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# Mourning, Evil and Grace: A Hermeneutical-Phenomenological Approach

James Dubose

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Mourning, Evil and Grace: A Hermeneutical-Phenomenological Approach

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty

of the Psychology Department

McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

James Todd DuBose

April 23, 2004

## Preface and Acknowledgments

This study comes out of personal, professional and academic interests in the nature, meaning, and relief of suffering. As an ordained minister and mental health professional, I have experienced both evil and grace in many contexts, not the least of which include many years as a hospital chaplain, pastoral counselor, community mental health clinician, supervisor, and teacher at the interstices of psychology, religion, and philosophy. In my clinical encounters with patients, my theoretical research, and in reflection on my personal experiences, I believe that *how we mourn* underlies any struggle to make sense of suffering, whether received or perpetrated, and that consolation in this struggle seems predicated on the possibilities of human or divine agency in deliverance from such suffering. Moreover, I have found that neither abstract, theological doctrines, nor reductionistic, psychological categories in themselves seem to grasp the profundity of horror and gratitude that merits what people call evil and grace, and what I call (following David Tracy and Karl Jaspers) “limit or boundary situations.” This dissertation is dedicated to all those who have shared their suffering with me, and have received my own, as I contribute to the meaning-making around how we can understand the interplay of these boundary situations.

Hermeneutical-phenomenological researchers are affected by the phenomena they study, and I am no exception. This project has followed me through three geographical relocations, with their accompanying vocational and relational losses and renewals, including the blessed birth of my two children, the death of my grandmother, newly diagnosed medical complications, and the marital separation from my spouse. Working

with evil and grace is taxing, and those around me have experienced my own evil along the way, and the grace that has brought us all to this project's completion. I want to thank Dean Constance Ramirez, Ph.D., and the administration of the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts for supporting this study. I am very grateful to Dr. Russell Walsh, Ph.D., Chairman of the Psychology Department, and to the Psychology Department's faculty, particularly Dr. Connie Fischer, Ph.D., students, and administrative assistants, most notably Norma Coleman, for their patience with me, and for their perpetual challenges and encouragement to me, and to Dr. Roger Brooke, Ph.D., my academic advisor, for his leadership, validation, and collaboration throughout my time at Duquesne. I want to especially thank Dr. Daniel Burston, Ph.D., my dissertation advisor, who continually and consistently honed not only my thinking and writing, but also my soul. Numerous colleagues and guides far outside the Duquesne community have also offered invaluable input on this project, and/or its impact in my life, including the staff and colleagues at Family Resources in Pittsburgh, PA; the Smoky Mountain Counseling Center in Franklin, NC; Family Service, Inc./CEDARR in Providence, RI; Northeast Occupational Exchange, Inc., in Newport, ME; Dr. Carl Vaught, Ph.D., of Baylor University's Philosophy Department for his guidance and wisdom on Augustine; Claude Barbre, M.Div., M.Phil, of the Harlem Family Institute in New York City for his continuing and long-term friendship and support; and Dr. Steven Gresitt, MD, of the Northeast Occupational Exchange, Inc., in Bangor, Maine, for his camaraderie in respecting pre-Freudian diagnostics of the soul, and to the many others who have read, heard about, commented on, and reflected about various parts of this dissertation.

I cannot thank my extended family enough, both in Georgia and throughout the Northeast, who never stopped believing in me in spite of ever-receding deadlines, especially my mother and father, Gail and Pete DuBose, whose unconditional love taught me that classism, regionalism, and intellectual intimidation need not quell my dream of achieving a Ph.D., a dream that began more than twenty-years ago. Most importantly, I offer my gratitude and apologies to my partner, Jennifer, and our children Noah and Holly, who have sacrificed everything and suffered enough, including the shattering of our own family structure, while never ceasing to believe that I would finish this painful journey. I also thank my four-legged family members who kept vigil with me during the darkest hours of the night, and to Dr. Bob Fancher, Ph.D., for walking with me during the darkest hours of my life. My friends and family still surprise and grace me in unearned ways; I owe them my life in more ways than anyone could imagine.

Finally, without that Gifting Presence who invites, sustains, and lures us to meaningful and fulfilling relationships and projects in life, I am certain that my light would not have continued to shine in the darkness, and deliverance would be impossible.

## **Mourning, Evil and Grace: A Hermeneutical-Phenomenological Approach**

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## Chapter One

### Introduction to the Problem, Method, and Scope of the Project

*Blessed are they that mourn,  
for they shall be comforted. Matthew 5:4 (RSV).*

#### ***On the Limit Nature of Mourning Every Moment***

This is a dissertation on the phenomenology of mourning and its relationship to evil and grace. I argue that mourning, evil and grace are not three separate phenomena. Evil and grace are extreme, albeit differing, modes of mourning-in-the-world. Moreover, and more importantly, mourning is not just a process one experiences *after* significant losses such as the deaths of loved ones, or in the aftermath of catastrophic events. Mourning occurs in every moment of our lives. The inexorable flow of time, the movement in and out of space, the greeting, dwelling and parting of interpersonal encounters is perpetually in flux, reminding us that no situation is fixed or immutable. The awareness of temporal and spatial mutability led Augustine in search of an Immutable God, demonstrating what (I argue) is an existential given for us all: our intention to bond deeply is eternally at odds with mutability. Hence, we are faced with loss and the incentive to mourn *all the time*, even if we are not *sad* all the time. What we call ‘stress,’ as Kugelmann so aptly puts it, is “...the grief of living with the *constant* loss of the familiar (1992, p. 167, italics mine).”

But grief is the private reaction to loss, while mourning is the interpersonal sharing of loss. Mourning is obstructed if we suffer from an inability to communicate our reactions, or insist on bargaining or protesting against mutability and loss. Our mourning is arrested or derailed when we insist on transforming mutability into immutability. We

grasp, wrench, and clamp down on person, place, and time, traumatic or not, with attempts to repetitively master or reclaim its significance in our lives. Even traumatic experiences that one seeks to ‘forget’ belie lost innocence, idealism, illusions of protection or immunity, and illusory self-images that are mourned at their passing.

Most ascetic traditions dwell on how attachment, grasping, and controlling situations, people and things drive unhealthy and addictive ways of being-in-the-world. *Apatheia*, or detachment (not alienation or isolation), is the prescription for healthy mental and spiritual life and the catalyst for fulfilling and meaningful relationships and projects in one’s everydayness. But here is the rub. We seek to restrain mutability through attachment, yet only through detachment we can mourn inevitable mutability. In order to love well we must make peace with mutability, not in the sense of tolerance, but in full embrace.

The enduring attachment, though, mitigates against complete detachment, forcing a recognition of inherent *complicated* mourning in need of assistance from an *Otherness* who is *Elsewhere*. Both the overpowering (or numinous) sense of our inability to cease mutability *as well as* the overpowering experience of making peace with it lead us to a recognition of mourning as a type of *Otherness* coming from *Elsewhere*. I am not referring to the experience of ‘otherness’ and ‘elsewhere’ as places in the physical sense, but in the phenomenological sense as “lived experience” of situations, which exist beyond my agentic creation and control of them. The magnitude and intensity of these experiences exceed the bounds of psychological, diagnostic and/or everyday language, forcing us to seek more appropriate limit language to better describe them. Hence, we



denote the experiences of otherness and elsewhere with the limit language ‘evil’ and ‘grace.’

Evil is the result of “finding ourselves” unable to mourn and ostracized in the world, while grace is the experience of “finding ourselves” mourning and radically, unconditionally accepted in communion with the world. Although we “find ourselves” as we come to know our agentic limitations, we remain accountable participants in the construction of these situations in the world—the question, though, is to what extent? This issue is best addressed by turning to an analysis of how we mourn.

Though we are destined to do so, we understandably resist mourning in each moment. To mourn is to *die*, to allow attachments to fade, self-images to dissipate, to succumb to a sense of alienation and absence, when efforts to haggle with time and space for reclamation of the familiar inevitably fail. In The Soul in Grief, Robert Romanyshyn

describes this horrifying and painful process as coming face to face with the figure of the Orphan, but nonetheless consoles us that “grief and mourning are a dying that opens to new life; a terrible journey through which he/she becomes more than he/she was.... (Romanyshyn, 1999, p. 65).” Romanyshyn recognizes the limit nature of mourning in his conviction that “consciousness is exploded beyond its human horizons (Romanyshyn, 1999, p. 65).”

That being said, however, I wish to advance the following thesis, which sheds further light on the issues at hand. Our experiential horizons are always constituted by our intrapsychic, interpersonal, and biological ways of being-in-the-world. The experience of the otherness and elsewhere of evil and grace occur *within* these modes of being-in-the-world, but when either one of these three modes of being-in-the-world is

seen as separate from, or subordinate to, the others, our understandings of these phenomena become distorted. To see evil and grace in their true character and dimensions, we must hold fast to the equiprimordiality of the *Umwelt*, *Eigenwelt*, and *Mitwelt* modes of being-in-the-world.

Therefore, *the purpose of this study is to elucidate the complementarity of evil and grace as phenomena grounded in the process of mourning, and as intelligible responses to limit experiences within the equiprimordiality of human existence.* As a phenomenon, mourning crosses disciplines and time, and the above mentioned struggles regarding agency, finitude and the otherness of evil and grace are taken up by fourth century theologians and twentieth century psychologists alike. The parallels between them are striking, and warrant careful discussion in the interests of clarifying the nature of evil and grace.

### ***The Scope of the Project***

This dissertation will address the following question: *How can ‘evil’ and ‘grace’ be understood empirically as complementary, psychological “limit, or boundary, experiences” in a hermeneutical-phenomenological sense?* I argue that the answer entails a particular understanding of the relationship between personal agency, the process of mourning, and the nature of limit language. By “limit or boundary experiences,” I mean those moments in which we experience something more than we are, or at least, receive an invitation to participate in situations that exist beyond our instrumental manipulation and control. We can call these experiences *moments of transcendence*. Both evil and grace have their own quality of transcendence. By ‘agency’ I mean the capacity and

accountability of meaning-making, personal awareness, decision-making, choice, and desire. As I am arguing in this study, agency is not a phenomenon separate from the process of mourning, but is manifested *in and through* it.

The “process of mourning” is either efficacious or arrested according to how well one *acknowledges* the finality of loss, *moves to experience* the remembered significance of loss, *adjusts* to a life-world minus what or whom one has lost, and *reinvests* into new relationships and life events in spite of loss. Difficulties in mourning are due to protests against some undeserved, unwanted, and unexpected limitation of personal agency. This is particularly the case when confronted with existential, limit experiences such as mutability, contingency, cognitive dissonance, chance, unmitigated and undeserved suffering, and unending, escalatory, or irreparable conflict.

This study will reveal the limit nature of the theological symbols, ‘evil’ and ‘grace,’ through various psychologists’ descriptions of these phenomena as either complicated or facilitated mourning. I am interested in discerning the “religious dimension” of mourning, a common, existential reality, that is represented in *both* theological symbols *and* psychological theory. Hence, I will argue that *mourning itself* is a limit or boundary situation and/or experience that is neither otherworldly nor reducible to evolutionary or biomechanical naturalism. Mourning is the foundation of the complementarity between evil and grace.

Though they are understood in diverse ways by different thinkers, mourning is central to the phenomena of evil and grace. Evil arises as the result of unresolved loss and blocked mourning. Elsewhere, I have differentiated the phenomena of bereavement, grief, and mourning (DuBose, 1997). Bereavement is the actual event of loss. Grief is

the private response to the event of loss. Mourning is the public expression of the private response to the event of loss. Evil arises in part because the reality of a particular loss is denied. Rather than being grieved and mourned, the loss, usually understood as the result of another's malicious and destructive act (whether the other is a person or group, a god, or a devil), fuels the desire for compensation and revenge. Compensation and revenge are protests fuelled by a failure to acknowledge and accept loss, i.e., are expressions of complicated mourning.

A very powerful assumption guides this process: the law of retribution, an eye for an eye, in which one "pays back" an equal or greater amount of similar suffering to the perpetrator. If one has suffered humiliation, one humiliates. Evil grows, though, when such compensation breeds retaliation, and unending, mutual escalation of destruction. Again, the project is to regain, repay, replace, restore, or revenge the loss suffered—all agentic (egoistic) expressions of complicated mourning. Here the agent seeks to alter or reverse the lived time and space of his (or her) situation in life, and to punish culprits or threats to this project. This project is never complete, because escalation breeds further escalation; the destructive acts and clinging (or grasping) at the illusion of omnipotence are never satisfied—hence, its limit quality.

Grace, on the other hand, is also implicated in the experience of mourning, but only in which an embrace of one's limits, and renewed openness to new relationships and projects occurs. Grace operates on a different set of economic principles, not a compensatory or retaliatory one. It is likened to being the recipient of what Georges Bataille calls "expenditure without profit (1988, p. xvi)," or what Emmanuel Levinas calls "a service indifferent to remuneration (1986, p. 134)." Graceful mourning is a

radical and unconditional acceptance in spite of irreversible loss and “unfinished business;” it is the capacity to relinquish clinging to the past, while simultaneously experiencing the unearned, uncreated, and undeserved affirmation of new and meaningful relationships and projects in life.

The contextual family therapist Ivan Borzoyemenyi-Nagy (1973) offers two ideas to enhance existential-phenomenological discourse concerning these matters. *Ledgers*, e.g., expected apologies, repentance, compensations, loyalties, offerings, and so forth, can lead to *destructive entitlement* when ledgers are not fulfilled or mourned, or to the *settling of debt*, through acts of revenge, retribution, or compensation. And conversely, I would add, one may receive recognition or acceptance from someone when one does not deserve them, or has done everything possible *not* to deserve them. The former gives rise to evil, and the latter to the experience of grace.

Egoism, I argue, is a form of complicated mourning, and is preoccupied with such ledgers—both in replenishing them or preventing their imbalance—through earning, maintaining or demonstrating self-importance by controlling, seducing, and coercing situations and persons in order to secure validation. This endeavor to *earn* validation (again part of an eye for an eye economy) suggests that the absence of validation is an error to be corrected by more efficacious means of winning or eliciting another’s love or respect, rather than being receptive to validation as an unearned gift. The conviction that worth and validation are earned can become a source of feigned security and an experience of power in interpersonal relationships, which is something very difficult to relinquish. Bernard Meland notes that the point of grace is precisely to relieve us of egoistic preoccupation (1955, p. 179). The relief from egoism can then free us to

recognize similarities between persons in the structure of human existence, thus bridging alienated relationships, as well as recognize that a counter-retaliation to willed destruction merely breeds evil.

My thesis, therefore, is that *evil is the outcome of (complicated) mourning-as-clinging, and grace is the outcome (or facilitation of) mourning-as-relinquishing. Mourning gracefully is different from malignant mourning because grace is a willing surrender of egoistic control in light of limit experiences, whereas evil is an agentic attempt to deny reality, reclaim the past and/or compensate for lost egoism by controlling, manipulating, and protesting limit experiences.*

One final presupposition of mine regarding evil and grace as complementary phenomena is that they are existential, limit experiences which reflect the interplay between the *Umwelt*, *Mitwelt*, and *Eigenwelt* modes of existence. *Eigenwelt*, *Mitwelt* and *Umwelt*, German terms proposed by Martin Heidegger (1962), and later used in psychology and psychiatry by Ludwig Binswanger (1947, 1963), Medard Boss (1979), the collaboration of Rollo May, Ernest Angel, Henri Ellenberger (1958), and Ernest Keen (1970), refer to ways of describing how we function in our daily existence as human beings.

The *Eigenwelt* has traditionally meant one's own experience of self in the world. From an existential-phenomenological perspective, cognition and self-awareness are never the result of the passive registration of sense data. On the contrary, the human psyche is an active entity that interprets and acts on its world. For the purposes of this dissertation (in my analysis of the *Eigenwelt*), I accentuate accountability, agency, and differentiation as aspects of mourning and its complications. Mourning usually takes one

of two positions in relation to loss: surrender and acceptance or denial, clinging, and/or imaginary compensations. This becomes interesting when addressing issues of accountability and/or self-awareness in the legal arena (e.g., pleas of insanity), as well as the role of agency and self-awareness in the experience of grace, and in limitations and possibilities of the patient's capacity for personal growth in therapeutic encounters. Evil entails a process of disowning accountability and differentiation in relationships. On the other hand, to experience oneself as accepted at one's core when such acceptance is not earned, or extorted, is an experience of grace that transforms the *Eigenwelt*

Attending to the issue of differentiation in relationships provides a good bridge between the *Eigenwelt* and the *Mitwelt*. The *Mitwelt* traditionally refers to the quality of relatedness to others in the world. To be free enough to take a position and state one's self-experience without withdrawing from, colluding with, or attacking others signifies a good level of differentiation (Bowen, 1966, pp. 345-374). Without this capacity for differentiation, perpetrators blame others for their own actions and for losses incurred (e.g., "The Devil made me do it!"). From a *Mitwelt* perspective, grace emerges from interpersonal encounters in an affirming community or relationship. As Buber (1947) points out, acceptance and affirmation are fundamental human needs, and affirmation from others facilitates the loosening of egoism and promotes healthy mourning, or complicate mourning (when absent) by heightening egoism and/or misguided strategies of self-preservation. These different *Eigenwelten* in turn affect the quality of *Mitwelt* comportment. Both the *Eigenwelt* and the *Mitwelt* affect (and are affected by) the environment in which they interact, or the *Umwelt*.

The *Umwelt* is the natural or physical world in which we find ourselves, or, to use Heidegger's term, in which we find ourselves *thrown*. We are born with, and live our entire lives, with certain unalterable, biological limitations: I live with this body, in this way, for these reasons, and I will eventually die. Radical contingency and mutability are inherent in *Umwelt's structure*. That being so, it is interesting to note that Harry Stack Sullivan (1953), Erich Fromm (1973), Frieda-Fromm Reichman (1950), Karen Horney (1937), object-relations theorists, and various family-systems theorists believe that the relational needs of individuals are as important to our sanity as the satisfaction of our instinctual drives.

Even so, the idea of *thrownness* is illuminating when we address the phenomena of evil and grace. Our experience of thrownness can evoke feelings of vulnerability, helplessness, and suffering. We can respond to these phenomena with denial, resentment and retaliation, which are expressions of complicated mourning that can actualize in such destructive acts as domestic abuse, terrorism, or social oppression. On the other hand, we can acknowledge and indeed embrace our thrownness and foster a virtuous character, as Irenaeus, the early Christian Patristic theologian and later twentieth-century philosopher and Neo-Irenaeian thinker John Hick (1967) remind us.

