it implied an "awe" and "wonder" that was lacking in several of the contributor's interviews. The final solution was to highlight evil's tendency to disappear once rationally explained by saying that an essential element of evil was that it was experienced as being "in the last analysis beyond rational comprehension."

One of the free phantasy variations used to arrive at this element involved another re-working of Moby Dick. In this variation, Ahab's great grandchild, called by his friends Ahab IV, was a student at the

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<sup>6</sup>Alan W. Watts, The Two Hands of God: The Myths of Polarity (New York: George Braziller, 1963), pp. 163-64.

California Institute of Integral Studies. There he learned various psychological theories and took a course in "The Law of Karma." When he couldn't find a job after graduating, he signed up on a whaling ship. Eventually he had a confrontation with Moby Dick's great grandchild, Moby Dick IV, and had his leg bitten off. After being rescued from the ocean, he lay on the deck of his boat and cried aloud, "O what an unfortunate day! I should have known that this voyage would bring bad karma. It was an unwholesome act trying to try to kill a whale. I am hurt, but I don't want to project my own frustrations upon the whale. I can certainly understand why he would fight back to protect himself from being killed."

With this "varied" story completed, the researcher asked himself if Ahab IV would feel either that he had had an experience of evil or that Moby Dick IV was "evil" incarnate. Upon reflection, the researcher concluded that Ahab IV would not view Moby Dick IV as "evil" since with the help of his psychological explanations, he was able to empathize with what he thought was the whale's point of view. However, Ahab IV still might describe his own experience as "evil" if he had no comprehension of why he had ended up suffering so much. If his understanding of the law of karma gave him a complete explanation for his own suffering, then he might conclude that there was "no evil anywhere," but only the workings of an impersonal law. Such a "varied" story pointed out to the researcher that once a psychological or spiritual theory gives an explanation for what might be incomprehensible (such as suffering), there is the likelihood that what might otherwise be seen as "evil" becomes merely "bad" or unfortunate."

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After this researcher again reflected upon both his own and others' experiences of evil, he came to the conclusion that the third element of evil is a radical opposition to what is considered sacred. The word "sacred" here implies what is either personally cherished or of religious value.

If "out-grown" childhood and youthful experiences of evil are included, eight of the nine contributors told of having experienced "evil"; after reflecting upon both these eight interviews, his own experience, and the review of the literature, this researcher was able to distinguish six different types of such "a radical opposition to the sacred":

- Type I: A malevolent or hateful person injures or destroys what is considered sacred. (The emphasis in these stories is on the sadistic intentions of the malevolent person.)
- Type II: An impersonal negative force dedicated to injuring or destroying what is considered sacred gains power over a person. (In these stories, the person whom the force has power over is most commonly without intentions, but on occasion her or his intentions remain unimportant or unknown.)
- Type III: A person's thoughts or actions step across a forbidden boundary and thereby defile what is considered sacred. (In such stories, there is a breaking of a taboo.)
- Type IV: A collectivity strays from a destiny that is considered sacred. (This type was framed with reference to the Hebrew prophets' interpretation of how the people of Israel "sinned" when they strayed from their historical purpose.)
- Type V: A person's thoughts or actions are unworthy of a moral standard that is considered sacred. (In such stories, there is commonly an accusation of guilt directed against either the self or others.)
- Type VI: A dimension is glimpsed or a realm is entered wherein there is an utter lack of what is considered sacred. (Just as the sacred is often associated with "wholeness," "light," and "the warmth of the heart," the tellers of these stories experienced this realm as "fragmented," "dark," and either "burning hot" or freezing cold.)

Type I is analogous to the theme called "another's pleasure in inflicting pain and/or death." Type II is analogous to the themes relating to "demonic forces." Types III, IV, and V are analogues to the layers of "fault" that Ricoeur termed (respectively) defilement, sin, and guilt. Lastly, Type VI is related to the themes called "inner and/or outer hells" and "a vision of evil itself." It should also be noted that Type VI has a different relationship to both "disruption" and "time" than the first five Types; whereas in Types I through V there is an event at a certain moment in time "disrupting" what is considered sacred, in Type VI there is a vision or observing of a realm that is always present (even if seldom seen).