For instance, discovering that one is only a part of something much greater than one's own creation tempers our innate grandiosity. Given this, the *Umwelt* shapes and defines the arena in which an *Eigenwelt* experience of grace can unfold. Numinous experiences, which reflect the person's *Eigenwelt* awareness of his relationship to the *Umwelt*, abound in the presence of an ocean, great mountains, a vast and starry sky, or a multitude of wonders which elicit feelings of humility, gratitude and relief at being only a



privileged participant in the world, rather than its sole creator and sustainer. In any case, the *Umwelt* is as dynamic and changeable as the *Eigenwelt* and the *Mitwelt*. Physical development and decay, the emergence of new social realities, and the ongoing influence of one's family of origin are continual, formative factors on the human personality and relationships. It is within the context of the *Umwelt* that the *Eigenwelt* and the *Mitwelt* find authentic expressions of meaningful mourning-in-the-world; this is where clearer understandings of both evil and grace are found.

The *Umwelt*, *Mitwelt*, and *Eigenwelt* are not separate, ontological worlds, or first rate heuristic fictions. As lived experience, they represent different (albeit intertwined)

levels of being that we inhabit simultaneously. How I experience my world is shaped by others' impact on my life. I cannot understand interpersonal emotions such as love and sadness without taking into account biochemistry. I cannot understand interpersonal responsibility and gratitude without a consideration of my own self-experience in discerning interpersonal boundaries. Therefore, it is futile to *privilege* one mode or level of existence above the other two. Borrowing from Heidegger, we call the incessant interplay of these *modes* of existence the *equiprimordial* character of the *Mitwelt*, *Eigenwelt*, and *Umwelt*. Hence, when discussing 'evil' and 'grace' as complementary, psychological phenomena, I will frequently call attention to the equiprimordial character of the *Eigenwelt*, *Umwelt*, and *Mitwelt*, and the ways in which the desire to accord primacy to one mode over others limits or distorts a theorist's perspective.

Finally, our lived experience of time and space are also essential aspects of the equiprimordial character of the *Umwelt*, *Eigenwelt*, and *Mitwelt*. Within the actual

physical space and time of our situated *Umwelt*, we experience time and space in personal and meaningful ways. For instance, *in the experience of loss, time slows down and space is amplified*, despite the fact that one's measurement of chronological time and geographical space remain unaltered. Enactments of securing or enforcing compensation, i.e., expressions of complicated mourning, are attempts to close space and hasten time, the latter often manifesting in anxiety. Heidegger (1962, pp. 391ff) notes that evil is often experienced as the fear of something dreadful, addressed both temporally and spatially, rapidly approaching us. This experience forces us to confront our thrownness.

The experience of grace, by contrast, closes the gap of alienation, and either lessens the urgent press of temporality, as in anxiety reduction, or accelerates temporality, as in lightening depression, depending on which set of symptoms are more prominent. Augustine's persistent emphasis on time, memory, and alienation illustrates how central such lived experiences are for understanding the processes of mourning that underlie evil and grace as "limit experiences" in the existential-phenomenological sense.

Arriving at an adequate answer to the question "How can evil and grace be understood as complementary phenomena?" entails much reflection on several other problems. First and foremost, can psychology address spiritual phenomena without waxing *otherworldly* (meaning non-empirical)? And conversely, can it do without denying the extraordinary and transformative quality of such phenomena by reducing them to mere diagnostic or clinical language? By way of response to these questions, I contend that evil and grace are neither supernatural, substantial, or merely "intrapsychic" realities, but *empirical* realities in the existential-phenomenological sense--what Karl Jaspers terms *limit, or boundary, experiences*. The last chapter of this project articulates

more fully how Jaspers' work on "boundary situations" frames my thesis: *that the limit nature of evil and grace are best understood when evil and grace are interpreted as manifestations or modes of mourning.*

Before addressing this issue, however, it is instructive to note that Jaspers' notion of "boundary experience" has been introduced into theological discourse by the Catholic theologian David Tracy (1978, pp. 91ff), for whom "limit experience" denotes the *religious* dimension of experience. As Tracy puts it, "All genuine limit situations refer to those situations, both positive and negative, wherein we experience our own human limits...as well as...some disclosure of a limit-of our experience (1978, p. 105)." Although I explicate Jaspers' work in more detail in the final chapter, I must emphasize here that Tracy's thinking, though illuminating, is less germane to the present study than Jaspers' existential psychiatry. Still, the fact remains: existential psychiatry and theology converge in their description of these phenomena, and emphasize their centrality to human existence.

What Tracy calls limit situations, Jaspers calls *boundary* or *ultimate* situations and experiences. For Jaspers, examples of these types of experiences include inescapable conflict, suffering, guilt, chance, and death. Such experiences are "felt, experienced, conceived, everywhere at the limits of our existence" and beyond our "objective gaze" at "things within the subject-object dichotomy (1919, p. 229)." The existential and phenomenological allegiances of both Jaspers and Tracy are evident in their attunement to situations that give rise to experiences. Jaspers explicitly states that one cannot "...leave one situation without entering into another. Existence is *being in situations* (1971, p. 469, italics mine)," including transcendent experiences. Limit experiences of

evil and grace are held in place by situational structures. Moreover, “limit experiences” are embedded in and/or affected by the equiprimordial character of the *Umwelt*, *Mitwelt*, and *Eigenwelt* modes of being-in-the-world. For Tracy as well, the religious dimension is experienced *within* existential realities, even to the point that it “necessarily touches all our experience or necessarily does not exist (1978, p. 205).” Likewise, Jaspers notes that “to experience ultimate situations and to ‘exist’ are one and the same thing (1969, p. 469).” This dissertation assumes that a phenomenological analysis of meaningful human experience necessarily entails methodological reflection on the nature of limit experience.

Limit language, which is used to describe limit experience, includes the use of metaphor, poetry, rhetoric, and symbols; Jaspers (1963, p. 326) calls them “ciphers,” all of which provide a bridge between theological and psychological discourse. Limit language allows us to address and describe phenomena that resist any straightforward reduction to mundane categories and diagnoses. By contrast, using diagnostic categories to explain such experiences trivializes them. Diagnostic language collects and categorizes clusters of behavior deemed dysfunctional, though not necessarily *extraordinary*. By contrast, limit language calls our attention to the ineffable, which eludes capture in the net of language. Radical terror and radical acceptance are generic human experiences, not the province of psychopathology per se. They demand limit language for purposes of description and further inquiry in a phenomenological vein.

Philosopher and theologian Langdon Gilkey (1969) has pointed out that secular, diagnostic appraisals of ultimate, existential situations are inadequate, hence the need for religious symbols to address these phenomena, such as ‘grace’ and ‘evil.’ Yet, for many people, religious symbols have also lost their capacity to embody or express limit

experience adequately. As historian Andrew Delbanco argues, "...despite the shriveling of the old words and concepts, we cannot do without some conceptual means for thinking about the sorts of experiences that used to go under the name of evil (1995, p. 9)." If, as Heidegger suggests, language is *the house of Being*, there are ways in which language allows for either more dilation or constriction of experience. This is the case with limit experiences, and I argue that hermeneutical-phenomenology provides the necessary balance between an acknowledgement of our thrownness and an openness to transcendence *within* the real-world constraints of our situated structures.

Jaspers notes that "...the conscious experience of ultimate situations...ends with the dissolution of what was previously a self-evident shell (1971, p. 281)." By "self-evident shell," Jaspers refers to the confidence of objective intellectual understanding of these experiences. For Jaspers, "...ultimate situations...cannot exist for the mere intellectual understanding of consciousness-as-such. Here intellect comes up against an absolute limit (Latzel, 1957, pp. 188-189)." Neither Tracy nor Jaspers are arguing for a supra-rationalist or irrationalist position so much as defending the thesis that limit situations are existential, though transcendent, realities that find their fullest expressions in non-reductive communication and human communion.

That said, I avoid a reductionist strategy of interpretation that "explains" the limit experiences of evil and grace in terms of *purely* psychological categories or processes that rule out the possibility of transcendence. At the same time, I avoid the opposite error of relegating religious experience to a dualistic, otherworldly realm represented by a *literalist* understanding of religious dogma. I abhor reductionism and dualism, but without sacrificing the radical *otherness* of such limit experiences as evil and grace by

arguing that mourning is the existential basis of both evil and grace. In truth, the observation that psychological diagnostics and theological doctrine address the same existential realities secures an arena for dialogue between psychology and theology on either side of the phenomena in question. It follows that existential language provides us with a more adequate limit language with which to address evil and grace than either theology or psychology in isolation.

A systematic comparison between fourth-century theologians such as Augustine, Pelagius, and Mani, and twentieth-century psychologists such as Freud, Jung, and Fromm has never been undertaken, perhaps due to the assumption that such apparently divergent discourses could not be compared. I argue that despite their disparate positions, the common mistake made by theologians and psychologists alike is their emphasis on the primacy of one mode of Being—the *Umwelt*, *Eigenwelt*, or the *Mitwelt*—over the other two. Karl Jaspers provides a corrective to this mistake by maintaining a more thoroughly balanced understanding of evil and grace, secondary to the limit situation of mourning. Jaspers' thought provides a framework for my emphasis on evil and grace *as limit mourning phenomena*, and is therefore the subject of my final chapter.

I will first revisit various authorities on these issues: St. Augustine, Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and Erich Fromm. Why choose Freud, Jung, and Fromm as partners in dialogue with Augustine? Freud, Jung, and Fromm spent considerable time addressing psychology and religion (Freud, 1913, 1919, 1920, 1923, 1923b, 1925, 1927, 1930; Jung, 1952, 1958, 1965, 1973; Fromm, 1930, 1950, 1964, 1966, 1973). A close reading of these thinkers discloses some uncanny parallels between them and Augustine, Pelagius, and the Gnostics, including the interplay and privileging of either agency, environment, and/or

biological endowment in their conceptions of evil and grace. Moreover, though it is not apparent at first glance, I believe that these theorists have all addressed the primacy of mourning as a constitutive factor in mental health (or the lack of it). My hermeneutic reading of their works will be adduced in support of their claim.

Meanwhile, their similarities on this score run in tandem with very divergent and distinctive perspectives on the psyche. These include three typical and separate stances: 1) evil and grace as instinctual or evolutionary, thus beyond the control of agency and entailing the loss of unbounded freedom, or 2) evil and grace as the result of relational or environmental traumas, deprivations, and/or unmerited awards, in which agency is a passive receiver of both, and experiences the loss of presumed invulnerability, or 3) evil and grace as expressions of human agency that serve to compensate for loss of dependency on another.

Augustine is the most important figure in this discussion, whose ideas spark conversation between the disciplines of theology, psychology, and philosophy. He thematizes the interplay between the will and the experience of loss in the emergence of both evil and grace. Discussions on memory, will, understanding, concupiscence, evil as the absence of the good, the discovery of God through self-reflection, and the significance of relationships in each of these processes make Augustine a seminal psychological as well as theological thinker.

Augustine's ideas on evil and grace do not emerge in a vacuum, however. He develops them in dialogue and disputation with his contemporaries, in and out of the church. For example, the Manicheans were a religious sect, which Augustine belonged to before his conversion to Christianity (Pagels, 1979; Cunliffe-Jones, 1979). Manichean

thought is altered by later Gnostic sects though many central ideas remain constant throughout. Augustine battles against two distinct ideas in Manichean thought: namely, the dualism between the spiritual and physical worlds, and the idea of two creators: one good and the other evil. Although some Christian Gnostics reject the latter conclusion, the project of purity and release from the confinement and contamination of the material world remains of utmost importance to them. For Gnostics, pagan and Christian, the path to release from this confinement is not by faith, but by way of clarity regarding a particular *knowledge* of God, the ethereal source of life.

Augustine's problems lie in his insistence that God is neither the creator of evil nor Himself created. In fact, the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* proposed that all creation is of God's hand and is good, hence evil cannot be something created. Evil must be some form of absence in relation to creation. This absence has its own expressions in the *Umwelt*, *Eigenwelt*, and *Mitwelt*. Evil sometimes means disorder and disharmony within a limited part of the cosmos (*Umwelt*). It sometimes means choices and behaviors as the result of ignorance (*Eigenwelt*). It sometimes means relational alienation from God and others as the result of prideful decisions (*Mitwelt*). The equiprimordial quality of these modes of being are held together by the freedom of the will and some form of absence or loss.

The free human decision to turn from God is the source of evil, for Augustine, and efforts to escape from such depravity are useless without God's intervening grace. Augustine believes that the higher, rational part of the soul produces the Fall in the exercise of pride. Pride leads to concupiscence, which is to be enslaved and at the mercy of the 'lower' dimensions of our nature, our instincts and impulses. For Augustine, evil is



ingrained in our natures and, thus, we cannot trust our choices and actions to be good. As Augustine says in his Confessions, “I was bound down by the disease of the flesh. Its deadly pleasures were a chain that I dragged along with me, yet I was afraid to be freed from it (1961, p. 128).”

Pelagius, an Irish monk, and Augustine’s most famous opponent, also opposes the Manichean attribution of evil to God, but does so by attributing more power to human agency’s ability to escape evil than does Augustine. Although Pelagius concedes that human beings rarely choose the good, he does believe that every human has the potential to choose the good and avoid sin. Pelagius believes that evil is found in specific actions, and he concludes that these actions are alterable. Adam’s sin, for Pelagius, does not ‘infect’ the rest of human nature to the extent that one is tainted at birth or that one relies solely on God for salvation. Given this position, infants are not damned if not baptized before death. Likewise, Pelagius rejects the issue of predestination, which for him ignores the primacy of a person’s choice and will in being saved. One could *theoretically* reach a sinless state, which has to do with *Mitwelt* relations, even though Pelagius himself recognizes the difficulty of this achievement. The supportive grace of God is essential for the Christian life but this is not the actual or prevenient grace for which Augustine argues so intensely. Pelagius argues that grace is something chosen and received but *not* something that causes one to choose the good. Again, the primacy of human choice and accountability for one’s actions in ethical relations drives Pelagius’ agenda. Indeed, like Sartre, Pelagius argues that we must relinquish our tendency to displace responsibility for our actions on others or on circumstances. He argues this position as passionately as Augustine argues that we simply cannot do this alone.

I will examine the psychological implications of Augustine, Pelagius, and Gnosticism at greater length in the chapter addressing these issues. Meanwhile, regardless of whichever position we adopt, we must remember that these theological positions were born of great personal searching, and patient, useful reflection on what phenomenologists call our “lived experience.” Augustine leaves us with a classic account of his experience of both evil and grace in the Confessions (1961), in which he tries to fathom these issues further. His understanding of evil and grace necessarily arise from his experiences in school, with friends, with his only son, his mentor Ambrose, his family, especially his mother Monica, and his God. Peter Brown, an internationally recognized biographer of Augustine, states that several psychological studies of Augustine “...show that it is as difficult as it is desirable to combine competence as an historian with sensitivity as a psychologist (1970, p. 31).” This project attempts to do this very thing.

This dissertation addresses “meaning-oriented” psychology, especially the psychoanalytic, hermeneutic, and existential-phenomenological traditions. I do not make any claims with respect to the various “naturalistic” approaches to more causally oriented psychology, which either negate or obscure the fundamental realities of evil and grace. I have already noted the hesitancy with which some researchers approach the topic, as well as the tendency of some clinicians to reduce evil to a categorical or diagnostic judgment to resist the appearance of a theological orientation. The meaning-oriented psychologies of Freud, Jung, Fromm, and Jaspers are obvious and essential exceptions to this practice. Many other thinkers have addressed these issues before. I argue that these thinkers have

offered foundations for such thought, both in terms of insight and in terms of error, regarding evil and grace, and the interplay of agency and mourning.

### ***Methodology***

Students of psychology and religion tend to distinguish between different theoretical approaches to their subject matter (Johnson, 1959; Fleck and Carter, 1981; Pruyser, 1968). These include (but are not limited to) 1) conflictual theory, (2) collective theory, (3) personalistic theory, (4) interpersonal theory, (5) approaches which emphasize the relationship of psychology as a discipline that refutes, parallels, or integrates religion, and (6) a number of hermeneutical approaches. The method best suited for answering questions regarding evil and grace as complementary phenomena is a hermeneutical-phenomenological one.

Hermeneutic and existential phenomenology prevent reductionistic appraisals to evil and grace by allowing for various qualities of transcendence, while still situating phenomena within its own domain of lived experience and without drifting into theological doctrine or speculative metaphysics. However, some caution is still in order. Langdon Gilkey (1969) and Carl Vaught (personal conversation, 2001) both suggest that traditional phenomenological categories may not capture the complete essence of the limit experiences in question. As Gilkey explains, if phenomenology limits itself to that which immediately appears within the stream of experience, then one can argue that "...no 'transcendent' factors...can be dealt with by phenomenology so defined (1969, p. 244)." Gilkey and others such as Rudolf Otto (1917), Friedrich Schleiermacher (1893), Gerardus van der Leew (1933), and Mircea Eliade (1957) argue that the limit experience

described above *is a part of* the stream of experience, but is a dimension that must be uncovered through the rigor of hermeneutical phenomenology. Therefore, what appears to be a problem with our methodology is resolved if we concede that *limit* experiences, and thus transcendent experiences, are nonetheless *human* experiences uncovered by hermeneutical phenomenology.

I enter the hermeneutical circle assuming that *evil and grace are empirical realities; in terms of origins, they are expressions of different relationships between agency and mourning in the Umwelt, Mitwelt, and Eigenwelt modes of being-in-the-world*. A complete psychology of evil and/or grace must address all three aspects of existence. In the interests of elucidating this fact more clearly, I have expanded and reframed the traditional understandings of these three “worlds” to form a ‘trinocular’ (read as equiprimordial) lens through which I interpret texts.

But if evil and grace, as complementary phenomena, are best understood in light of the equiprimordality of *the Umwelt, Eigenwelt, and Mitwelt* the same requirement holds for hermeneutical methodology. Many thinkers in the phenomenology of religion have addressed evil and grace from a variety of hermeneutical perspectives. Their methodological intentions guide this project of bridging possibilities of dialogue between fourth century theologians and twentieth century psychologists. Nevertheless, even among hermeneutical-phenomenological theorists, an equiprimordial approach to the subject matter is often forfeited.