The distinguishing characteristics of five of these six Types of "radical opposition to what is considered sacred" can be made even more apparent by giving examples from the descriptions of evil (neither any of the contributors nor the researcher had a Type IV opposition):

Bishop Myōkōko-- as a young man he hated those who "did something wrong" (Type V)

Luke-- a woman possessed by "a real force" was dedicated to killing his wife (Type II)  
 -- after "an enormous wave of cold" shot through his body, he had a vision of "blackest black" that he later considered to be "the dark side of God" (Type VI)

Ruth-- the "psychology woman" tried to hurt her (Type I)  
 -- she gave away her power when under the influence of a negative force called "the evil eye" (Type II)  
 -- she believed that the actions of the "psychology woman" were unworthy of the moral standard that "nobody should hurt each other" (Type V)  
 -- she felt a fiery "burning" in her heart that she experienced as an inner "hell" (Type VI)

Paul-- he feels unworthy when he does not live up to either an external or internal religious standard (Type V)

Daniel— the Nazis "got high" through torturing and killing their victims (Type I)  
 -- implicit throughout the interview is an accusation that the Nazis at Auschwitz were less than human (Type V)  
 -- it is implied (but never stated explicitly) that the intensity of hate and suffering in Auschwitz made it a modern version of hell (Type VI)

Maria— while an acquaintance was under the influence of "demonic forces," there was a dedication to both self-destruction and terrifying others (Type II)

Abe-- in his childhood "transgressions" he stepped across a forbidden boundary (Type III)  
 -- the Holocaust is viewed as being "absolutely horrendous and evil" (Type V)

Choko-- the ghosts in the altar are described as "a force" or "negative energy" capable of devouring her (Type II)  
 -- the anger accumulated in her body made her bite a person so she wouldn't let go (Type II)

Elliott-- Justin wanted to get high by shooting people (Type I)  
 -- implicit in Elliott's reaction is the assumed moral standard that killing is wrong (Type V)

In all the Type I and II examples presented above, what is considered "sacred" is human life—either another person's or the storyteller's. In the Type III example, the "sacred" boundaries that were stepped across related to sexual feelings and the taking of life. [In Type IV (of which there is no example above) what would be considered "sacred" is an historical purpose or destiny.] In the Type V examples, the most common "sacred" moral standard related to a cherishing of other human beings.<sup>7</sup> Lastly, in the Type VI examples, there is in all examples an implied contrast between what is considered "sacred"—such as "wholeness," "light," or "love"—and the diametrically opposite world the person

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<sup>7</sup>One link between Types I and V is that all the contributors who had an experience of "hateful" behavior (Type I) judged the action to be violating a sacred "moral" standard (Type V).

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As may be recalled, the experience of evil has been tied to "an opposition to what is considered sacred" earlier in this dissertation during the review of the literature. In his book The Symbolism of Evil, Paul Ricoeur defined evil as the "crisis" in the "bond between man and what he considers sacred." Similarly, James Boyd in his Satan and Māra defines evil as "a disruptive break in the bond between man and what he considers sacred."<sup>8</sup>

To demonstrate that "a radical opposition to what is considered sacred" is an essential element of evil, it was necessary for the researcher to do several free phantasy variations where in each case what was varied was either what was "considered sacred" or the "radical opposition" to what was considered sacred. One of these variations was taken from the Bhagavad-Gita where Arjuna's doubts about going to war are put aside after Krishna convinces him that He—an incarnation of God—knows this to be Arjuna's sacred duty. Although most Hindus interpret the "war" of this legend as being "internal" and "symbolic," the "varied" story used by the researcher assumed that Arjuna went to an "outer" and "literal" battle in which he killed many people and was wounded himself. The question then arose, "Will Arjuna feel he has done evil or that evil has been done to him or that he has had an experience of evil?" After reflecting upon this set of events, the researcher concluded that neither Arjuna's killing of others nor his own wounds nor his experience would be seen as "evil" as long as he retained the faith

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<sup>8</sup>For these definitions, see (in this dissertation) respectively p. 62 and p. 65 (footnote 35).

that these were the results of his willingness to fulfill his sacred duty. However, Arjuna still might view his opponents on the battlefield as "evil" if he saw them as opposing God's will. This "variation" reveals that even what is most often considered "evil"—the killing of one's fellow humans—is no longer "evil" in the eyes of the killer once he believes what he is doing is not opposed to "what he considers sacred."