Ontological hermeneuticists, such as Friedrich Schleiermacher (1893), view religion as an *object* to which activity is devoted; a hermeneutical approach that carries an *Umwelt* bias. Psychological hermeneuticists such as Gerardus van der Leew (1933)

and Rudolf Otto (1917), for whom religion is an *activity* itself rather than devotion to an object, have an *Eigenwelt* bias. Dialectical hermeneuticists such as Mircea Eliade (1957) and Martin Buber (1958) understand religion as a *relationship* between subject and object, hence showing a *Mitwelt* bias.

Those thinkers who are most aligned with my project are empirical and/or existential hermeneuticists of theological doctrine such as Paul Tillich (1951), Bernard Meland (1969), Langdon Gilkey (1969), David Tracy (1978), John Macquarrie (1955), and Jurgen Moltmann (1974), among others. As empirical theologians they view theological doctrines as symbols for existential situations and/or natural processes, the latter being addressed, more often than not, in terms of Whiteheadian process philosophy. Let me then hasten to add that, in keeping with this approach, I use the term ‘theology’ to mean *the symbols representing the lived experience of existential realities*. This definition of theology allows for a dialogue between the lived experiences of both theological *and* psychological symbols. Moreover, authentic, lived experience arises from the equiprimordality of the *Umwelt*, *Eigenwelt*, and the *Mitwelt*.

I, therefore, will utilize a methodological integration of Langdon Gilkey’s hermeneutical phenomenology, David Tracy’s revisionist method of correlation, and existential-phenomenological psychology. Gilkey’s hermeneutical phenomenology attempts to discern the religious dimension of generic, human experiences, as does Tracy. The religious dimension, as Gilkey describes it, is likened to Tracy’s *limit experience*, or Jaspers’ *boundary situation*. Tracy takes this step further to suggest a correlation between common human experience and Christian texts. This entails a “dramatic confrontation, the mutual illuminations and corrections, the possible basic reconciliation”

between what he calls the two primary sources of theological reflection: common human experience and classical Christian texts (1978, p. 32).

This process is necessarily a hermeneutical or interpretive one, but unlike Tracy's project, in which the dialogue takes place between texts (i.e., Biblical literature and classical Christian texts), and common structures of human experience, my project entails a dialogue between two different *types of texts* or discourses, which are those of psychology or theology. At times, to bring the texts "alive" I will note how a theorist's biography relates to his theory. A comprehensive understanding of theory is greatly hindered without biographical considerations. All theories arise within lived worlds and are grounded in the meanings of those lived worlds, including theories and/or constructs about evil and grace. Therefore, I privilege the biographical antecedents to theories because constructs such as 'evil' and 'grace' arise from and are lived out in what von Eckartsberg (1971, pp. 66-87) and others (Fischer, C., 1994, p. 37) have called *experiactions*. A proper analysis should deconstruct constructs and concepts, if not entire doctrines that signify ways lived experience is operative in our ways of being-in-the-world. Erich Fromm notes that "...any kind of thought, true or false, if it is more than a superficial conformance with the conventional ideas, is motivated by the subjective needs and interests of the person who is thinking (1941, p. 64)." Fromm goes on to argue that "...ideas, which are not rooted in powerful needs of the personality, will have little influence on the actions and on the whole of life of the person concerned. (1941, p. 64)." Interestingly, Fromm is careful to add that "...psychological analysis does not imply a judgment concerning the truth of the doctrine one analyzes (1941, p. 63)."

The highly philosophical dimension of this dissertation is intended to clarify those lived worlds through an analysis of doctrines, theories, and constructs. Ernest Wallwork, in Psychoanalysis and Ethics, notes that "...clinical psychologists and psychoanalysts often grow impatient with the conceptual analysis of philosophers," but the "...philosophical elucidation of meaning...can be of enormous assistance to the empirically oriented behavioral scientist (1991, p. 107 note)." In and of itself, clinical language, as Carl Goldberg aptly points out, "...seems more accurately descriptive of physical objects than expressions of human problems and motivations (1996, p. 236)." Furthermore, Goldberg buttresses his point by noting that theologian Jeffery Burton has critiqued psychological language as "...an extension of physics, unable to address and describe intelligently the moral and spiritual needs of mankind (1996, p. 236)." This is all the more reason for integrating *meaning-oriented* psychology and theology.

In Insight into Value, Andrew Fuller notes that the "...application of this method consists in clarifying psychological (and I would add *theological*) concepts at their source in experience (1990, p. xi)." Fuller quotes Merleau-Ponty: "It is a question...of replacing habitual concepts...by concepts which are consciously clarified and are therefore far less likely to remove us from experience as it is lived (1990, p. 34-35)." Fuller notes again that the "...basic task phenomenological psychology sets for itself, then, is the clarification of basic psychological concepts: phenomenological psychology is essentially a conceptual enterprise (1990, p. 35)."

Hence, the specific steps of my methodological process are as follows. The equiprimordality of the *Umwelt*, *Mitwelt*, and *Eigenwelt* will be highlighted continually as implicit categories in the analysis of each theorist. I will interpret St. Augustine's

classic doctrine of *malem et privatio boni*, or evil as the privation of the good, as a *psychology* of evil. I will argue that Augustine's understanding of evil must be read against the background of his *causa gratiae*, or his case for grace, which I also interpret psychologically. I contend that evil as the absence of the good, and grace as divine intervention, both involve a peculiar relationship between the experience of agency and the process of mourning.

After Augustine's position is contrasted with those of Pelagius and the Gnostics, I compare debates between them with the disparate perspectives of Freud, Jung, and Fromm. I argue that *the central points of contention regarding evil, grace, agency, and mourning between Augustine, Pelagius, and the Gnostics are mirrored in the differences between Freud, Jung, and Fromm.*

More specifically, I will explore how Freud's theories of repetition compulsion, the death instinct, the neurosis of demonic possession, and the uncanny all exhibit an *Umwelt* bias, and mirror Augustine's understanding of evil as inherent and inescapable. Moreover, I will describe how grace comes from an 'Otherness' for both Augustine and Freud, which is *God* for the former and the *unconscious* for the latter. We will see how Jung's understanding of evil as judgment in light of his theories of the shadow, the complexes, the dual nature of God, and the grace of right knowledge continue the Gnostic end of the debate, and possess a distinctive *Eigenwelt* bias. I will then investigate how Fromm's notion of the syndrome of decay and syndrome of growth express a *Mitwelt* bias as well as a Pelagian confidence in human freedom and potential for graceful liberation from evil. After surveying these thinkers, I conclude the dissertation with Karl



Jaspers' more balanced, synoptic view, and dwell more closely on the psychology of evil and grace as founded on particular relationships between human agency and mourning.

### ***Literature Review***

This literature review is a representative sampling of how others have addressed evil and grace as psychological phenomena, with or without an emphasis on mourning. In it, I explore how some authors address the 'otherness' of evil and grace as forms of transcendence while resisting supernaturalism. Finally, I address how these authors discern the "etiology" or origins of evil and grace in light of agency, environment, and instinct, respectively. As we shall see, this procedure will underscore the need for undertaking my project, and the value of a hermeneutical-phenomenological approach to evil and grace as complimentary phenomena in light of the relationship between agency and mourning.

Jeffrey Burton Russell (1981, 1984, 1986, 1988), whose writings focus on images of evil and the person of Satan, notes that evil has been imaged in remarkably similar ways across cultures and in different situations in life as the *adversary* of the good. Roy Baumeister interprets Russell's research as meaning that "...evil is defined in relation to the good, as its opposite. Evil does not exist by itself.... If evil is dependent on good (as a reaction to it) then there is hope of eventual victory (1997, p. 67)." Gabriel Marcel (1973) also believes that evil is not final and, therefore, that hope is always present in some form or another. Paul Ricoeur, in discussing the symbolization of the tragic, notes that symbols of 'salvation' occur *within* the tragic, which is never fully eliminated, and is

given meaning as the result of the tragic (1967, pp. 229ff). The direct implication of these various appraisals is that evil and grace are complementary phenomena. Evil becomes a force to be reckoned with only in relation to grace. Meaning and hope are “graceful” experiences in which we experience being menaced by or triumphing over evil.

These theorists also concur in their view that in “returning to the things themselves,” evil and grace are inextricably intertwined. As we shall see in the chapter on Augustine, Pelagius, and Gnosticism, this premise has classical roots in understanding evil as the absence, contortion, alteration, or deformation of the good (all forms of loss), much as darkness gain depth in the absence of light. This is the essence of Augustine’s doctrine of evil as the *privatio boni*, or the privation of the good. For my part, I also maintain that evil and grace are complementary, and must be seen in light of each other, while interpreting this complementarity in a *psychological* way within the existential tradition. This is what distinguishes this project. Differentiating evil and grace as psychological phenomena will allow us to see better the importance of understanding their complementary relationship.

### ***What is Evil?***

Augustine himself does not distinguish between ethical and physical evil when considering their causes—which for him is the same in both cases: the misuse of human free will. Elaine Pagels (1979) notes that Gnosticism, from which Augustine’s own thought emerges, did not make distinctions between moral and physical evil. For Gnostics, the Greek term *kakia* means what is ‘bad,’ which includes any misfortune,

which is an experience of loss. Significantly, however, the Valentinian sect used *kakia* to refer to *emotional* harm or experiences such as fear, confusion, and grief. A central Gnostic scripture, The Gospel of Truth, shows the dualism of spirit and matter inherent to the Gnostic position in passages claiming that "...all materiality (understood as evil) originated from three experiences: terror, pain, and aimless confusion (Pagels, 1979, p. 172)."

Though articulated primarily in terms of terror, pain, and confusion, experiences of evil are also experiences of loss, including the loss of cosmic intelligibility and of personal agency in the face of evil. The clear (if indirect) implication of the preceding is that in the Gnostic mind, the confrontation with evil is inextricably tied to loss in various forms. So, given the Hebraic emphasis on the experience of estrangement from God, Gnosticism's emphasis on terror, pain, and confusion, and Augustine's focus on evil in the disordered will, one could say that evil is always understood as a *psychological* phenomenon within different theological traditions. After all, in every instance, what is described is a deeply disrupted relationship with a significant Other, with a benign and intelligible cosmos, and the different varieties of anguish that result from this disruption, as well as personal efforts to rectify the underlying problem.

Roy Baumeister (1996, p. 72ff) thematizes various myths of evil. Baumeister uses the word *myth* to denote what is commonly held to be the case about evil in the general populous. Some myths suggest that evil is the intentional infliction of harm on another person, accompanied by a sense of pleasure. This sadistic pleasure is embodied by evil figures, who are also marked by extreme egoism. They often have no tangible motive for wreaking havoc and have difficulty maintaining control over their feelings,

especially anger and rage. Other myths focus on how evil is the “...other, the enemy, the outsider, the out-group (1997, p. 75).” Linked to this myth is another one that depicts victims as uniformly innocent and good. Finally, Baumeister argues that these myths of evil have been with us since time immemorial, and they all share the belief that evil represents the antithesis of order, peace, and stability.

In The Symbolism of Evil Ricoeur argues that the myths of evil usually allude to the notion of the bounded and servile will that seeks salvation outside of itself. Ricoeur insists that “...evil is *not* nothing...it is the power of darkness...something to be taken away. There is a ‘positiveness’ to evil (1967, p. 155).” Secondly, no matter how guilty a person may be, the servile will experiences evil as coming from “...outside of freedom, as the other than itself in which freedom is taken captive (1967, p. 155).” What initially appears to be a refutation of Augustine’s *privatio boni* is later reframed in line with its intentions. Ricoeur notes that “...evil is not symmetrical with the good, wickedness is not something that replaces the goodness of man; it is in the staining, the darkening, the disfiguring of an innocence (1967, p. 156).” The nature of grace is in the conviction that “...however radical evil may be, it cannot be as primordial as goodness (1967, p. 156).”

In reading the works of these thinkers, we discern three attributes of evil that can be readily understood in light of the equiprimordial character of the *Eigenwelt*, *Mitwelt*, and *Umwelt*. The *Eigenwelt* perspective construes evil as *an intentional act of the will*. Here, agency is construed as being dominant, active, and destructive. The *Mitwelt* perspective, by contrast, holds *some form of Otherness* accountable for evil, whether this be a force beyond the will’s control, oppressive environmental circumstances, or the abusive conduct of another. Here, agency is diminished, passive, and victimized.

Finally, the *Umwelt* perspective sees evil as *primordial and ubiquitous*, prior to any individual's actions or intentions. No matter what affective reactions or valuations we experience in its presence, this third position sees evil as an inescapable and necessary part of our *biological* endowment.

My research to date indicates that the literature on evil always falls within one of these three perspectives, but tends to overlook the formative role of loss and mourning in the genesis of evil. Moreover, in most theorists' work, "world" is usually privileged over the other two, thus obscuring equiprimordality, and the fact that evil and grace are both modes of *mourning-in-the-world*. My project will address both problems.

The view that evil is instinctive privileges the *Umwelt* perspective. Robert Wright, an evolutionary psychologist, takes Freudian instinctual psychology in a Darwinian direction. He argues that one could consider our genetic structure, as it serves the designs of natural selection, as evil, thus placing free will or personal agency in a dubious position (1994, p. 368). Other positions help bridge the *Umwelt* and the *Eigenwelt* by arguing for an inherent disposition that can either become evil or good given one's intentions. This is consistent with early Hebrew thought, Erich Fromm's ideas (Fromm, 1964), and Rollo May's (1969) discussion of the *daimonic*.

The second position, the view of evil as a developmental phenomenon in reaction to environmental factors, has a *Mitwelt* bias. For example, Carl Goldberg (1996), leaning on Erich Fromm, Harry Stack Sullivan, and Karen Horney, who all have environmentalist leanings, sees evil as the result of a lack of warmth and engagement from parental figures (loss of nurturance). Yet, Goldberg acknowledges the role of personal agency since the violent perpetrator blossoms in an abusive, neglectful, or

otherwise inadequate environment, but then deepens his or her destructiveness and indifference to others more or less willfully.

Alice Miller (1983, 1984, 1990) writes extensively on the consequences of abusive behavior. She includes a case study of Adolf Hitler's childhood, in which she argues that Hitler was beaten constantly, leading her to infer that were this not the case, Hitler would not have been the person campaigning for "the final solution." Here again, environment is key, as is loss and complicated mourning.

Attachment theorist John Bowlby (1953) is a rather radical environmentalist who compares maternal deprivation to the evil of German measles or a deficiency of Vitamin D. He notes that not all deprived or abused children become evil, and that some children have an uncanny tendency to maintain connections in the face of abuse and deprivation, thus suggesting, as I argue, that the issue is not loss *per se*, but how we mourn loss or not. Bowlby's (1969, 1973, 1980) concepts of attachment, separation, and loss are important to this dissertation, particularly as they inform the relationship between agency and mourning as a precondition of evil as well as grace.

Advocates of environmentalist positions see evil as a reactive phenomenon triggered by the environment, at least initially. For them, loss is a loss of trust in the Other for the secure and nurturing environment necessary for the wholesome formation of agency. The strength of this position is that it recognizes the relational context in which we come to be persons. At its extreme, however, this position downplays any personal accountability for relational disruption, including factors of instigation, provocation, and the maintenance of maladaptive relational patterns (Goldberg is an obvious exception to this statement).

By contrast with environmentalist theories, evil, as the result of a disordered, clouded, split, but responsible will, indicates an *Eigenwelt* bias. Most positions within this category address evil as the result of some form of fractured, split, or dissociated psyche, self, or ego. Scott Peck, borrowing Fromm's idea of "malignant narcissism," describes the predominant characteristics of evil as scapegoating and projection; the purpose being to maintain one's narcissism at all costs (1983, pp. 73, 79, 241).

Christopher Bollas aptly connects agency to mourning. Like Goldberg, Bollas' position straddles the *Mitwelt* and the *Eigenwelt*, albeit with a different emphasis. Addressing the phenomenon of "extractive introjection" Bollas writes, "The person who has consistently had important elements and functions of his psyche extracted during childhood will experience a certain kind of loss (1987, p. 166)." The extraction most often occurs through the child's relationship with a narcissistic parent in that the parent's validation and meaningful experience relies on the child functioning as a mirror of, and/or extension of, the parent. Bollas goes on to speak of the vengefulness that can evolve from this, which is usually identified with evil, and states that one has the feeling that "...the loss can only be undone by the law of talion," which for Bollas, is "...an unconscious act intended to recover the lost part of the self by violent intrusion into the other—to recover what has been stolen from oneself (1987, p. 166)."

Although each psychological theorist has a particular bias, their distinctiveness as a group resides in how they address the relationship between mourning and agency. Arguably, all their positions have some merit and warrant careful reflection. That said, however, there is an additional psychological position discussed by Menninger that merits attention: the idea that evil is an illusion (1963, pp. 119-120). I include in this

category psychological theorists or researchers who refuse to address evil for various reasons. One common excuse is that such a project, by their reckoning, belongs to the disciplines of philosophy and theology. Such researchers feel overwhelmed by the inherent difficulty of operationalizing concepts such as evil into experimental designs. Dominated by the primacy of positivism and the physical sciences, experimental researchers are also concerned with appearing too otherworldly by concerning themselves with these topics. Many clinicians also shy away from this topic for fear of being deemed judgmental, or of betraying their supposed neutrality.

That being so, it is instructive to note that the tendency to reject the exploration of evil by denying it any ontological status is nothing new. This is one of Augustine's points of contention with Manichean thought. But the embarrassment occasioned by appearing to have lost neutrality or appearing judgmental does not make acts of atrocity and unmitigated suffering disappear. Given that such limits experiences are ubiquitous, the inability or refusal to address them is not so much scientific, as a scientific evasion of fundamental human realities.

Another position on evil which I will *not* be addressing here is the *literalist* understanding of evil as being an actual entity in a spirit world that is separate from our material, embodied mode of being-in-the-world. Even transcendent experiences are historically situated. This does not mean that the radical Otherness of evil is not respected and investigated, but that Otherness is an integral part of human experience. Neither do I mean that the Otherness of evil is amenable to psychological explanation alone, for meaning structures take place in the world and not merely inside one's mind. Having said this, let us turn now to the representative literature on the psychology of grace.



### ***What is Grace?***

The literature on grace, like that of evil, lends itself to being interpreted in light of the existential categories of the *Eigenwelt*, *Mitwelt*, and *Umwelt* modes of being-in-the-world. Bernard Meland notes that "...grace is empirically discerned in companionship, in human understanding among people where no explanation is needed, and in the affections of people that affirm and appreciate the good discerned in human life (1955, p. 178)." Meland goes on to state that "...this slumbering sentiment becomes the most evident sustaining power, without which the suffering and grief might become unbearable (1955, p. 178)." With these statements, Meland articulates a *Mitwelt* perspective on grace and the relationship of grace to mourning. Grace allows mourning to occur yet remain bearable. Meland indicates that what one mourns, typically, is the loss of companionship and community. And ironically, it is *by* mourning that one overcomes isolation. Meland notes that "...no one gets on by his own resources and efforts alone...the best of our efforts fall short of sustaining our existence...we live upon the grace of one another (1955, p. 177)." When received, this "concrete goodness" can "...release the ego from its preoccupation with self-protective procedures (1955, p. 179)." The access to grace entails the relinquishing of the ego's obsession with control. In fact, as Gerald May notes, "...because grace is a pure gift, the most meaningful of our encounters with it will probably come at unintended times, when we are caught off guard, when our manipulative systems are at rest or otherwise occupied (1988, p. 126)." The interesting question for this position is whether grace is the *consequence* of the ego's

relinquishing control or whether grace helps to *facilitate* this process, a question that will be addressed later in this study.

Segundo argues that grace is the dynamic that liberates man. Liberation, for Segundo, is "...the freedom to proceed along projects of self-realization (1973, p. 37)." Proposing that evil occurs as the result of a divided self, Segundo describes the division with the well-known Sartrean phrases *bad faith* and *self-deception*. A person's liberation, then, must "...necessarily involve his conscious realization of the unconscious determinisms that surround him (1973, p. 39)." In existential categories, Segundo presents us with grace as the resolution of the conflict between the *Eigenwelt* and the *Umwelt*. Gerald May offers another way to view this resolution. May argues that the brain, an aspect of our *Umwelt*, is habitually wired to selectively attend or not attend to limit experiences. Graceful experiences occur when habituation is decreased, the brain is rewired, and we experience the world in new and surprising ways (1988, pp. 123, 191 note).

The starting point for any position on grace, Segundo reminds us, is how one has come to see the relation between human effort (agency) and grace. He points out that the history of ecclesial asceticism warns against voluntarism, which undermines creative initiative (1973, p. 50). May (1982) concurs with this line of thinking about grace by highlighting the difference between *willfulness* and *willingness*. Willfulness is the agent's grasping and controlling of change and liberation. Willingness is the openness to creativity and transformation.

Though seldom invoked in this context, Heidegger's *Gelassenheit* and *meditative thinking* also come to mind as further examples of this positioning of agency in the face

of grace. Segundo knows that the *Eigenwelt* experience of grace is a life of “authenticity, liberty, and truth. (1966, p. 54).” To accomplish this, though, the *Eigenwelt* cannot ignore the *Umwelt* context in which it exists; human agency cannot understand itself as God. This is itself a process of mourning because of our desire to seek unbounded possibilities while ignoring our finitude and situated limitations. This dilemma is symbolized in the *Genesis* story of Adam, Eve, and the forbidden tree of knowledge.

David Augsberger notes that “...grace offers the support that allows trust to replace anxiety, acceptance to restore honor where we were shamed, and forgiveness to resolve guilt (1986, p. 138).” Augsberger further writes that “...grace is the acceptance and affirmation of the person before and independent of any action a person can take in the world. Grace affirms that each human being is irreducibly valuable...(1986, p. 140).” Finally, he writes that “...all therapeutic intervention into human pain is grounded in grace, whether it is named or unnamed.” Augsberger understands this as the clinician’s “...unconditional positive regard, which accepts that other where he or she has felt unacceptable (1986, p. 141).” Augsberger’s position still begs the question, “From where does such acceptance and support come?” It does not come from the therapist proper if “...all therapeutic intervention...is grounded in grace (1986, p. 141).” Presumably, this would include unconditional positive regard. Evidently, the therapist is *graced* in order to approach patients this way. If not, grace could not be equated with anything the therapist could accomplish.

These thinkers are representative of the literature on grace as a vital human reality. What is absent from most of them, however, is an awareness of how the experience of grace *is the product of mourning*. And although these positions show grace

as it is lived in empirical situations, they leave unanswered the identity of the Other from whom such grace originates. From a hermeneutical-phenomenological perspective, this answer must both maintain the Otherness of grace, while showing its structure within our situated ways of being-in-the-world to be fully faithful to the phenomenon.

In light of the preceding, then, we can safely say that agency and mourning are partnered in a variety of ways. In the face of evil, agency is rendered impotent, either by choice, consequence, or nature. What is mourned is the good, which, depending on circumstances, can be self-actualization, community, or natural order and harmony. The liberation of imprisoned agency and the thawing of frozen mourning occurs through help from elsewhere, from an Other, that facilitates the recovery or re-discovery of the very things lost as a result of evil. The theorists I examine here enable us to understand the Otherness in evil and grace in ways that are faithful to the experience of it while illuminating the psychic interior addressed in the concepts of personality, psychopathology, and the therapeutic process.

Firm adherence to the equiprimordality of the *Eigenwelt*, *Mitwelt*, and *Umwelt* help elucidate how evil and grace operate as complementary, mourning phenomena. This approach prevents the errors of reductionism, dualism, and the misattribution of accountability for evil and grace in personal agency, the environment, or biological endowment. In order to accomplish this agenda, I will demonstrate that the complementarity between evil and grace is directly related to a particular relationship between agency and mourning in which agency *is expressed* in mournful ways. I will begin my demonstration by exploring the central issues in this study as articulated in the

debates between the fourth-century theologian, St. Augustine of Hippo and his opponents, Pelagius and Manichean Gnosticism.

## Chapter Two

### Augustine, Pelagius, and Manichean Gnosticism: Antecedent

#### Psychologies of Evil, Grace and Mourning

This chapter addresses the psychology of St. Augustine's theories of evil and grace and the Manichean and Pelagian challenges to Augustine's theories that I will interpret from a psychological perspective. My position is that both theological and psychological discourses are representations of existential realities. Therefore, I explore evil and grace as complementary phenomena that are existential ways of mourning-in-the-world. I will take the thought of Mani, Augustine, and Pelagius, discern their major insights related to evil and grace, and identify their respective positions on the underlying relationship between agency's possibilities and limitations and the limit nature of mourning. Through this discernment, I will demonstrate, in subsequent chapters, how aspects of these lines of thought are continued and debated in Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Erich Fromm, and Karl Jaspers.

#### *The Debate: Mani, Augustine, and Pelagius on Evil and Grace*

Manichean Gnosticism had a great influence on Augustine (Coyle, 1999, pp. 520-525). Mani, the founder of Manicheism, was born in 216 to a family that practiced their faith among the Elchasaites, a branch of Jewish Christianity (Coyle, 1999, pp. 520-521). He received two revelations as a young adult to bring to the world "the religion of the light (Coyle, 1999, p. 521)." Manicheism spread mainly during the third to the

seventeenth centuries from North Africa to China. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, one can see many similarities with various Eastern religious traditions, especially Buddhism, and even more so, with Zoroastrianism.

Manicheism, like most religions, begins by questioning the essence and origin of evil (Coyle, 1999, p. 521). Mani and his followers answer these questions by way of *Umwelt* explanations. However, it is important to note that the Manichean *Umwelt* entails more than our biological and/or physiological reality. It also encompasses a metaphysical cosmogony, which unfolds in three movements, dispensations, or phases (Coyle, 1999, pp. 521-523).

In the first phase, two co-eternal principles exist completely separate from each other in different worlds of substance. The *good*, created by the Father of Greatness, dwells within the substantial realm of light. The good is that which is agreeable and found in such experiences as peace, intelligence (as rationality) and order, and harmonious interaction. *Evil*, on the other hand, is that which is disagreeable. It is substantial darkness, exhibited as matter, and often personified as Satan both in Manichean thought and in later Judeo-Christian traditions. Understood in terms of geometric quadrangles, each respective realm is infinite in three sides of its expansion, while fused together in the final side.

During the second phase of this Manichean cosmogony, known as *the present condition of everything*, with the current and ongoing stage, turmoil within the state of darkness boils over and, subsequently, the dark principle desires and invades the light. Defending itself, the good principle evokes the Mother of Life, who in turn evokes the Primal Human, whose duty is to defend the light realm. Yet, evil overcomes the Primal

Human and captures his light. Eventually, the good realm frees the Primal Human, but evil and good intertwine such that *neither good nor evil are pure: each contains parts of the other*. This mixture of light and dark elements make up our present and visible world. Whatever is pleasing exhibits entrapped light, while whatever is disagreeable exhibits entrapped darkness.

The goal, then, is to free the imprisoned light. The Father of Greatness has various mechanisms to accomplish this task. The moon and the sun are used as collectors of light. A Third Messenger is sent to trick the demons to release the particles of light by appearing to them as a desirable being of the opposite sex. In short, the Third Messenger of the light realm seduces the light from the demons. In retaliation, the realm of darkness and evil has created a rival to the Primal Human. A male and female demon mated and produced Adam, the first earthly human, who embodies the world in miniature. The demon couple mated again and created Eve.

The realm of light countered by sending Jesus to earth as a human who suffers on the cross to fulfill his duty of releasing the realm of light from matter through saving knowledge. Upon Jesus' departure and return to the realm of light, his followers, the Elect, continue to carry forth his mission. This is not the same Jesus of Christian orthodoxy, as Manichean Gnostics consider him to be Satan in disguise. Being from the realm of light, Jesus was not made of flesh, presumably.

The third and final phase of this dramatic cosmogony is a future-oriented event when the *Umwelt* returns to the order of the first phase, when as much light is released as possible. At a future time, a great fire will erupt to complete the process. The universe will disappear and evil will once again be forced into the realm of darkness, separate



from the realm of light, though some light will be trapped with darkness and lost forever. At the same time, the infection of the darkness in the light will leave the good principle eternally wounded and diminished.

This cosmogony is *not* mythological for the Manichees. Light and darkness, good and evil, are substances and found in all aspects of existence (Coyle, 1999, p. 523). Food with bright colors such as grains, vegetables, fruits, and spices contains light particles. The light is released through digestive processes; therefore, ascetic discipline demands abstinence from any food that may constipate the digestive processes, such as meat, and even more so, prohibits killing any living thing. One remains interpersonally detached, pure in thought, diet, and nonviolent action. At death, one journeys back to the realm of light while the body is destined for absorption in the realm of darkness.

To summarize, the essential points of this cosmogony are the tension between the cosmos and existence; the eternal intertwining of good and evil as substances; the nature of good as harmony and agreeableness; the nature of evil as disagreeable, matter, and decay, the view of evil as something *elsewhere*; a hard deterministic view of substantial realms limiting human agency; the reading of history as capture and release; the yearn for purity; and the return to an original state of existence by way of asceticism and saving knowledge.

Augustine struggles to differentiate his own thought from that of Manichean positions, including the dichotomy and eternal incompatibility of body and soul, the hard determinism of the cosmos controlling the will, the eternal warfare in human beings and their duplicitous nature, the definition of 'good' as harmony and order as well as 'evil' as disorder and chaos, and the mistrust of materiality (Evans, 1999: 341). Nevertheless,

Augustine refutes a number of Manichean positions and developed his own view of evil and grace implying a particular interaction between agency and mourning.

As Augustine sees it, evil is a state of alienation from God, a willful decision to move away from God, chosen out of pride, resulting in concupiscence, an irremediably clouded memory, and an understanding so fixed in character that deliverance is futile without divine intervention. Formally argued as the *privatio boni*, or the absence of the good, Augustine mirrors Manichean thought by defining evil as the absence of order and harmony (1961, p., 148).

The difference rests in that Augustine views neither goodness, nor evil, as substantial, but instead defined by a particular relationship with God (1961, p. 148). Moreover, Augustine's insistence on the disruption of order and harmony as evidences of evil stem from his allegiance to Plotinus's emphasizes that all events happen by some cause. Augustine uses multiple concepts interchangeably with *privatio*: *perversus*, *perversitas*, *aversio*, *defectio*, *lapsus*, *deformatas*, *deviare*, *infirmare*, all empirical evidence for Augustine that "...evil is a happening that ought not to be, a *defectivus motus* (Evans, 1999: 94-95).

God is the creator and sustainer of that which exists. Therefore, anything that exists is good (1961, p. 148). Were evil to be substantial, its existence would be attributed to God's authorship and thus, God's accountability. This is something Augustine wants to avoid at all cost, while remaining monotheistic and affirming of the traditional attributes of God as omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent. At the same time, Augustine refuses to view God as substantial either, at least not in the material sense, lest God be subject to mutability and limitation, errors that Augustine feel are

central flaws to Manichean thought. God, for Augustine, is immaterial, immutable, infinite, and the one and only source of all existence, the One in whom we can finally rest (Ayres and Barnes, 1999: 390). This concern of others to secure God's immutability drifts back to Manichean suspicions of materiality, which, by nature, is mutable.

The self is immaterial as well, and is sustained only by its relationship to God. In fact, it is through introspection that the self comes to know God (1961, p. 143). We come to realize that our existence is created, sustained, and preserved by Being. This insight is illuminated through a clarity between one's memory, understanding, and will, Augustine's Trinitarian analogy of the God within us (Duffy, 1999, p. 28). Here, however, is where the problem lies with Adam's Fall.

Original sin is the result of Adam's turning away from God. In doing so, Adam's sin infects every subsequent generation of individuals such that our memory, understanding, and will are irreparably damaged. We can never trust our discernment, decisions, actions, and intentions to be entirely good. Although we still exercise a freedom of the will, we inherit an inborn tendency to choose evil if left to our own choices, which is exactly what happens in most instances. Augustine appeals to our own life experiences to verify his position.

Augustine never resolves the transmission of original sin conundrum, whether it be by a traducianist understanding, in which parents' souls are handed to children at birth, or a creationist view, in which transmission occurs through the child's body (Fitzgerald, 1999, p. 843). Augustine sees this dilemma as unresolvable for two reasons. The first is that God is ultimately incomprehensible. Second, as a result of transmitted original sin, our intellect, understanding, and will are too damaged to understand its transmission,

short of gracious intervention. Humanity's knowledge is facilitated by the grace of clarity, which is from God.

For Augustine, though, we inherit concupiscence by way of procreation, for sexual concupiscence is inherent in every sex act. Existentially, we can interpret transmission with attention to Being's equiprimordality. We inherit genetic and biological predisposition and formations at birth, an *Umwelt* reading of transmission. Yet, we are also born into a familial, social, economic, and political situation, what Heidegger called being "thrown," and what we consider a *Mitwelt* understanding of transmission. At the same time, we interpret the *Mitwelt* and the *Umwelt* by way of our own lived experience. Hence, our equiprimordial ways of Being-in-the-World in historically situated ways shows an inheritance of beliefs, comportment, and patterns of relating. In this way, transmission can be understood as *inherited ways of Being-in-the-World*.

Grace, for Augustine, is *solely* the activity of God. Augustine is arguing two points with Manichean thought. He is refuting any human effort in deliverance from evil. Secondly, Augustine realizes that more than "correct knowledge" is needed to overcome original sin. One needs a transformation and conversion of heart, that is, of attitude and affect, as well.

Most importantly, grace comes from elsewhere. Again, for Augustine, this Otherness, or spatially, this elsewhere, is not a physical or metaphysical elsewhere, but an *existential* one. The key to understanding Augustine's position empirically is to understand the interplay of Otherness (read existentially) and unmerited in the project of returning personal agency (freed from egoism) to God (the ground of meaning).

With grace, agency is quite passive. Any final liberation from evil is solely the work of God. Augustine does not believe that through effort we could choose the good, due to the intractable staining of original sin. By contrast, Hebraic, Aristotelian, and Thomistic thought all place more emphasis on the importance of personal choice and effort, and an attempt to align one's will with that of the Almighty, rather than relinquish it altogether (The phrase, "Thy will be done..." can be interpreted in either sense). Healing occurs when we forfeit the egoism of combative, split selves and move from self-absorption, the highest form of concupiscence, to the Ground of our relational existence. We, however, cannot do this by our own willpower. Irrevocably tainted by the sin of Adam, our healing must be a gift from God, unearned and unmerited (1961, pp. 40-41).

Yet, one can understand the grace of God in empirical ways that may lend insight into the therapeutic wisdom of Augustine's position. The therapist *addresses* the client, and kindles a readiness for transformation, but God is the healer, and grace is something undeserved. According to Augustine, though not all Christian theologians, grace also functions without any rules of merit. We receive God's grace when we do not deserve it. For Augustine, *charis* or God's love, is synonymous with *gratia*, or grace. Its potency is due to the fact that grace eludes the relational economy of expectations. Through our own will we instigate evil, which should result in our just punishment through the law of retaliation; however, grace nullifies such expectations through radical acceptance.

Pelagius concurs with Augustine on the culpability and freedom of the human will, as well as the delivering power of divine grace (TeSelle, 1999, pp. 633-640). Nevertheless, he places much greater emphasis on agency's capacity to overcome evil,

and his conviction that Adam's sin does not *congenitally* affect this capacity, a teaching which is deeply akin to the Rabbinic notion of the *yetzer ha'ra*. Since it is unlikely that he knew the Rabbinic sources, perhaps Pelagius' insistence on the will's accountability may come from his legal background as a student of the law. He was born in Britain in 380 and devoted himself to being a *monachus*, or *servus dei*, an ascetic in direct contact with the world. Even Augustine considered him to be a deeply passionate Christian apologist with the mind and intent of a zealous reformer. His chief interests were ethics and Christian practice. Evil, for Pelagius, is not from elsewhere, and grace, as deliverance, only works in cooperation with the will's intention and motivation for deliverance. Grace is the condition, outcome, or capacity of right action (TeSelle, 1999, p. 635). Examples include natural freedom, love, exhortation, the example and promise of Christ, justification through faith, enlightenment through baptism, and purification through the Holy Spirit.

Pelagius believes that God neither commands the impossible, nor condemns what is unavoidable, nor violates human freedom (TeSelle, 1999, pp. 634-635). Given this, human nature has a permanent *capacity* for sinlessness of act and will. The differentiation that allows Pelagius to hold this position is his distinction between 'natural' and 'voluntary.' We possess the natural capacity to achieve sinlessness, which is brought to recognition and exercised through free choice. Moreover, the distinction between 'natural' and 'voluntary' places Pelagius in direct opposition with those who assign blame for evil on human nature rather than human will (TeSelle, 1999, p. 633). The freedom to will and do the good is the essence of God's grace in us, if we take advantage of it. That God grants us the ability to choose and do the good does not mean

that God does it for us. This would negate the essence of human freedom for Pelagius. We are graced with the potential to actualize sinlessness, but we must do so ourselves. Pelagius reminds us that what is deepest in us is neither goodness, nor evil, but the capacity to *discern* the difference between good and evil (Burns, 1986, p. 44).