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It may have been noticed by the reader that there is a fourth essential element of "evil" implied by each of the first three—that is, each of the first three elements contains within itself the assumption that the determination of whether or not that element is present depends upon the experiencer's viewpoint. No experience can be "real," "beyond rational comprehension," or contain "a radical opposition to what is considered sacred" except through the eyes of a particular experiencer. As was seen in the contributor's interviews, "evil" only gains a meaning when a person relates this term to his or her own personal history, set of values, and religious worldview. What this means is that it will never be possible to make an "objective" determination—independent of particular subjects—of what is "really" evil.

To illustrate this point, it is now time to let the last contributor speak for himself. Upon learning that whales talk, this researcher chose Moby Dick's great grandchild as the tenth and last contributor to this dissertation. The researcher sailed out to the middle of the Pacific Ocean and quickly located Moby Dick IV by his fountaining spout. Before the whale disappeared into the ocean, the researcher managed to ask him to describe an experience of evil. The whale sang out in a deep

throaty boom:

Granpappy Moe never had anything against Ahab. He just didn't like being pricked by those big iron sticks—harpoons, you call 'em. Y'know, nowadays all these whalers have sticks that make Ahab's harpoons look like toothpicks. They give me nightmares!!!

All I want to do is just eat my plankton and raise my babies in peace, but those whalers won't leave me alone for a moment. I wish those whalers would talk to me so I could teach them the value of whale life. When you have a chance, I would appreciate it if you would tell your fellow humans to stop murdering my family and friends.

Yes, I guess I do feel living in fear of my life among these humans who are only after my blubber is an experience of evil. These days it's just no more fun being a whale.

On this sad note, the whale sank beneath the waves.

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Although it may be argued that "evil" is just a concept and that anyone can use it to mean anything, one point of this chapter is that among people of diverse cultural and religious backgrounds there is a surprising similarity in the way the word is used to describe a certain kind of experience. The evidence herein suggests that the following two sentences are the most succinct summary of the essential elements of the experience of evil:

The experience of evil from the viewpoint of the experiencer is a real experience of that which is radically opposed to what the experiencer considers sacred. The experiencer may later explain or interpret what happened, but accepts that in the last analysis the experience is beyond rational comprehension.

If these are correctly perceived as the essential elements of evil, it logically follows that there could be no experience of evil for any person:

- a) who experienced her or himself as having no "self" that experienced;
- b) who did not consider her or his experience to be real;
- c) who assumed that she or he had an explanation that in the last analysis rationally comprehended all phenomena; or
- d) who viewed either nothing or everything as sacred.

Both a) and b) are common Buddhist teachings (held, for example, by Bishop Myōkōko.) As for c), this assumption is often implicit in the worldview of those who have faith that all phenomena can be explained by either "the law of karma" or "the laws of science." Lastly, as for d), the position that "nothing is sacred" was consistently held by the Marquis de Sade; it would therefore logically follow that although the Marquis "got high" by doing what others considered sacrilege, he himself never considered his own actions to be "evil." Similarly, if the position is held that "everything—with absolutely no exceptions—is sacred," it logically follows there could be no "opposition" to the sacred and therefore no possibility of experiencing "evil." One person who holds the view that "everything is sacred" is the contemporary 93 year old mystic named Śūnyatā; when asked by this researcher about "evil," he said that he didn't believe in evil since "all is right that seems most wrong."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Personal interview with Śūnyatā, Mill Valley, Ca., 2 April 1982. For a discussion of Śūnyatā's views, see Catherine A. Peters, "The Modest Mystic," Pacific Sun [Mill Valley], 20 August 1982, pp. 5-6.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter is both to summarize the findings of this dissertation and to suggest possibilities for further research.

#### Summary of the Findings

As shown throughout this dissertation, there is a relationship between any person's cultural and religious background and what is experienced as "evil." However, the researcher was not able to discover any "hard and fast" rules governing the relationship between a particular individual's religious background and what themes relating to evil emerged from his or her interview. On occasion, people of different religious backgrounds had highly similar themes just as people of the same background had vastly different interpretations of evil.