### ***Psychological Implications: A Hermeneutical Phenomenology***

The very language of clinical psychology belies strong Manichean proclivities. Therapists talk of “getting rid of the old tapes,” “becoming functional,” “gaining the right insights about oneself,” “becoming autonomous and differentiated from others,” “gaining peace of mind,” “ending conflict in a relationship,” “getting over mood instability,” and so forth. In fact, *any therapeutic venture that has “getting over,” or “arriving at,” a purer state of being than had been originally the case upon entering therapy is at heart Manichean.* At the same time, the preceding comments by patients suggest an active and productive agency that is counter to the hard determinism of Manichean thought. The relationship between agency and determinism is central to each theorist I explore and is certainly the core of Manichean doctrine.

Agency is only active, for Manichees, during practices of purity, detachment, and the reception of saving knowledge, all of which are geared to facilitate the return to the realm of light. The agentic is not culpable for evil because evil is a substantial force that comes from *elsewhere* and has always existed. Grace occurs when the Father of Greatness sends messengers with the knowledge to save humanity from the darkness. It is prevenient, initiating, and inherent in the scheme of things, but this gift of knowledge is not sustaining or cooperative. The Elect become the saving guides for others by

instructing them in the ascent to right doctrine and in ascetic disciplines of purity.

Correct knowledge and ascetic discipline help tainted practitioners shed evil.

Evil is not defined as deception, which is more the case in orthodox Christianity, for within the Manichean schema both Demons of Darkness and Messengers of Light utilize deception to accomplish their respective tasks. The heart of evil is disharmony, chaos, disruption, turmoil, disorder, and disagreeableness in general. From this perspective, fear, confusion, guilt, and especially grief and mourning experiences are considered evil effects on a clear, peaceful, and rational mind. In short, evil is substantial *Umwelt* infecting the *Eigenwelt*. The *Eigenwelt* experience of evil is *ego-dystonic*, originating from *elsewhere*. Mourning and agency are *opposing forces*, and at the mercy of the *Umwelt*. The miniscule freedom the agentic possesses is spent escaping the disturbance of mourning. *Mourning, though, is the consequence of matter's mutability. Its inevitability is neither instigated, nor resolved, by agency.*

This worldview is reinforced by the increasing trend in mental health to view the culprit disturbing affect as either a biochemical imbalance, or a genetic flaw. In his book on evolutionary psychology, Robert Wright notes how one could call certain genetic structures *evil*, such as genetic predisposition to certain illnesses, the “tooth and claw” law of survival, and natural selection (1994, p. 151). When biochemical and genetic culpability are emphasized as the unmoved movers of a patient’s moods, actions, and choices, the patient negates his own agentic responsibilities in relation to his own suffering, the suffering of others, and relief for both parties.

The Manichean bias hidden in clinical practice is that both evil (genetic predisposition, brain chemistry, and the devil) and grace (medication, saving knowledge



administered from the therapist as a member of the Elect) *are substantial and come from elsewhere*. Therapeutic care, then, of *Eigenwelt's* agency is relegated to merely processing limitations without possibilities in face of the *Umwelt*. The processing, though, is not mourning, for this would be seen as practices of the dark realm. The near universal resistance to mourning may have this bias deep in the collective mind. Elaine Pagels noted how this dread, although not all of evil, is certainly its ground (1979, pp. 143-146). On the contrary, Manichean therapy would help sufferers realize the transitory nature of their suffering, over-emphasize possibilities while under-emphasizing limitations, and keep their focus on the sought after realm of light--to "just look on the bright side of life" so to speak. Some brands of humanistic therapy practice without apology in this very way.

Suffice it to say that some therapeutic positions that minimize agency view the problem and solution as *elsewhere*. The goal of transcendence (as escape) toward undisturbed peace of mind in a pure and harmonious state of existence sounds very Manichean, and bears a striking resemblance to Freud's death instinct, as we shall see in the next chapter.

Augustine's yearning to connect with that which is immutable, his ambivalent struggle over the nature of human agency, particularly its duplicity, limitations, freedoms, and accountability, and his insistence that deliverance comes solely from 'elsewhere,' all may have as much to do with Augustine's own biography as it does with refuting Manichean thought. Augustine's family of origin was very unstable. Elaine Pagels reminds us that Augustine's father, Patricius, was "habitually unfaithful" to Augustine's mother, and Augustine himself blamed his father for transmitting his "brambles of lust"

to him. Augustine was moved by how his mother “patiently endured” her husband’s infidelity (1988, pp. 122-123). I concur with Alfred Winterstein’s view that psychological analysis is to show how philosophical (and theological) systems arise from the nature of their founders (Leavy, 1964, p. 69). Moreover, the personality is at least partially formed out of the thrown familial matrix into which individuals are born and reared. Augustine’s ambivalent alliance with his mother and his internalization of her view of sex as destructive while attempting to identify with his father, if Winterstein is correct, certainly gives a more personal foundation to Augustine’s views on various aspects of evil and grace, and hence, agency and mourning.

Augustine and his family struggled with a variety of crises and traumata including, but not limited to, economic hardship while Augustine attended school; Augustine’s own serious illness when he was six years of age, and his reception of repetitive, corporal punishment from his instructors, which Augustine rationalized as “tradition,” and later blamed himself for (1961, p. 35). Augustine’s extreme emphasis on agentic accountability for evil while at the same time highlighting agentic incompetence in deliverance from evil are surely influenced by these experiences, although to what degree is left to speculation.

Augustine also experienced several, personal losses in his life (Markus, 1999, pp. 498-504). In his late teens he took a mistress, who became the mother of his only son, Adeodatus. Adeodatus was born the same year that Augustine’s father, Patricius, died. Augustine is strangely silent about his father in the Confessions, though we know now that Patricius was baptized on his deathbed. Augustine’s best friend died when Augustine was twenty. Later, after Augustine’s baptism, Augustine’s mother pressured

him to marry a more “appropriate” woman than his mistress. He regretfully sent her home, but his son stayed with him. Monica died shortly thereafter. The *Mitwelt* relationship between Augustine and his mother, an enmeshed and ambivalent one, shaped his *Eigenwelt*. His mother’s goals for him became his own goals.

Three years after Monica’s death, Augustine’s only son, Adeodatus, died at the age of twenty. During the same year Augustine’s childhood friend, Nebridius, died as well. Hence, by the time he was ordained a priest in Hippo, at the age of thirty-seven, Augustine had lost both parents, two of his closest friends, bore the marks of severe corporal punishment, terminated his relationship with his only son’s mother (at his mother’s insistence), and lost his only son.

Although Augustine’s personal losses do not “explain” his notion of passion evil as the absence of the good, his search for an immutable God, and his struggle with the activity of the human will in any straightforward, reductionistic fashion, these experiences certainly *influenced* his thoughts on these matters. The final resting place he sought in God suggests a symbolic resolution to his abuse and bereavement: an assurance that when all is said and done, he will not be harmed or ever lose again (1961, p. 35). What could be more graceful?

His conclusion that grace is beyond any human effort may also have been *influenced by his* legitimate self-reproaches regarding his own paralysis of will, and/or failure to govern his passions. Augustine’s life experiences must have taught him that nothing is immutable except his God, and seeking immutability in mutability leaves one with disappointment and suffering. What may have drawn him to Manichean thought was

his search for immortality, immutability, and certainty of wisdom and truth—all outcomes of complicated bereavement.

Regardless of the impact his life experiences had on his theology, the psychological aspects of his theology are remarkable. His self-report in the Confessions, his search for God through self-reflection, and his emphasis on memory, will, and understanding, all move his theology from metaphysical speculation to psychological description, which I argue should be understood in existential categories.

Inherited, original sin is interesting in its own light if interpreted empirically. What is inherited, for Augustine, is a disordered will, due to a clouded memory and limited understanding, and hence, a disordered energy of desire. This is brought on by Adam's "will to power" to borrow a Nietzschean phrase, which Augustine sees as pride. One could not say that pride leads to concupiscence, because pride is a form of concupiscence. One seeks to be as God in order to compensate for a type of loss, and does so by progressing from need to want in material impulses, such as sexuality, eating, drinking (1961, pp. 233ff).

One's memory "forgets" one's origin through concupiscence. The essence of concupiscence and original sin is the tendency to turn penultimate aspects of life into ultimate ones, where desire becomes mere lust. We are thrown into concupiscence at birth. Hence, original sin is embedded in the *Umwelt*. We have bodily needs, such as a need for nutrition. The problem arises when need becomes want or insatiable desire, lust, or concupiscence.

Here, the Otherness of evil is experienced as being in conflict with an ego-dystonic self that continues to choose evil in spite of not wanting to do so. In existential-

phenomenological discourse there is a type of *Mitwelt within the Eigenwelt*. Current discussions of this phenomenon have led to the formulations of introjected object relations, the play of the unconscious on our consciousness, ideal versus real selves, true versus false selves, etc., the point being that we are split *within* ourselves prior to being split *from* each other. In this model, inner conflict *precedes* interpersonal conflict, and must be overcome to engender (interpersonal) peace.

The entire psychology of the privation of the good depends on a turning, defecting, or negation of what *is*. What *is*, that which is created, is created and sustained through its source in God. Without God, what *is* would fade into nothingness. What seems like a move of relational dependency to many psychologists, is, for Augustine, more like an appliance becoming unplugged from its source, or darkness as the absence of light, or starvation as the absence of food. Evil, therefore, is the absence of what *is*, which is experienced as disorder, chaos, deformity, and the absence of life and existence. These experiences are, nevertheless, for Augustine, part of a greater plan of goodness and grace, and if seen in the larger picture of things, actually make sense and have their place in the order of God's providence, even though not created by God.

Existential analysis addresses in part how patients respond to the givens of existence, of what *is*, and how individuals understand experiences within situated contexts. Yet, what *is*, *is* mutable. Mutability breeds mourning. Augustine addresses mourning, but only as an experience to be avoided, overcome, and/or limited. One central trope for Augustine is that mutability must be overcome; given that we too are mutable, we are limited in our agentic capacities for self-deliverance. Our deliverance must come from the Immutable One. Proudful agency, agency that *seeks to be God* through

assumptions of self-creation, leads to chaos and mourning. It fosters its own alienation. Destructive acts of compensation result in futile attempts at forcing the penultimate (e.g., status, others, sex, etc.) to fill the loss occasioned by self-created alienation, mistaking it for Ultimacy. This is an existential understanding of concupiscence.

Ultimacy, understood as the experience of alignment with the Ground of our Being (to use Paul Tillich's phrase), is sought in substitutions, or penultimate (less than ultimate) experiences. The one who searches for Ultimacy is searching for meaning and stability that is immutable and unchangeable, which penultimate, or mutable and limited experiences, things, or persons, cannot provide. Langdon Gilkey, commenting on the Augustinian perspective continued in Tillich and his own work, notes that no creature can provide Ultimacy (Gilkey, 1969, p. 322). The passionate search to fill the seat of Ultimacy; with less than ultimate options often shows itself in addictive behavior, melancholic demeanor, complicated bereavement, and violence.

Agentic created mourning and the concupiscence active in objectifying the penultimate as the saving factor, abound in this clinical situation. Yet, from an Augustinian perspective, the grace to unhook from this patient's self-created mourning comes from *elsewhere* and *otherwise* than the therapist or the group members themselves create. Yet, the grace that is *elsewhere* and *otherwise* occurs in the agentic interactions between participants. This line of thought will be addressed further in the last chapter.

Augustine's understanding of grace is more than a convenient position to take when faced with human limitations at self-transformation. It is not, as the cliché goes, turning toward God when all else has failed. Augustine's point is more that we are accepted in spite of ourselves, not as a result of our efforts. The psychology of grace is

predicated on its undeserved nature. If God is understood as the Ground of Being, grace could mean trust in the provision of undeserved care that occurs unexpectedly in situations where the person has no control over events. From an existential-phenomenological viewpoint, grace would mean the unexpected discovery of one's significance in the context and ground of meaning that bestows meaning. The empirical splendor of grace is felt through moments of being accepted without earning it, deserving it, and demanding it. Augustine offers a different economics of relationship. This point is Augustine's place of connection and disconnection with Pelagius.

Pelagius, too, sees grace as a gift from God, but believes that personal accountability entails agentic responsibility for attempting to overcome sin. It appears, though, that in his emphasis on the human will, Pelagius walks directly into what contemporary social psychologist would call the "error of misplaced attribution," blaming the individual for a social or systemic problem. Pelagius seems to de-contextualize the individual, sacrifice the *Mitwelt* and *Umwelt*, and raise the *Eigenwelt* to an almost ultimate status. His confidence in the individual's power overlooks the seriousness of the central cipher of the human condition under the reign of evil: "captivity (Ricouer, 1967, p. 282)."

Pelagius sees *Mitwelt* oppression in the social, economic, and political sense, though he understands them as consequences of evil freely chosen by individuals. If alive today, Pelagius would probably diminish responsibility to chemical imbalance, social and economic oppression, or dissociation (say, during crimes of passion) as mere excuses for disowned individual accountability. Hence, evil, for Pelagius, is neither nature, nor nurture, but an intentional and individual act of the will turning from God.

The good news, the grace, is that if one can choose evil, one can also choose the good. Pelagius notes that “ The glory of the reasonable mind is located precisely in its having to face a parting of the ways (Burns, 1986, p. 42).” One choice towards evil does not condemn a person to a permanent distortion of will, although habits may initiate character fixing, as Erich Fromm notes in his own thought. Each moment presents one with the opportunity for a return to righteousness and accountability.

The three positions we find at the end of this chapter regarding mourning and agency as foundational for the relationship between evil and grace are as follows: first, mourning is the outcome of material mutability, independent of the will, though it is overcome by extricating oneself from matter; second, mourning is created by the will in original sin and continues to this day as an inherent part of human nature, overcome only by a return to seeing one’s significance only in the larger context of God’s deliverance; and third, mourning can be either created or healed by the will at any given moment.

In the first (Manichean) position, evil is matter, which *causes* mourning due to mutability, while grace is a process of escape from matter, and by implication, from mourning. In the second (Augustinian) position, evil is not substantial, but is result of an initial and volitional turning away from that which *is*, thus, leaving each subsequent generation in alienation, and hence, in mourning. Grace is the experience of the Other’s invitation to return to radical acceptance and meaningful relationships. The will is free to accept or reject this invitation, which is also an invitation to acknowledge that we are at the mercy of that which is more than we are. In the final (Pelagian) position, evil is the result of willful alienation from right and just behavior, where grace is bestowed on those who choose to live a just and righteous life. We will see how each of these positions is



continued in the works of Freud, Jung, and Fromm. In the final chapter, I will argue that deliverance, from an existential-phenomenological perspective, occurs by way of *engaging* mutability and mourning--*without* concern for returns of self-validation or self-preservation--rather than avoiding, creating, or healing it.

## Chapter Three

### Freud, Evil, and Grace; On the Vicissitudes of Mourning

Sigmund Freud is regarded by some as the master-theorist on the interstices between sex, death, and violence, where demons and angels reside. Though it is not apparent at first glance, Freud is quite intrigued with the relationship between loss and evil. Due to his anti-religious leanings, he does not use the word *evil* often, nor, to my knowledge, does he ever use the word *grace*. It may therefore strike the casual reader that Freud and St. Augustine of Hippo, the father of Western theology, do not share a common perspective. On closer inspection, however, one sees that their affinities are remarkable.

As we shall see presently, both Augustine and Freud view the empirical realities of evil and grace, as complementary phenomena arising from the agentic activity of mourning. Agency is not separate from mourning; mourning *is* an agentic activity, even when it is experienced as an affliction. Freud's analysis of taboos surrounding the dead (1912) influence his distinction between mourning and melancholia (1917), which in turn influence his reflections on the uncanny (1919); the relation of aggression, masochism, and sadism to the death instinct (1920); the 'demonic' nature of repetition compulsion (1920); and the projection of lost parental figures into demonic personages (1923).

On the other hand, Freud unwittingly relies on graceful moments in analytic settings. Grace, again, is the experience of unearned, undeserved acceptance and validation of one's being by another. Grace manifests itself in Freud's writings during a reversal of melancholia into mania, which, for Freud, is a type of "false positive"

experience of grace. A more authentic experience of grace follows the ego's failure to master the anguish of separation during libidinal de-cathexis. Grace facilitates the normalization and acceptance of ambivalence related to loss by integrating tenderness and hostility. *Grace transforms melancholia into mourning.* Who or what provides grace? Freud notes, for instance, that de-cathexis of libido from a lost object takes a great deal of time and "mental expenditure," nonetheless "...*some influence supervenes* making it (a complex) superfluous ... (1917, p. 135, italics mine)". The particular way this supervision, or better yet intervention, becomes apparent is in light of Freud's description of evil.

***Evil: The Means to Melancholic Ends***

Freud observes that although most people understand evil as an immoral *act*, complex psycho-dynamics precede every act of destruction. The act is the outcome of such dynamics, and its victims are "collateral damage" to a project that begins before, and aims beyond, the destructive act itself. These acts of destruction (and the dynamics giving rise to them) are rooted in a natural, instinctual source, namely, the death instinct.

According to Freud, all instincts seek stimulation reduction. For instance, aggression is inclined to eliminate obstacles to and interruptions of libidinal discharge and/or cathexis. Nevertheless, cathexes are invariably frustrated, disrupted, or prevented from occurring by environmental contingencies of one sort or another. In order to avoid the trauma of these disruptions, phantasy yearns for a state of being freed from life's complications: a return to the tensionless, painless state of inorganicity, no matter how much discomfort this movement toward inorganicity may entail. Presumably, this

explains why some people endure repetitive, painful situations; a powerful instinct, often stronger than sexuality and aggression, which serve the struggle to survive, exists--the "death instinct."

The death instinct pulls persons towards inorganicity, and hence, away from life-creating energies, or *eros*. Yet, in the sense that *eros* is desire, we find a curious coupling and interplay between *eros* and when persons experience a "desire for inorganicity." David Bakan takes this interplay between *eros* and the death instinct to a cellular level. Bakan argues that cancer is caused by the death instinct as well. He grounds his argument in physiology, arguing for a relationship between asexual reproduction and the death instinct (1968, p. 174). He states that "...there is a parallelism between what takes place between the organism and the environment, including other organisms, and what takes place within the organism on the cellular level (1968, p. 175)."