The seven findings of this dissertation that the researcher does consider most revealing are the following:

- 1) The Buddhists who were interviewed showed a much greater degree of homogeneity in their themes relating to evil than did either the interviewed Jews or Christians. All three Buddhists had a common theme that there is "no evil from the vantage point of absolute reality." In the review of the literature, this same theme was found to be a central teaching in the Theravādin, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna traditions of Buddhism.



2) The themes that emerged from the interviews of the Buddhist contributors differed noticeably from those that emerged from the Jewish and Christian contributors. In particular, none of the Jews or Christians expressed the Buddhist viewpoint that there is "no evil from the viewpoint of absolute reality." One possible conclusion from this is that the difference between Eastern and Western traditions is greater than the two branches of what is called the Judaeo-Christian tradition. However, it should be noted that the review of the literature discussed esoteric traditions of Judaism and Christianity (such as Kabbalism and Gnosticism) that have suggested that evil is not "ultimately" real; Western writers who have shared assumptions with these traditions (such as William Blake and Herman Melville) have also held that there is no "ultimate" difference between good and evil. It could therefore be posited that on this issue Buddhism has more in common with the esoteric traditions of Judaism and Christianity than with the more orthodox forms of these religions.

3) A suggestive difference between the contributors from the three religious groups was whether the source of evil was considered internal and/or external. The Buddhists tended to see the source of evil as stemming solely from the internal impurities of an individual's mind; the Christians tended to see the source of evil as being equally within everybody and in an external reality; and the Jews tended to see the source of evil as being solely outside the individual in an external reality. (As noted earlier, this generalization only held true for seven of the nine contributors.) In the review of the literature, it was found that whereas the Buddhist traditions emphasized that evil stems solely from the internal impurities of mind, the orthodox forms of

Judaism and Christianity view the source of evil as being both internal and external. Since some of the texts in both Kabbalism and Gnosticism used the symbols of evil (such as Satan and Lilith) to stand for the mind's internal obstacles to spiritual progress, it can be concluded that here again the Buddhist view of the source of evil has more in common with the esoteric traditions of Judaism and Christianity.

4) Those two contributors who had a "numinous" experience of evil also interpreted "demonic forces" as being the other "side" of either God or the Goddess. As this viewpoint that there is an "ultimate unity between demonic forces and God/dess" was not "orthodox" in either of these contributor's religious traditions, this raised the question of whether there is a relationship between having had a "numinous" experience and this particular interpretation of evil.

5) Accusations of "guilt" directed against either the self or others occurred more frequently among the contributors than those experiences of "fault" classified as "defilement" or "sin." If this generalization held true for the larger population, this would suggest that in our particular historical era most people would link "evil" to either their own or others' unworthiness in living up to a moral standard.

6) Two phenomenologists who had written books on evil defined "evil" in terms of "a radical opposition to what is considered sacred." When the researcher looked for examples of such "opposition" in both his contributors' interviews and the review of the literature, he was able to distinguish six different types of such "a radical opposition":

Type I: A malevolent or hateful person injures or destroys what is considered sacred.

Type II: An impersonal negative force dedicated to injuring or destroying what is considered sacred gains power over a person.

Type III: A person's thoughts or actions step across a forbidden boundary and thereby defile what is considered sacred.

Type IV: A collectivity strays from a destiny that is considered sacred.

Type V: A person's thoughts or actions are unworthy of a moral standard that is considered sacred.

Type VI: A dimension is glimpsed or a realm is entered wherein there is an utter lack of what is considered sacred.

7) The following two sentences are the researcher's most succinct summary of the essential elements of the experience of evil:

The experience of evil from the viewpoint of the experiencer is a real experience of that which is radically opposed to what the experiencer considers sacred. The experiencer may later explain or interpret what happened, but accepts that in the last analysis the experience is beyond rational comprehension.

#### Possibilities for Further Research

Four possible directions for further research on the phenomenon of "evil" are as follows:

1) Testing of Hypotheses. The phenomenological approach is not incompatible with empirical research modeled after the natural sciences that attempts to test hypotheses by interviewing subjects who have been randomly selected. Such a testing of hypotheses relating to "evil" would undoubtedly be assisted by the discussion of the various meanings and themes of "evil" presented in this dissertation. This researcher perceives the main obstacle in using such a method to investigate the topic of evil is that the term "evil" is so fraught with meanings and connotations that it may be difficult to do quick interviews or questionnaires. However, such research would be made easier by limiting the study to a particular aspect of evil. One such focus that does intrigue this researcher is whether it could be empirically validated that there

is a difference between the way members of various religious groups view the "source" of evil on a continuum from "solely internal" to "solely external"; such a study would have to begin by exploring the many meanings of both "internal" and "external."

2) Thematization. It would be possible to do research on the themes relating to "evil" in other religious traditions. For example, the researcher came across rich literatures on evil in Islam (and its mystical offshoot of Sufism), in Hinduism (and its "left-handed" path of Tantra), and in the ancient texts of both Zoroastrianism and Taoism. It would also be possible to let themes emerge from those ways of expression which are replete with symbols of evil: tribal myths and folklore, movies and novels, plays and poetry, fairytales and dreams, even graffiti and comic books.

3) Interviewing. In order to ascertain if the differences noted between Jewish, Christian, and Buddhist contributors held true for other members of these groups, it would be useful to gather more interviews from people in each of these three groups. If a researcher was fluent in an Asian language, it might be possible to interview Buddhist "folk-people" who did not have extensive contact with Western traditions. (Obviously, careful consideration would have to be given to the terms used to translate "evil.") Similarly, it would be possible to interview people from other religious backgrounds not included here. It might also be fruitful to design studies on evil where contributors were chosen for reasons other than their religious background. For instance, by just interviewing people who had once had a "numinous" experience of evil, it would be possible to determine if such an experience had a specific effect on these people's interpretations of evil. There are

also groups of people who may have an expertise on evil—such as sadists and Satanists—who, although widely condemned and explained, are rarely given the opportunity "to speak for themselves." Another group that could be interviewed who have had an unusual familiarity with "evil" are those people who have experienced the type of "possession" where a demonic being—such as Satan—enters their body and takes them over. Lastly, because of the generally acknowledged intimate connection between evil and the sacred, it would be useful to interview "realized saints" or "enlightened beings" who may have had more than an ordinary degree of communion with what is considered sacred.

4) Clarifying the Essential Elements of Evil. Further investigation of several concepts closely akin to "evil" might enable the essential elements of "evil" to be stated with greater precision. Most crucial here would be the concept of "the sacred"; since there is a wide agreement that "evil" is "a radical opposition to what is considered sacred," the clarification of the meaning of "the sacred" would cast some light on "evil" itself. It might also be useful to study those spatial categories such as "hell" that are most generally accepted as the location of "evil"; using an interviewing method, it might be possible to determine the structure of "an inner hell" (the evidence from this research would suggest that one possible common element is a total involvement in one's suffering wherein it is impossible to adopt the stance of the "witness.") The specific area related to "evil" that this researcher considers still the most unexplored is "demonic forces." One possible roundabout way to study "demonic forces" would be through investigating two related concepts—"the magical" and "the psychic." Investigating these latter two concepts would also be useful since they do appear to

have as an essential element that they are experienced as being in the last analysis beyond rational comprehension--just as when "evil" is explained away, it becomes merely "bad," so "the magical" or "the psychic" when explained away become merely "tricks." Such an investigation of either "the magical" or "the psychic"—or of "demonic forces" in general—would necessarily be on the very edge of what is "rationally comprehensible."

#### How Writing This Dissertation Affected the Researcher

It was no use trying to move him; evidently,  
he was wholly without feeling . . .

— Mark Twain's description of the  
devil in "The Mysterious Stranger"

This last section is an attempt to describe how the writing of this dissertation affected the researcher. In order to do this, the focus will be on two of this researcher's dreams. As this section is part of this researcher's ongoing self-hermeneutics, the story can better be told in the first person singular.

\* \* \* \* \*

The night after completing Hannah Arendt's book Eichmann at Jerusalem,<sup>1</sup> I had the following dream:

Thursday, Dec. 10th [1981]

Adolf Eichmann is in a very mental space—he has a mind with many compartments. He has gotten all these lockers from people who have been taken away against their will and he is now using these lockers to store belongings and information. All the lockers are neatly arranged in rows and he is proud of his orderliness. He is matter-of-fact and has few emotions.