Giving equal weight to relational and agentic modes of being as he does to physiology, Bakan goes on to explore the "diffusion" of the death instinct on a cellular level, which he believes may be linked to narcissism. The defusion is a movement away from social interaction and connection. According to Bakan, empirical data suggests that various manifestations of this process can be seen in cancer patients, such as sexual maladjustment, inhibition of maternity, lack of social involvement, and the loss of a significant person as precipitants of cancer (1968, pp. 183ff). But these could be the result, rather than the cause of the illness, and empirical studies of cancer patients do not support Bakan's theoretical conclusions. Nonetheless, at a conceptual level Bakan attempts to extend Freud's work toward a more equiprimordial integration of the *Eigenwelt, Mitwelt, and Umwelt*.

Thus Freud believes accountability was not an activity opposed to the instinctual life (as he is typically read). On the contrary, he challenges us, for instance, to take responsibility for the evil in our dreams, where the prevalence of intrapsychic censorship shows the existence and strength of human kind's evil nature. So, at first sight, it appears that Freud's position is already at odds with Augustine's position; Augustine does not believe that evil is either substantial or a part of creation, but an agentic act of disobedience. For Freud, the point that evil is related *to* the instincts does not mean that the instincts *themselves* are evil. To take the latter interpretation would be to read Freud as a latter day Manichean. From a theological perspective, this is analogous to grounding evil in matter itself.

For Freud, though, as for Augustine, evil does not reside in created matter *per se*, but is comprised of destructive acts left in the wake of *agentic disorders* in association *to* the instincts. Dream distortion (and its overcoming) *are* agentic activities, which show the dreamer to be ambivalent, duplicitous, and unconscious of him (or her) self, but active throughout. In fact, deception and self-deception are agentic activities that Freud and Augustine take to be integral parts of human nature as evidenced by its presence in childhood. Freud surmises that defensive maneuvers commonly seen in childhood operated to ward off helplessness, vulnerability, and terror in the face of death and loss, which for primitive man, engenders the fear of the demonic.

In *Totem and Taboo*, Freud establishes the foundation for his theory of compulsive neuroses and his distinction between melancholia and mourning. Freud contends that fears of and taboos toward the dead are related to primitive beliefs that the recently dead are demons seeking retaliation or reunion with the living. The deeper the

attachment to the dead, the greater the reason to fear them. The unconscious, writes Freud, does not distinguish between good and bad deaths. All deaths are the same: “killed by evil wishes.” Obsessive self-reproaches promote a type of self-contempt that punishes the bereaved person’s failure to prevent the loved one’s death or other significant loss. Clinically, this type of agentic comportment expresses itself through retrospectively asking questions like “what if?” and “if only?” Freud considers obsessive self-reproaches to be “pathological expressions of mourning (1912, p. 80),” which, I believe, became associated with (and more fully formulated as) melancholia. For Freud, though, self-contempt masks a more disturbing truth: that the bereaved is “...not displeased with the death, and which would have been brought about sooner had it been strong enough to do so (1912, p. 80).” Freud writes further that “...such hostility, hidden in the unconscious behind tender love, exists in almost all cases of intensive emotional allegiance to a particular person,” and represents the “...prototype of the ambivalence of human emotion (1912, p. 80).”

Compulsive neuroses develop in reaction to the unconscious hostility. We compulsively protect ourselves from the painful experience of our “satisfaction with the demise” by *displacing* our hostility onto the lost object or loved one (1912, p. 81). Hence, demons are personified projections of our hostile feelings. Taboos related to death originate, therefore, from the antagonism between our conscious, private grief and our unconscious, hostile satisfaction with the dead one’s departure. Ambivalence is an equiprimordial phenomenon, an existentialle, that sobriety accepts.

I argue that our “satisfaction with the demise” and its accompanying hostility is a primitive reaction to disrupted attachments, and the reason why the death and loss of the

“nearest and dearest” is so dangerous. Sociability and love blighted by separation and loss through events beyond our control produce *Eigenwelt* feelings of betrayal, vulnerability, and rage, the latter being an infantile protest against an insensitive and impersonal *Umwelt*. We yearn for inorganicity to escape the maelstrom of feelings associated with unpredictable and uncontrollable events. But the will to end suffering in this way results in the annihilation of the self, the other, or both, if they become obstacles to achieving inorganicity. The real prohibition or taboo, then, is the numinous fear of our own destructive rage that will sacrifice everything to achieve *absolute* peace, harmony, and stability, which *is* death.

When we experience loss, agency is faced again with the recurrent helplessness and vulnerability of childhood on one hand, and destructive, infantile rage on the other. Agency can go in at least two directions. One direction is the painstaking task in which “...each single one of the memories and hopes which bound the libido to the object is brought up and hyper-cathexed, and the detachment of the libido from it accomplished (1917, p. 126).” The other direction agency can pursue results in melancholia.

Mourning presupposes agentic ambivalence in the midst of mutability, a seemingly impossible task that recalls to mind the question, “Can one, would one, voluntarily detach from such cathexes and submit to a reality of ambivalence and mutability?” Freud’s answer is clear and mimics Augustine’s answer to the question of self-deliverance from concupiscence: “...it may be universally observed that man never willingly abandons a libido-position, not even when a substitute is already beckoning to him (1917, p. 126).” If the seductive pull of inorganicity is averted, in spite of the

horrifying prospects presented by the reality principle, agency bargains with finitude, and melancholia is the result.

Melancholia develops when we deny finitude by hating the lost love-object for its absence; we refuse to accept *Umwelt* contingency by retreating to the boundlessness of phantasy, our love-objects securely in tow. Hating presumes abandonment is *chosen* and not *inevitable*. This conviction reinforces the fantasized continuation of disrupted attachments after the fact. One sustains lost love-objects through intrapsychic transfusion of libido, resulting in the merger of the other-as-self. The result, though, is that agency now hates itself, or at best, is ambivalent towards itself.

Freud points out that in "...the clinical picture of melancholia dissatisfaction with the self on moral grounds is by far the most outstanding feature (1917, p. 128)," hence, the relentless self-pounding. Morality presumes agentic choice in the midst of complex relationships and natural contingencies. Now the other-as-self is the recipient of punishment. This is a very dangerous state of existence that is often averted only through displaced aggression and, at times, destruction of the other, who, ironically, is usually the other who attempts to pry loose the ego from the dead object. As far as the fear of demons goes, we *project* our rage onto them or onto the dead loved one, while in melancholia we *introject* our rage from the lost love-object onto ourselves. Either way, the destructive rage presumes a justified and entitled reparation, which functions also to distract from the even more savage truth that "...*the object-cathexis proved to have little power of resistance, and was abandoned....*" (1917, p. 131, italics mine)." The melancholic represses this unmentionable experience, only to have it return to consciousness in uncanny moments.



Freud uses demonic imagery in his discussion of the uncanny, in which one is overcome by a strange sensation of something lost that nonetheless returns to consciousness. The lived spatiality of “the return” provides us with a phenomenology of ‘Otherness’ that need not be supernatural, since Freud is still referring to processes of the mind. The uncanny, as in the return of the repressed, returns our *Umwelt to our Eigenwelt*, and heightens our loss of innocence. Freud embarks on an interesting analysis of the uncanny, which shows that what frightens us is that which leaves us uncertain. Freud (1919) reinforces his analysis with the use of a story, *The Sandman*, which he interprets as uncanny because of the fear of the loss of eyes, signifying a fear of unknowing, vulnerability, and helplessness.

Yet, this uncertainty is not complete unknowing. In fact, it is profoundly ambiguous. The uncanny is something that is not known, because it is repressed, yet returns to us as familiar. Freud goes on to give several examples of how the evil eye and corpses often evoke our sense of the uncanny. Freud concludes, “...an uncanny experience occurs when infantile complexes which have been repressed are once more revived.... (1919, p. 249).” The infantile complexes Freud refers to originate in “infantile anxiety around silence, solitude, and darkness, ...from which the majority of human beings never become quite free (1919, p. 252).” It is in such states that “the repressed” returns, being, chiefly, an awareness of our mortality.

The uncanny is the blending of the frightening with the familiar (1919, p. 220). What makes something frightening is the uncertainty of the familiar. The repressed familiar is the *helplessness of preventing abandonment in the severance of libidinal cathexis*. This feeling is unknown, because it is repressed, but becomes familiar upon

resurfacing. These experiences slip from secrecy, as “...everything is uncanny that ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light (1919: 225).”

The uncanny arises when what *seems* to have been surmounted returns, including “...all the strivings of the ego which adverse external circumstances have crushed, and all our suppressed acts of volition which nourish in us the illusion of free will (1919, p. 236).” The identification of the ego with the lost object in melancholia creates an uncanny experience in which the “...ego had not yet marked itself off sharply from the external world and from other people (1919, p. 236).” Corpses that appear alive, inanimate objects that appear animate, de ja vu experiences, and so forth, are all uncanny because of the blur between reality and illusion, most pointedly, between what is real and what is lost. Moreover, the Sandman always appears as the “disturber of love (1919, p. 231)” in the story, such as in separating Nathaniel from his betrothed. The Sandman severs libidinal ties. The Sandman is, metaphorically, the uncontrollable nature of life that ruptures attachments beyond any hope of repair. We are paralyzed by the dilemma of not being able to keep our eyes open, for fear of blinding intrusion, and of not being able to see with our eyes closed. This helplessness, often masked by rage, is met with more resistance and denial in agentic disorders such as ‘the omnipotence of thoughts,’ and the compulsion to repeat, which are both attempts to master loss, or at least to master reality’s unpredictability—a phenomenon fully unfolded in Beyond the Pleasure Principle.

In Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1920), Freud presents his theory of the death instinct. To summarize, Freud notes that in addition to sexual and survival instincts, the organism is endowed with an innate striving to escape suffering and uncertainty by

reverting to an inorganic state. In effect, Freud sees the yearning for death as a form of pining for a lost world, one free of suffering. Freud indicates that the death instinct could be directed toward or away from the organism itself. External aggression is a kind of ‘detour’ that prolongs and protects life from both external and internal annihilation. But by the same token, self-destruction is brewing when external violence is operative since aggression directed outward merely defers the moment of reckoning until another day. Hence, to see evil as *the violent act* itself is to miss the dynamic giving rise to the singular act, namely, a self-destructive yearning for annihilation. In short, homicidal tendencies protect against suicidal ones, and both forms of violence, by my reckoning, are rooted in unresolved grief.

Another reason for positing the existence of the death instinct was the observation that many analysands create and repeatedly reproduce painful life situations, even when more pleasurable ones are accessible to them. Freud calls this a “repetition compulsion” and uses the idiom of the demonic to describe the experience of being in its grip. The compulsion to repeat arises as an attempt to master absence, to be able to choose when and how that which is beyond our grasp visits itself upon us. Freud goes on to note how war neuroses exhibit a similar pattern. He calls them “fate neuroses” for those needing to go through some tragedy over and over again. I argue that repetition compulsion is a symptom of melancholia.

Remembering that ambivalence is central to melancholia, I offer another interpretation of repetition compulsion. Freud believes that the compulsive neuroses are the behavioral enactment of prohibitions, which, again, ward off projections of our *own* destructiveness. In this sense, we are hung between a vicious cycle of destructive desire

towards inorganicity and the prohibition against it, with neither option feeling free. So, in spite of the power of *Eros*, Freud finds an equal if not more masterful adversary, later called *Thanatos*, which leads Freud to pronounce, “The aim of all life is death.”

Freud’s (1923) most focal commentary on evil comes from his discussion of the possessed destitute artist, Christoph Haizmann, who makes a pact with the devil as a result of his melancholic state at the death of his father. The Devil, in Freud’s eyes, became a father substitute for Christoph. This case, published over a decade after Totem and Taboo, ties together taboos or prohibitions in relation to the dead, the vicissitudes of projecting destructive rage onto the Devil, and melancholic displacement of punishing rage onto the self via the introjected self-as-lost-other.

Haizmann sacrifices his soul for the Devil’s enactment of his father’s presence for nine years, which, as Freud notes, is the number of months in pregnancy. Haizmann desires the womb, which translates as inorganicity. Moreover, the Devil appears to Haizmann in different guises, ever increasing in their fearful attributes, from breasts to horns. Aside from expressing some obvious fears and wishes, the Devil’s metamorphoses demonstrate Haizmann’s own incremental projection of rage onto the Devil-as-father, which, again, is the impulse of melancholia.

Freud notes that “...quite possibly the whole conception of demons was derived from the extremely important relation to the dead.... nothing terrifies so much as the *influence of mourning* on the origin belief in demons as the fact that demons were always taken to be the spirits of persons not long dead (1913, pp. 857-858, italics mine).” Our deliverance must come from elsewhere.

***Grace: Ananke's Kenosis***

Grace, as we define it, is an unearned and an unmanipulated gift of radical acceptance without concern for reciprocity. In the process of mourning and melancholia, two types of grace are potentially present. In one case, melancholia reverses into mania. The experience of mania can mask as grace, giving us an illusion of grace, or a “false positive.” Nevertheless, the manic somehow breaks free or masters the complex occasioned by the loss, or manages to jettison it through “...some influence (that) supervenes making it superfluous (1917, p. 135).” Freud does not clarify what he means by “some influence,” but explains his position by pointing to instances where chance shifts the melancholic’s situation in life, as when suddenly “winning a large sum of money,” or when “a man finds himself in a position to throw off at one blow some heavy burden (1917, p. 135).”

In mania, a “discharge of joyful energy” occurs, as does “an increase in readiness to engage in all kinds of actions (1917, p. 136).” Freud goes on to suggest that in mania, the “...ego *must* have surmounted the loss of the object (1917, p. 136, italics mine),” thus freeing the anti-cathected energy. It is as if Freud is puzzled himself how this is done, and/or by what external intervention this is accomplished. This experience of chance *as* grace is most often short lived and has the telltale sign of manic desperation to re-attach the freed libidinal energy to another mutable object as someone running “...after new object-cathexes like a starving man after bread (1917, p. 136).” Each new cathexis starts the process over, in which loss occurs and melancholic bargaining resumes.

Another type of grace-ful experience occurs when “...the work of mourning is completed and the ego becomes free and uninhibited again (1917, p. 127).” Who or what intervenes to facilitate this work? Here Freud is silent. Where chance is the undeserved and unmerited god in a melancholic reversal into mania, Ananke (necessity) is the undeserved, unmerited and intervening force in mourning. Necessity, contingency, and the reality principle invite us to engage our mutability rather than to continually mistake mutability for an illusory immutability—including, and most importantly, the illusion of inorganicity.

In The Ego and the Id, Freud argues that the ego gives itself up because it “feels hated and persecuted by the super-ego” as noted in the moralistic self-contempt of the melancholic (1923, p. 233). Here, giving up the ego avoids the super-ego’s reprimands, and is akin to yearning for inorganicity. At the same time, even with the lack of return that acceptance of finitude and life’s “reasonable misery” may afford, the ego can feel “protected and saved” by the superego once finitude *is* accepted. “To the ego,” Freud writes, “living means the same as being loved—being loved by the superego (presumably due to a balance between and compliance with both the id and the superego) (1923, p. 233).” Other commentators suggest more Freudian possibilities of grace.

In his critique of Freud, Ricouer points out that after Beyond the Pleasure Principle, a twofold shift of emphasis takes place. There is a movement away from the inclination to destroy, via sadism and masochism, which is biological and instinctual, toward more ‘cultural’ expressions of this phenomenon (1970, p. 294). Yet, Ricouer correctly notes that “repetition is not destruction (1970, p. 314),” meaning that mastery,

as noted in young Ernst's *fort-da* game, could be an *inspirational* endeavor rather than a masochistic or sadistic one.

Ricouer reads the pleasure principle as a tendency to restore things to an *earlier* state of being, thus related to the tendency to maintain homeostasis in the *present* state of affairs. This being the case, nothing, as Ricouer sees it, is actually *beyond* the pleasure principle except, ironically, *Eros* (1970, pp. 318ff). *Eros* must disrupt inertia in order to achieve union, while the death instinct destroys in order to restore conditions for inorganic life (1970, p. 323). The destructive act is a *means* toward an end. Rightly or wrongly, Ricouer believes that Freud had in mind more of a resignation to the universal sense of suffering rather than a desire to re-instate inorganic life (1970, p. 324). It follows, then, that grace is what allows an individual to embrace a reasonable misery, or in other words, a realistic finitude.

Finally, Ricouer elicits an unexpected (if somewhat dubious) perspective on grace from Freud by asking whether 'reality' and 'necessity' are synonymous. Ricouer answers this by highlighting the role of agency in this assessment. For Freud, reality is "the world shorn of God (1970, p. 327)." It is a world in which Ananke, the deity for all those who have "renounced the father" and have "left the heavens to the angels and the sparrows (1970, p. 327-328)," rules. Yet, in spite of Freud's atheism, and clear textual support for his interpretation, Ricouer suggests that "...the touchstone of the reality principle... would be the *victory of the love of the whole over my narcissism, over my fear of dying, over the resurgence in me of childhood consolations* (1970, p. 328, italics mine)."

David Bakan argues for an interpretation of Freud that includes more attention to the agency of the person. Recalling Haizmann's projected image of the Devil, Bakan believes that "Satan is a projection in which the agentic in the human psyche is personified...to cope with despair by ejecting the agentic from himself (1966, p. 39)." Bakan goes on to clarify that the natural history of Satanism reveals four stages that can be interpreted as four stages of this process: separation, mastery, denial, and beholding that which has been denied (1966, p. 45). This last phase is also what Bakan calls the "therapeutic phase," which is where he believes Freudian grace can be found. "Playing with the Devil" allows one to enter into the deepest aspects of rejected parts of one's agency in order to heal the separation (1966, p. 45). Bakan believes the heart of this process is the rule of free association.

The Christian notion of grace as infantile, writes Bakan without apology, allows one to "play with the Devil" without fearing "ultimate catastrophe." Bakan puts it succinctly: "Being in grace allows the suspension of belief; for suspension of belief entails suspension of mastery. (1966, p. 94)." This allows one to explore taboo and rejected aspects of oneself. Bakan notes that historically the Devil enters when "...all else fails, which we can translate into psychological terms as the failure of the ego to master.... (1966, p. 95)." Healing is the graceful relinquishing of one's need to master in order to "be alright" with disowned aspects of oneself. Both therapist and patient need considerable courage to undertake this project.