After recording the dream, I wrote down the following associations:

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<sup>1</sup>For background information on Adolf Eichmann, see footnote 71 on p. 87.

A part of me without feeling.  
 Lockers— compartments of the mind.  
 Eichmann's real crime was the suppression of all feeling— he was  
 not "there" emotionally.  
 Suppression of the Dionysian.

In my dreamwork, I was used to taking every person who appeared in my dreams as part of me. When I did this with Eichmann, I saw him as a part of me that was orderly, perfectionistic, and unfeeling. Since I experienced some negative feeling toward each of these characteristics, I realized that Eichmann was intimately related to a "shadow" side of my personality.<sup>2</sup>

In her book Arendt had mentioned that while Eichmann was imprisoned in Jerusalem, a long article by him had appeared in Life magazine. When I read this article, I was surprised that Eichmann took such pride in his efficiency; for instance, he tells how he made sure that the Jews were transported

with Prussian exactness about provisions and transportation. Although we had the greatest difficulty in obtaining trains, the Jews were always shipped in covered, not open, cars, and always by the quickest possible routes.<sup>3</sup>

It was clear that Eichmann had no notion that he had ever done anything "wrong" or "immoral" and that he was proud of his exactitude in executing orders.

After reading this article, I had the following dream:

Saturday, Feb. 27th [1982]

I am wandering around near the ocean, and I go underground at one point to see a film. I meet a good friend there and we feel comfortable together.

Then I am above the ground and I try to find my way back to

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<sup>2</sup>For Jung's definition of the "shadow," see footnote 34 on p. 77.

<sup>3</sup>Adolf Eichmann, "Eichmann Tells His Own Damning Story," Life, 28 November 1960, p. 110.

this underground chamber. I come to a docked boat in the harbor and believe that I have come to a dead end. Before me is a big sea wall and a turbulent ocean, and there is no way to get over the ocean in order to get back to the entrance of the underground chamber. But then the owner of the docked boat shows me an underground passageway on the other side of his boat.

I am soon in the underground chamber and who should I find there but Adolf Eichmann. To my surprise, I find that he has been made the head of my dissertation committee. This is a class concerning the project and Eichmann's students are sitting around in a circle. I place myself towards Eichmann's right and I see between me and Eichmann is Ralph [Dr. Ralph Metzner, a teacher on my dissertation committee]. Ralph soon runs out and I am left with Eichmann and several of his students.

One of these students begins complaining about how dirty the bathtub is in this underground chamber. I see a white bathtub in the corner of the room behind Eichmann and take it upon myself to scrub it clean. After scrubbing really hard, I notice brown crumbly spots where the vigor of my scrubbing is wearing away the bathtub's white porcelain surface. I see that my scrubbing is making these brown earthy splotches bigger and bigger. I am still trying to scrub the bathtub to the best of my ability when I awake.

I awoke both scared and fascinated. The underground chamber had appeared in other dreams and I associated it with a part of me that was wise, self-contained, and protected from the woes of the world. Now not only had Eichmann taken over this underground chamber, but he had become my boss and superior. As I was lying in bed, half-dazed and still waking up, I realized that Eichmann's intention was to help me to find a "final solution" to the problem of evil. Considering his efficiency in his first attempt at a "final solution," I had no doubt that he would be dedicated and conscientious in helping me organize my task . . . but yet I felt repelled by his perfectionism and I feared he might force me to exclude from my dissertation all of my own feelings and intuitions.

Once fully awake, I realized that just a few days before I had been reading what Freud had written about the connection between the devil, repressed anality, and compulsive habits.<sup>4</sup> The appearance in the dream

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<sup>4</sup>For a fuller discussion of Freud's theory, see pp. 69-70.



of "brown" crumbly splotches" felt like a clear allusion to such "anal compulsiveness." At the time of the dream I had not yet written the first word of my dissertation and I saw that I would need a rigor and self-discipline if I were ever to complete such a big project; yet I feared that the conscientiousness and obsessiveness that I associated with "rigor" would make me both unfeeling and perfectionistic. I also saw that the dream gave me a warning—that the point would come when continuing to "perfect" my dissertation would only make it worse.

My own experience of this dissertation is that it has resulted from a pact between my creative impulses and an internal devil of conscientious obsessive-compulsive perfectionism. While doing this dissertation, this devil became more powerful than he had ever been before in this lifetime and more than once I felt as if he were about to swallow me in one merciless gulp. Now that the dissertation is finished and the devil has done his job, I see my task as training this Prince of Darkness to be the faithful servant of my creative powers.

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APPENDIX  
ADDITIONAL QUOTATIONS CONCERNING "EVIL"

"Suffering always brings the problem of evil with it, and the  
problem of evil and the problem of suffering are companions."  
John A. Sanford<sup>1</sup>

The heart of man is the place the devil dwells in.  
I feel sometimes a hell within myself;  
Lucifer keeps a court in my breast . . .  
Sir Thomas Browne<sup>2</sup>

"According to Jesus Christ, and according to the indisputable  
facts of the case, some evil Spirit has dominion in this imperfect  
world."  
Percy Bysshe Shelley<sup>3</sup>

"While Sri Krishna, Himself God Incarnate, played with the  
gopis at Vrindāvan, trouble-makers like Jatilā and Kutilā appeared  
on the scene. You may ask why. The answer is that the play is  
enlivened by the presence of trouble-makers. They were necessary  
to lend zest to the play—there is no fun without Jatilā and Kutilā."  
(Loud laughter [from his disciples])  
Sri Ramakrishna<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See his Evil: The Shadow Side of Reality (New York: Crossroad, 1981), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>See his Religio Medici [1642], Part I, Sect. II.

<sup>3</sup>From his "Essay on Christianity" [1817] in The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. Roger Ingpen and Walter E. Peck (New York: Gordian Press, 1965), Vol. VI, p. 235.

<sup>4</sup>From The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, trans. Swami Nikhilananda (New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1942). This quotation combines passages from pp. 141, 144, and 270.

" . . . it is more difficult to love God than to believe in Him. On the other hand, it is more difficult for people nowadays to believe in the Devil than to love him. Everyone smells him and no one believes in him. Sublime subtlety of the Devil."

Charles Baudelaire<sup>5</sup>

The spirit that I have seen  
May be a devil; and the devil hath power  
T' assume a pleasing shape . . .  
Shakespeare<sup>6</sup>

The prince of darkness is a gentleman.  
Shakespeare<sup>7</sup>

The death of Satan was a tragedy  
For the imagination.  
Wallace Stevens<sup>8</sup>

No one knows the age of Satan  
when he fell.  
Maybe he was just fourteen.  
Milton says he was marvelous to view  
& smart as a whip. We know that much.  
Snaky boy!  
Maybe he had long brown hair  
which fell like a bruise around his neck  
in ringlets. Medusa curls.  
Maybe he was androgynous, a hustler  
wanting to drag everyone down.  
Steve Abbott<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>From his "Preface" to The Flowers of Evil [1857], ed. Marthiel and Jackson Mathews (New York: New Directions, 1958), p. xi.

<sup>6</sup>Hamlet, II.ii.606-608.

<sup>7</sup>King Lear, III.iv.147.

<sup>8</sup>In his "Esthetique du Mal," VIII [1947], The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961), p. 319.

<sup>9</sup>From his "How Michael the Archangel Was Fooled," Wrecked Hearts (San Francisco: Dancing Rock Press, 1978), p. 14.

FAUST: Where are you damned?  
 MEPHISTOPHILIS: In hell.  
 FAUST: How come it, then, that thou art out of hell?  
 MEPHISTOPHILIS: Why, this is hell, nor am I out of it.  
 Christopher Marlowe<sup>10</sup>

"[A] California Assemblyman . . . has written a bill to require warnings on records that contain subliminal messages inserted in the record backward. A research said the subconscious can decipher the backward message even when the record is played forward. A Led Zeppelin song "Stairway to Heaven" was played backward and turned into cacophony on the backward tape, interspersed with words, such as 'Here's to my sweet Satan' and 'I live for Satan.'"