Sharon MacIsaac (1974, pp. 107ff) shows that Freud viewed human nature in ways similar to St. Paul and Augustine, i.e., as being subject to persistent, internal conflict, and what we have called, thus far, agentic duplicity. Like Freud, however,



MacIsaac interprets the “split” as a function of a conflict between a person’s natural and biological or instinctual needs and the normative pressures, constraints and ideals in his social, cultural, and moral environment, rather than between his “flesh” and some supernatural order. Interpreting this dilemma in the language of existential-phenomenology, there is a conflict between a person’s *Mitwelt* and their *Umwelt*, both of which somehow take place within one’s *Eigenwelt*. The conflict must be accepted to some extent as a central part of existence, which is the goal of grace.

MacIsaac addresses how St. Paul’s understanding of a man without grace (Romans 7:14-25) parallels Freud’s description of unconscious activity (1974, pp. 107-108). The two profound truths of original sin include that “man is divided against himself,” and that “...he is formed by his environment at a level anterior to his choice (1974, p. 115).” MacIsaac shows how concupiscence, understood not as desire itself, but as the inability to have choice over desire, sees this road to evil healed by “truthful love” in the resolution of the transference dynamic. The resolution of the transference releases one to love freely again. Grace provides the healing by way of these transference dilemmas. The aim of all life may be death, but the death of our need to master reality may be the way to live again.

### ***Freud’s Augustinian Psychology***

Freud is more Augustinian than Freud or his readers ever suspected. Both Freud and Augustine see evil as arising from agency-*as*-desire. Both see the path to evil as propelled by prideful attempts to escape finitude, particularly unknowing, vulnerability, and powerlessness, which are existentialles first experienced in childhood. Both are

aware of the duplicity of agency, which is a split between the *Umwelt* and the *Eigenwelt* that wreaks havoc in the *Mitwelt*. Both see volitional disorders as attempts to recover an illusory state of limitless transcendence. Both are dependent on unearned, undeserved, and grace-ful (external) interventions to facilitate mourning of lost idealism that can foster the acceptance of finitude.

Both thinkers understand the utter dependency on an Otherness to extract us from the grip of agentic disorders as expressed in concupiscence and repetition compulsion. For Augustine, external intervention is accomplished by grace-ful countering of expectations, where our deserved punishment is met with unexpected and unconditional acceptance of our finitude. For Freud, grace-ful intervention occurs in the mystery of the consulting room, where movement from melancholia to mourning dissuades the death pull of repetition compulsion, including, as Ricouer intimates, the hope hidden in the impulse to repeat. Hence, the complementarity of evil and grace as empirical, though nonetheless ‘limit,’ phenomena is located *in* finitude itself.

Freud believes transformations do occur, for example, as hate changes into love, and melancholia becomes mourning. Freud respects how someone could conclude that an external Being is responsible for such transformations when we “...find ourselves in overwhelming danger of a real order which it believes itself unable to overcome by its own strength... (1923, p. 234),” even though Freud does not draw the same conclusions for himself. More directly, although Freud knows that transformation occurs internally, as in the movement from the unconscious to consciousness, he still does not know exactly *how* it occurs. “Here,” Freud confesses, “we are met at the outset by an uncertainty (1917, p. 137).”

Charles Matthews comments that "...it is only by appreciating how Augustine's work radically lacks, and is incompatible with modernity's belief in perfectionism, that we come to understand his proposal rightly, or feel its force fully (2001, p. 203)." Matthews continues that subjectivism is likened to perfectionism in that both are suspect and illusory given the nature of original sin. Both presume that Gnostic purity and Pelagian "know how" are doomed from the start by a prideful and concupiscent will.

Likewise for Freud, projection and displacement "fool us" as the unconscious reminds us time and time again of our duplicitous nature, the tenacious grip of attachments, and our refusal to give up lost loves. *The complementarity of evil and grace in this view hinges on the acceptance of inevitable contingency, finitude, and mutability, or the lack thereof.* Agentic freedom is not a choice of finitude or infinitude, but an *acceptance or rejection* of possibilities inherent *within* limitations. *Eigenwelt* finitude is clouded judgment and limited wisdom. In the *Mitwelt*, we experience the quality of relationships as irreducibly ambivalent. Most importantly, the *Umwelt* is both the Sandman, the disrupter of attachments, and chance events that help us through libidinal de-cathexis in spite of our refusal to "let go."

We can respond to and care for suffering, according to Charles Scott "...without the hope of curing it (1990, p. 119)." Scott goes on to ask and answer an Augustinian-Freudian question: "Can we live in the perpetual mourning that is here prescribed without becoming morbid and ineffectual? Our most proper living is found...in a demanding alertness that intensifies our sense of suffering in the absence of its resolution or removal (1990, p. 119)." Although our judgments are suspect, our minds clouded, our consciousness influenced by processes beyond our awareness, and though we cannot

eliminate ambivalence, loss, and suffering, we can nonetheless mourn the loss of mastery, embrace our finitude, and release our lost loved ones with the aid of an Other's interventions. As I will show in the next chapter, however, the Other, for Carl Jung, resides *within* the psyche, though nonetheless arises out of the limit nature of mourning.

## Chapter Four

### On Splitting and Integrating: Jung on Evil, and Grace and Mourning

In this chapter I present Carl Jung's theory of evil and grace and its relationship to agency and the limit nature of mourning. Jung's position has a Gnostic flavor to it, despite his occasional protests to the contrary, and, in existential-phenomenological language, carries an *Eigenwelt* bias. At the same time, however, Jung holds numerous points of similarity with Augustine on evil and grace. In the end, though, Jung maintains his *Eigenwelt* bias by his insistence on Otherness as residing *within* the Self, rather than between selves.

#### *Jung on Evil: On the Precariousness of Moral Judgment*

St. Augustine's "circumlocution" that evil is nothing more than the absence of the good, appalls Jung, who argues that evil is a very real and active force in the world (1965, p. 329). At the same time, Jung resists any implication that evil is a physical, substantial force or entity. According to Jung, there are other 'facts' besides physical facts, such as psychological facts, or facts of meaning (1952, pp. 521-522). Jung offers instead an understanding of evil as the polar opposite of the good in conscious, moral judgment (1958, p. 168). Murray Stein elaborates on Jung's point by noting that "...evil is not a product of nature...it is a product of consciousness. In a sense, evil comes into being only when someone makes the judgment that some act or thought is evil (1996, p. 7)." For Jung, then, evil is a moral category, a conscious value judgment about enactments of "a sheer will for destruction (1952, p. 635)." For Jung, judgments are good when they

support harmony and stability, and evil when they disrupt the goals of human life and well being, and feed our diseases (Stein, 1996, p. 10).

With this position we already see the impact of Carpocratian Gnosticism. Carpocrates, the second century philosopher, (as interpreted by Ireneaus, and reported with admiration by Jung) teaches that evil and good are merely human opinions and that soul must detach from the “prison of the body” to reach its destination in the immaterial One (Jung, 1938, p. 77). Admitting that these judgments are relative (what is good for one may be evil for another), Jung nonetheless insists that relativity need not nullify the existence of evil (1965, p. 329). The difficulty lies in the reliability of our consciousness to accurately ascribe moral judgments.

In his memoir, Memories, Dreams, and Reflections, Jung writes: “In practical terms, this means that good and evil are no longer self-evident. We have to realize that each represents a judgment. In view of the fallibility of all human judgment, we cannot believe that we will always judge right... (1965, p. 329).” Nevertheless, in spite of evil being a relative category of moral judgment, Jung believes the phenomenon should be investigated and addressed (Stein, 1996, p. 11). Jung’s investigation focuses on the relationship of the unconscious to moral judgment. He believes the unconscious disrupts consciousness through repression, projection, the formation of what he calls the ‘shadow,’ and its accompanying complexes.

The shadow is actually more of an active process than a thing, which may be better understood if described as a *process* as *shadowing*. Shadowing is the process of repressing and projecting undesirable tendencies in the self (1938, p. 78). These tendencies are not always evil in themselves, or wholly bad, but “inferior, primitive,

unadapted, and awkward” experiences of ourselves (1938, p. 78). We repress these experiences to preserve the ego ideal (Whitmont, 1991: 12). Anything that challenges our idealized self-image must be repressed. The preservation of Gnostic-like perfectionism and purity are at stake.

Repression is not so much an unconscious activity as it is a ferrying away of unwanted experiences from conscious awareness to the unconscious. Repression is not unconscious *of* itself and, therefore, is an agentic activity that assesses threat to the person’s self-image (persona). Repression is likened to the bargaining stage of mourning in which deals are made to deceive oneself into denying the actuality of a loss. As such, repression is an act of bargaining that seeks to secure the reign of the ego ideal. What is repressed is transformed from an Otherness of what is *unwanted* as a part of the self to a lived experience of Otherness that is *not* a part of the self, and, instead, is a part of someone or something else. Jung considers this process ‘projection.’

As I argue that repression is a bargaining stage of mourning, the mourning of lost ego-idealism, I also argue that projection is a type of mourning. Projection is just the opposite of the internalization that occurs in Freud’s understanding of melancholia; projection *externalizes* what threatens the ideal ego, where melancholia internalizes it. Yet, like melancholia, projection maintains connection with what is projected through its “passionate attachment” with what one hates or finds revolting. Hate itself belies a disappointment of “what could have been the case,” thus ascribing agentic choice to projected materials. In its extreme form, projection can lead to violence in which one tries to kill off that which can disturb the ego-ideal. The project of upholding purity, a Gnostic ideal, more often than not accompanies the attitude of those committing hate

crimes. Why do we obsess over “the enemy?” Without the contaminating scapegoat there would be no need for purification. Jung points out that our very fear of evil and our proclivities to project evil onto others precludes a reasonable and insightful ownership of evil as our own psychic phenomenon (1957, pp. 96-101). In Jungian terms we could say that our agency engages in counter-pulls: one seeking an integration of opposites and the other wanting to jettison any threat to the imaginary ego -ideal.

So, in projection one mourns in two ways. One mourns the loss of imaginary perfection that is shattered by that which is subsequently repressed and projected. Repression and projection are processes that are enacted, albeit unconsciously so, to protect imaginary perfection from any data that threatens to topple this project. One also mourns the loss of integration and wholeness as a result of repression and projection. Achieving wholeness entails an integration of the very aspects of the self that would dethrone the self’s imaginary perfection, leaving the self at a loss with either choice: lose imaginary perfection or completeness. Admittedly, I am reframing Jungian understandings of repression and projection as agentic processes of mourning. But the upshot is that *hatred of the enemy belies a pining for re-integration and a return of the prodigal aspects of our selves*. The first step towards the process of integration is to locate and integrate the shadow, which has its own perils and further potential for complicated mourning.

We recognize the shadow by locating what is projected. As repression moves into projection the chronicity of this complicated mourning increases the intensity of that which is repressed and projected such that a ‘complex’ develops that is experienced as completely Other-than-ourselves, yet ‘possesses’ us all the more. Although Jung does not



explicitly address evil in his theory of complexes, experientially being “caught” in a complex is akin to being *possessed* by something that utterly defies one’s conscious volition and judgment (1938, p. 331).

We find ourselves behaving in ways that we deplore, but we are unable to rid ourselves of such comportment in the world. Jung notes that our reasonable attempts to repress and project these ‘inferior’ experiences will in time merely provoke a revolt (1938, p. 79). The possessive quality of the ‘complexes’ is also likened to a boomerang in which the harder we throw it away, the harder it returns to us. Agency experiences itself as helpless in relation to the complexes, as being possessed by forces that seem to take on an agency of their own, or at least an ego-dystonic *counter agency* that takes issue with us. Yet, quite like a Malaysian monkey trap, in which a monkey is held captive only by its own grip on a piece of fruit that makes it impossible for both its balled fist and the grasped fruit to escape a pot’s narrow hole, what is experienced as the Other’s possession of us is in turn held in place by our own refusal to release that which has us in its grip. We cannot release the complex because we refuse to mourn its loss. Again, we also seek some form of reunification with the very content of the complex we simultaneously oppose.

Jung understands a complex as “...a psychic fragment split off owing to traumatic influences or certain incompatible tendencies (1928, p. 121).” Splitting, traumatic influences, and incompatibility are experiences of loss. Remembering the pull towards integration and the reconciliation of opposites, the desire for such integration is as strong as, if not stronger than, the desire to cast away psychic fragments that threaten our

imaginary ego. Once again, as with repression and projection, we mourn the loss of our imaginary integrity, yet pine for the integration of what we have “sent away.”

It is vital to remember two points at this juncture. One point is that this entire drama of repression, projection, complex formation, and integration all take place *within* the self. The second point is that Jung uses personified and anthropomorphic language to describe psychic energies taking place within the self. I explore these points later. Meanwhile, however, Jung knows that the lived experience of Otherness makes it as originating ‘elsewhere.’ Evil and grace are numinous experiences and, therefore, are experiences Other than mere conscious awareness. Jung writes that “...man is much more the victim to his psychic constitution than its inventor (1938, p. 98).” Yet, at the same time Jung is troubled by the argument that liberation from evil must come from elsewhere, because such a position devalued the power of the psyche (1958, p. 17). In an attempt at theoretical integration, Jung cleverly positions Otherness is an experience that occurs *within* the psyche. The goal of integration is likened to the dispersion and return to the One in Neoplatonic and Gnostic literature.

*Psychically* feeling something as Other than one’s own creation is very different from affirming *ontologically* this Otherness is *separate* from my psychic experience. Here, Jung’s position is different from the physical dualism of Manichean Gnosticism. If God is a synonym for the unconscious, which it is for Jung, then logically grace comes from the unconscious. If the devil is the personification of an unconscious experience, a shadow projection, a complex, or even an archetype, then evil *also* originates in the unconscious. So, no matter how much Jung stresses that evil and grace are experiences from elsewhere, it remains the case that the spatiality of this Otherness resides *within* the

psyche. Although Jung's critics, like Martin Buber, accuse him of psychologism, Jung retorts that his work focuses on psychology rather than say, sociology, or metaphysical theology (Smith, 1978, p. 539). This critique will be taken up in more detail in the final chapter.

The second point at issue in Jung's concepts of evil and grace is that Jung uses mythic and personalistic language as symbolic to describe unconscious psychic energies and not real existential entities "in themselves." Jung writes in Psychological Types, "...demons are nothing other than intruders from the unconscious, spontaneous irruptions of unconscious complexes into the continuity of the conscious person (1921, p. 109)." Jung gets at this in another way in Memories, Dreams, Reflections by remarking, "When I see such mythic language, I am aware that "manic," "daimon," and "God" are synonyms for the unconscious—that is to say, we know just as much or just as little about them as about the latter (1965, p. 337)." Jung continues, "The great advantage of the concepts "daimon" and "God" lies in making possible a personification of it.... We know that something unknown, alien, does come our way, just as we know that we do not ourselves make a dream or an inspiration, but that it somehow arises of its own accord (1965, p. 336)."

Here Jung's use of mythic and personified discourse to describe psychic energy may be his most important contributions to the bridge between theology and psychology. Theologian Joseph Haroutunian puts it well when he states that the use of personalistic language is the only way human beings *can* address limit experiences they have encountered. The profundity of such experiences is so because of personal access. How else, Haroutunian argues (and perhaps Jung as well), are human beings to address limit

experiences? Putting it eloquently, Haroutunian writes, “People who live by responding to people have a ‘God who speaks.’ They may not believe there is a God...if they do have a God, they have one that is ‘personal.’ Since they are not ‘man beyond man’ but fellow men, they can have no traffic with ‘god beyond God’(1969, pp. 321-344).”

Unlike positivist rejections of personalistic and anthropomorphic descriptions of empirical realities, Haroutunian, Jung, and others like them note that it is only *through* the personal that one encounters and understands limit experiences or the numinous. Abstracting experiences into “experience distant” categories merely functions defensively to secure de-tachment, and therefore serves as a prophylactic against loss. Jung writes, “...their (the personifications’) emotional quality confers life and effectuality upon them. Hate and love, fear and reverence, enter the scene of the confrontation and raise it to a drama. What has merely been ‘displayed’ becomes ‘acted’ (1965, p. 337).” With these two points in mind, I turn now to Jung’s Answer to Job.

Jung’s focus on the integration of opposites leads him necessarily to view evil and grace as polarities. Without the recognition of one’s polar opposite, shadow projections are inevitable. According to Jung, everything that turns against God must be traced back to God. Yet, if opposites coexist in the psyche, one’s ability to make correct and good judgments could be compromised by the opposite reality of self-deception leading to evil judgments.

A deity who could trap Adam in the Garden of Eden, ask Abraham to sacrifice his own son, and allow Satan to torment Job revolts Jung. Having as his chief project the importance of integration, Jung argues that the necessity and responsibility of integrating one’s shadow, and the danger of not doing so, should be applied to God as well (Jung,

1956). Nevertheless, Jung's 'God' and 'Devil,' hence grace and evil, are aspects of the *psyche* and not ontological entities in themselves.

Hence, in spite of Jung's description of Job, God, and Satan as three different characters in an interpersonal conflict, I argue that Jung's call for a Quaternity refers to the Self rather than the Deity. If so, it logically follows that without realizing it, perhaps Jung calls *us* to withdraw our shadow projections and own the complexes as our own. Jung poignantly writes towards the end of The Answer to Job, "The account I have given of symbolic entities corresponds to a process of differentiation of *human* consciousness (1956, pp. 648-649, italics mine)."

### ***Jung and Grace: Gifts from the Internal Elsewhere***

Grace, for Jung, can neither be "...taught nor learned, given or taken, withheld or earned, but, like evil, comes *through* experience, which is an irrational datum not subject to human will and caprice (1933, p. 331, italics mine)." "Experience," Jung continues, "cannot be made (1933, p. 331)." It follows that if grace is unearned or uncreated, and if the essence of grace is radical acceptance by the Other, then grace must come *from* the Other. Yet, once again, Jung uses a slight of hand. Otherness comes to us *through* the psyche, and more specifically, through the unconscious.