A news item entitled "Satanic Twist"<sup>11</sup>

"The devil doesn't know for whom he works."  
 Folk saying

FAUST: What is your name?  
 MEPHISTOPHELES: Part of the force which would  
 Do evil, yet forever works the good.  
 Goethe<sup>12</sup>

When all the world recognizes  
 beauty as beauty,  
 this in itself is ugliness.  
 When all the world recognizes  
 good as good,  
 this in itself is evil.  
 Lao Tzu<sup>13</sup>

"The evil best known is the most tolerable."  
 Livy<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>From his The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus [1593], I, iii, 77-80.

<sup>11</sup>San Francisco Chronicle, 28 April 1982, p. 7.

<sup>12</sup>Faust [1808], Part One, Scene III.

<sup>13</sup>From the Tao Teh Ching, trans. John C. H. Wu, ed. Paul K. T. Sih (New York: St. John's University, 1961), Chapter 2, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup>See his History of Rome [10 C.E.], Book XXIII, Chapter III.

"No evil is great which is the last evil of all."  
Seneca<sup>15</sup>

There is some soul of goodness in things evil,  
Would men observingly distil it out. . .  
Thus may we gather honey from the weed,  
And make a moral of the devil himself.  
Shakespeare<sup>16</sup>

"To God all is beautiful, good, and as it should be.  
Man must see things as either good or bad."  
Herakleitos<sup>17</sup>

Good and evil, dead and alive, everything blooms  
from one natural stem.  
You know this already, I'll stop.  
Any direction you turn it's one vision.  
Jalāl al-Dīn-Rūmī<sup>18</sup>

"The very nature of God's creation is that good and evil,  
righteousness and unrighteousness, will always exist in the world.  
There is no doubt that virtue and vice exist in the world; but God  
himself is unattached to them. There may be good and bad smells in  
the air, but the air is unattached to them."

Sri Ramakrishna<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>See his Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales [63-65 C.E.], Epistle IV. Section 3. In both this and the previous quotation, the Latin malum was translated as "evil."

<sup>16</sup>Henry V, IV.i.4-5 and 11-12.

<sup>17</sup>Fragment 106.

<sup>18</sup>From his poem "The Elusive Ones" in Night and Sleep, trans. Coleman Barks and Robert Bly (Cambridge, Mass.: Yellow Moon Press, 1981). Rūmī was a Persian Sufi who lived in the thirteenth century.

<sup>19</sup>From The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, pp. 246-47. In the original, these three sentences appeared in a different order.

Abstract for

THE EXPERIENCE OF EVIL:  
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH

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The purpose of this dissertation is to present a phenomenological approach to the experience of evil. The experience of evil is described both in the historical writings of Judaism, Christianity, and Buddhism and in the interviews of three individuals who were connected to each of these three religious traditions.

In order to emphasize that this researcher's own background and interests have shaped the way he sees the phenomenon of evil, he tells of his own experiences of evil and states his own assumptions about the phenomenon of evil.

The review of the literature begins by describing various viewpoints concerning evil in the Jewish, Christian, and Buddhist traditions; also included in the review are the writings upon evil by scholars (such as Rudolf Otto and Paul Ricoeur), psychologists (such as Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung), and literary figures (such as the Marquis de Sade, William Blake, and Herman Melville).

After summarizing the nine tape-recorded interviews, themes are extracted from each of the interviews and there is a comparison of the themes that emerged from the Jewish, Christian, and Buddhist interviews. One significant finding was that the Buddhists who were interviewed showed a much greater degree of homogeneity in their themes relating to evil than did either the interviewed Jews or Christians--all three Buddhists shared the theme that there is "no evil from the vantage point of absolute reality." Since this theme did not emerge from any of the Jewish or Christian interviews, a second significant finding was that the Buddhists' themes differed noticeably from those of the Jews and Christians.

Lastly, a description is given of how Edmund Husserl's method of "free phantasy variation" (the "ph" being intentional) was used in an attempt to determine what are the essential elements in the experience of evil. After working with this method, this researcher arrived at the following conclusion:

The experience of evil from the viewpoint of the experiencer is a real experience of that which is radically opposed to what the experiencer considers sacred. The experiencer may later explain or interpret what happened, but accepts that in the last analysis the experience is beyond rational comprehension.

*Paul E. Herman*