In one lengthy description of an experience Jung considers an act of 'grace,' he describes a childhood situation in which he was paralyzed by blasphemous doubts so much so that he could not bear to "think the thought all the way to the end (1965, p. 39ff)." When he summoned enough courage to do so, he felt "indescribable relief," and "wept with happiness and gratitude." As Jung describes this moment, "Instead of the

expected damnation, grace had come upon me, and with it an unutterable bliss such as I had never known (1965, p. 40).” Interestingly enough, this experience situates Jung as a heretic, in that in his dream God shat on the church, implying an utmost contempt for its doctrines, and, subsequently, giving Jung license to improvise thereafter. In this sense, freedom from the fetters of doctrinal orthodoxy is central to Jung’s experience of bliss.

At times during his early schooling, Jung describes times when he “...suddenly knew something which I really could not know at all. The knowledge came to me as though it were my own idea (1965, p. 51).” Jung also recalls other experiences of holding the tension of opposites in the struggle to consciously resolve an intellectual conundrum, and how he reached a place where “no solution can be seen,” and finding that “...if all goes well, the solution, seemingly of its own accord, appears out of nature. Then and only then is it convincing. It is felt as “grace” (1965, p. 335).” Grace, for Jung, is not compensation for passivity in intellectual rigor, or a whitewash for moral cowardice. Grace is a felt sense that occurs when one finds a way out of an *aporia* or *impasse* in problem solving, or when one finds oneself unconditionally accepted in spite of one’s felt taintedness.

Given these three examples in his own life, Jung feels that grace comes on its own accord and not by any felt construction or manipulation of his own. Even common experiences such as when relaxed minds gain insight, or when momentary distraction clears one’s ‘cobwebs’ enough to problem solve, or even when expected reprimands turn into praises, still we must concede that these events are solutions *from elsewhere—from an Other than ourselves*. As evil is experienced in more than just conscious judgments of immoral and destructive acts, and is more aligned to the repression, projection, and the

formation of complexes that gives rise to such destructive acts, grace is more than an interpretation of conscious happenings of serendipity, or resolutions to conscious conundrums, or as relief from guilt. Grace is also an agentic process of mourning. The losses involved in the repression-projection-complex formation process are the loss of imaginary perfection and the loss of those aspects that are necessary for integration and wholeness. Grace, therefore, is the facilitation of mourning these losses.

Grace facilitates mourning by allowing us to accept the loss of ego-idealism. Acceptance is an agentic relaxing of intentionality towards maintaining ego-idealism, best facilitated by encouraging our trust of the unconscious. We trust our unconscious when we know that the Otherness, which is experienced as ego-dystonic, has actually a part of us all along. This is one benefit of seeing the Other as part of the psyche; one need not be afraid of a part of oneself, which is more intimate to oneself than any actual, ontological Other. If I do not fear the unconscious, then I need not defend an ego-idealism, thus negating the need for repression, projection, and complex formation. Clients need actual experiences, though, of how listening to the wisdom of the unconscious actually does benefit one's existence.

The Jungian premise seems to be that the more we embrace what we desire to repress, the more opposites can be wed and the more complete we can become. Furthermore, it is assumed that ever-increasing experiences of psychic wholeness and integration will foster better health. The conundrum here, often breeding misinterpretation of Jung's project, is that the very goal of treatment may actually foster the very symptoms that treatment is hoping to alleviate—the strive for perfection. If one must be *perfectly* whole and integrated, the Gnostic purity motif appears to reemerge in

one's search to perfect an imaginary ego. Yet, what is integrated is our dis-integration, or at least *dys*-integration; part of our striving for whole includes *incompleteness*. Jung writes in Psychology and Alchemy, “(There is) no psychic wholeness without imperfection. To round itself out, life calls not for perfection, but for completeness; and for this the ‘thorn in the flesh’ is needed, the suffering of defects without which there is no progress and no ascent (1968, p. 159).”

In summary, Jung's own recorded experiences of grace are all episodes that acknowledge psychological limitations as well as offer help that comes from elsewhere, beyond our manipulation. Acceptance of limitation and reliance on Otherness—whether as a part of the psyche or not—mitigates against ego-idealism. Where evil is the offspring of ego-idealism, grace fosters humility and relaxed vulnerability, and consequentially, allows the flow of mourning to occur. Lightened by not having to defend an ego-idealization, we open ourselves to experience with Jung “indescribable relief and weeping with happiness and gratitude (1965, p. 40).” There is a shadow side to this experience as well. Part of Jung's relief rests on how his heretical leanings admit him into an epistemic elite, those with ‘inside’ (esoteric) knowledge of God, which is quite contrary to mainstream Christianity.

There is inherent Otherness in evil and grace built *into* the psyche, for Jung, that we paradoxically neither control nor create. Both the complication and facilitation of mourning are numinous experiences of Otherness *within* the self. But it is at this point that Martin Buber (1957) levels his critique of Jung. Buber argues that Jung reduces all religious phenomena to self-encounters. Buber cites Jung's conviction that God is a function of the unconscious. Buber considered these pseudo-religious phenomena



because they did not have the authentic sense of addressing an Other beyond one's incorporation of such phenomena into the self. For Buber, the Other "...remains over against the self, no matter what completeness the self may attain (1957, p. 89)." Only when one renounces "...all claim to incorporating it in any way within me or making it a part of my soul, does it truly become Thou for me. This holds good for God as for man (1957, p. 89)." Buber ends his critique of Jung by categorizing Jung as "a modern day Gnostic," particularly due to Jung's Answer to Job, in which he seeks the unity of opposites, including the integration of evil with God.

### ***Numinosity, Mourning, and the Complementarity of Evil and Grace***

In his interpretation of the Trinity, Jung notes that "...numinous experiences have one thing in common: they relegate their source to a region outside consciousness (1942, p. 150)." Jung continues by pointing out that "...such experiences have a helpful or, it may be, annihilating effect upon man. He cannot grasp, comprehend, dominate them; nor can he free himself or escape from them, and therefore feels them as overpowering (1965, p. 336)."

Jung writes in his Letters, "The main interest of my work is not concerned with the treatment of neuroses but rather with the approach to the numinous. But the fact is that the approach to the numinous is the real therapy and in as much as you attain to the numinous experiences, you are released from the curse of pathology (1973, p. 337)." Jung continues describing the numinous as "...overwhelming—an admission that goes against not only our pride, but against our deep-rooted fear that consciousness may perhaps lose its ascendancy, for *pride is often only a reaction covering up a secret fear* (1958, p. 184, italics mine)." The 'secret' is the already and continually occurring loss of

ego-idealism. The numinous reminds us of the fact, which breeds both our fascination and our terror of it. For Jung, though, the placement of the numinous “outside of consciousness” does not mean “outside of the self.”

This being the case, the numinous is the key to understanding not only the complementarity of evil and grace in the self, but also the agency of mourning represented by the numinous experience. The key turns on Jung’s use of the word, ‘overpowering.’ As we have noted, one sense of an overpowering experience is when we find the ego-ideal crumbling, and/or when shadow projections are in full force and complexes possess us; then, one can feel even more out of control. If we try to repress the numinosity that evokes these experiences, in Jung’s language, we increase our pathology and, I would add, increase more probability for acting out in destructive ways.

Another type of feeling overpowered comes with the radical acceptance of even the worst in our selves. The pleasant surprise of receiving affirmation, validation, acceptance, appreciation, and/or invitation when we are expecting just the opposite can overwhelm us. Other types of graceful numinosity include moments of unexpected insight, a change of heart or habit after long struggles of impasse, or finding one’s niche in life after unending dislocation, or acquiring a “second wind” or surge of unexpected strength or courage to accomplish a seemingly insurmountable task. Here the overwhelming quality is the perception and reception of the Other’s unexpected gifts of radical acceptance. The gifts are radical in that the Other accepts us in spite of our evil, that is to say, our tendencies towards willed destruction.

Jung reflects on Saul’s conversion regarding this matter. Jung notes that “Saul’s conversion is directly related to his life of following out his own sense of his worse

mistake. Being blinded by conviction and acceptance was only as powerful as the intensity of his murderous pathway lying before his journey to Emmaus (1938, p. 332).” “The patient,” Jung writes, “does not feel accepted until the very worst in him is accepted too (1938, p. 338).”

Jung is quite explicit in Memories, Dreams, and Reflections about his experiences and illnesses related to the alienation and splitting of his parents during his childhood, as well as the parentified role he assumed for both his mother and his father. As cause and effect in Jung’s own mind of this split, Jung’s experiences of grace are perhaps aimed at healing this pain. In fact, the very act of unification is numinous, whether the act is one of wedding or reconciliation (1958, pp. 186ff).

### ***Jung, Evil, and Grace: Unwitting Augustinian or Reluctant Gnostic?***

The relationship between Jung and Gnosticism is not new to those versed in Jung’s biography. Photographs often show Jung with his Gnostic ring, and Jung delighted in being presented the gift of the Gnostic text, the Nag Hammadi Codex I, which was affectionately called the “Jung Codex (Smith, 1978, p. 538).” Jung’s “Seven Sermons to the Dead,” appendix V in Memories, Dreams, and Reflections, ascribed pseudonymously to Basilides, the second-century Alexandrian Gnostic, praises Abraxis, the Gnostic god who creates “...good and evil, light and darkness, in the same word and in the same act (1965, pp. 383).” What is very important to remember, though, is that Jung takes the Gnostic dualist myth and locates it *within* the psyche; all gods and demons reside in the psyche. Unlike Manichean physical dualism, Jung focuses on split off opposites *of the psyche* that belonged in tension with each other. As the Gnostic scholar,

Richard Smith, so astutely points out, not only does Jung locate the dualism in the psyche, but Jung also sees the goal of salvation as psychic integration rather than a separation of the divine from the mundane (1978, pp. 540-541). So, there may be Gnostic-like qualities in Jung's thought on evil and grace, but there are also differences. In terms of similarities and differences, it is also interesting that in spite of his attacks on Augustine's *malem et privatio boni*, Jung is closer to Augustine's thoughts on evil and grace than he imagined. Like Augustine, Jung does not see evil as substantial. This fact runs counter to the widespread understanding of Jung as an ardent Gnostic, or Manichean, where evil is the creation of another deity and actualized in matter. In the final analysis Jung places evil where Augustine does: in the realm of judgment and clarity of mind.

Although Augustine uses different language, he, too, sees the dilemma as a contamination of right thinking. For Augustine, we are contaminated by our passions, which make contemplation of God impossible without God's grace. For Jung, repression, shadow projections, and complex formation contaminate correct judgment, which makes clarity of mind for sound moral judgments impossible without psychic integration. How, then, could one trust that one's conscious judgment would never again be contaminated by the shadow and its accompanying complexes? Jung, Freud, Augustine, and St. Paul, for that matter, point to the inherent duplicity and unreliability of conscious thought and judgment. This implies a severe critique of the rationalization of cognitive psychology. Correct thinking about reality is forever suspect.

Other points of similarity between Augustine and Jung include the following. Jung's desire to return to an integrated, wedding of opposites is likened to Augustine's

confession, “We are restless until we rest in thee.” Neither Augustine nor Jung want the self to be equated with the One, even as the One for Jung meant psychic integration, and the One for Augustine meant reunion of the soul with God. Nevertheless, both thinkers predicate their views on an understanding of salvation as an act of *returning*.

Some of Jung’s writings on the numinous read as if they came straight out of Augustine’s writings. For both thinkers, pride, expressed in egoism and ego-idealism, is that which presumes a harnessing of what is over-powering, of what is Other. The work of integrating the shadow is likened to Augustine’s understanding of human nature’s duplicity and of repentance. The convictions that actions are good when they support harmony and stability, and evil when they disrupt the goals of human life and well-being, are held by both regarding evil and grace.

Jung opens his chapter on the Trinity in Psychology and Religion with a quote from Augustine, presumably to align with him: “Go not outside, return unto thyself; truth dwells in the inward man (1938, p. 72).” In fact, he affirms Augustine’s argument that from the intellect proceeds wisdom, and from wisdom proceeds love, all which are part of the psyche, and which nonetheless lead us, at least for Augustine, to the actual Trinity. Jung adds that the medieval mind finds it natural to “...derive the structure of the psyche from the trinity, whereas the modern mind reverses the procedure (1942, p. 147).”

Jung also “follows St. Augustine” when noting that images are ‘typical’ as he developed his theory of the archetypes (1958, p. 518). And finally, Jung links Eastern thought with Augustine’s thought by relating the Sanskrit word, *kleshas*, to Augustine’s *concupiscentia* or *superbia* as forces that “fetter human beings to the world (1943, p. 560).”

The major difference between an Augustinian, *Umwelt* bias, and a Jungian, *Eigenwelt* bias is the nature and placement of the Other. For the latter, the Other resides within the psyche. As evil (for an *Umwelt* bias) arises out of genetics and evolutionary instinct, evil (for an *Eigenwelt* bias) arises out of the psyche and is the result of splitting, repressing, and projecting in order to maintain ego-idealism. Grace, from an *Umwelt* bias, is chance, luck, and/or teleological design, of which we have no part in creating or manipulating. Grace, from an *Eigenwelt* bias are personal insights and feelings associated with alleviating psychological guilt and shame, or intellectual *aporias* and impasses. In this sense, Jung is Gnostic, if the goal is clarity of mind, and the process is immaterial and occurs within the psyche. In dialogue with these two positions we will explore Erich Fromm's *Mitwelt* bias on evil and grace that carries a Pelagian thread throughout its tapestry, though does so in terms of agency's possibilities and limitations in relation to the limit nature of mourning.

## Chapter Five

### On Choosing Life or Death:

#### Erich Fromm on Evil, Grace and Mourning

In contrast to Jung, who focuses on the *Eigenwelt* Erich Fromm displays a *Mitwelt* bias. Fromm's emphasis on how unresolved loss, particularly loss of faith in life, contributes to the formation of evil. Fromm writes that "...in my clinical experience the deep-seated experiences of loss of faith are frequent, and often constitute the most significant leitmotif in the life of a person (1964, p. 30)." Moreover, he says, "...man cannot live without faith (1947, p. 210)." Faith, for Fromm, is not assent to credal statements of a particular relationship with the divine, but an 'attitude,' a "...character trait that pervades all his experiences, which enables man to face reality without illusions (1947, p. 199)." Faith is not an exercise in illusion construction (e.g., someone else is in control), but that which allows one to see, acknowledge and enact human accountability, choice, and freedom. Faith, for Fromm, is about actualizing human potential by developing one's powers of love and reason. By Fromm's reckoning, submission to an external authority generally betokens a lack of faith in oneself and the world, or what he sometimes called *irrational* faith. (Rational faith, by contrast, fosters autonomy and critical thinking).

In keeping with his emphasis on *Mitwelt*-based factors, Fromm says that many of the experiences that shatter our faith in life occur in infancy or early childhood, as a result of death and/or the absence of a nurturing and life-affirming social environment. To this

statement, I hasten to add that in my experience, care-givers who abandon or disappoint their youngsters often yearn for affirmation and nurturance themselves, due to the intergenerational transmission of “faithless” parenting, an issue Fromm does not address, unfortunately. In instances like these, the parents’ diminished hopefulness and neurotic need to find or force compensation for their childhood losses blights their own children’s lives.

Loss of faith in life can lead to a “syndrome of decay,” or “malignant aggression,” says Fromm. But I suggest that this is only the case if our loss remains unmourned. Paradoxically, constructive mourning can revive our faith in life, because mourning entails an honest look at authentic possibilities in the midst of limitations, which in optimal circumstances, prompts fresh affirmations of Being. But before we can fully understand how the loss of faith leads to evil, however, we must survey Fromm’s analysis of human aggression and destructiveness--phenomena that are generally associated with ‘evil.’

### ***Fromm on Evil***

In The Legacy of Erich Fromm, Daniel Burston notes that unlike Freud, who subsumes all forms of aggression under a single instinct, diversely expressed, Fromm differentiates between fundamentally different modes of aggression. Reactive hatred is biologically conditioned, and operates in the service and protection of life. Destructiveness proper, by contrast, exceeds or transgresses the requirements of adaptation, varies in intensity from individual to individual, and “...surfaces only after the potentiality for growth and development has been blighted by adverse environmental conditions (1991, p. 68).” “Adverse environmental conditions,” and not biological



instinct or intrapsychic conflict, become the new culprit and potential breeding ground for ‘evil.’

Burston adds that in 1955 Fromm characterized “destructiveness” as “...the response of a crippled, distorted person to the existential problem of “thrownness” (*Geworfenheit*) (1991, p. 69).” Unable to embrace the inherent limitations in one’s life, one lashes out at them, regardless of whether they are the artifacts of history and culture, or inherent in the human situation. Consciously or otherwise, this protest against thrownness seeks to effect a state of transcendence, albeit “negative transcendence,” as Burston says, by way of “...compensation for the impotence and isolation occasioned by the inability to love, care, or merely to assert one’s experience.... (1991, p. 70).” In Man for Himself, Fromm notes that “...the degree of destructiveness is proportionate to the degree to which the unfolding of the person’s capacities is blocked...destructiveness is the outcome of un-lived life (1947, p. 218, quoted in Burston, 1991, pp. 68-69).” Again, in The Sane Society, Fromm writes that destroying life is one way to transcend it: “Creation and destruction, love and hate, are not two instincts which exist independently. They are both answers to the same need for transcendence, and the will to destroy must rise when the will to create cannot be satisfied (1955, pp. 41-42, quoted in Burston, 1991, p. 69).”

Though he claims to be a Pelagian, Fromm often sounds quite Augustinian. He notes that “...evil has no independent existence of its own, it is the absence of the good,” which for Fromm means “...the result of the failure to realize life (1947, p. 218).” Fromm endorses Spinoza’s idea of evil as being the absence of the good, apparently oblivious to the fact that Spinoza borrowed this idea from Augustine. In any case, Fromm cites

Spinoza's Ethics: "I shall mean by 'good' that which we certainly know to be a means of approaching more nearly to the type of human nature which we have set before ourselves; by 'bad' that which we certainly know to be a hindrance to us in approaching the said type (1964, p. 149)." Goodness, for Fromm, "consists of transforming our existence into an ever increasing approximation of our essence; evil into an ever increasing estrangement between existence and essence (1964, p. 149)." Evil not only separates existence and essence, but retards their subsequent re-unification. But if evil arises out of adverse and oppressive social situations, such situations can be eliminated—at least in theory. Indeed, the whole thrust of Fromm's theoretical orientation, which he terms "existential humanism," is geared to effecting the social changes necessary to make the actual conditions of human existence compatible with the experience, expression, and resounding affirmation of the "human essence."

After 1960, however, Fromm shifts his ground somewhat, arguing that evil is the result of a "syndrome of decay" (Fromm, 1964), which includes necrophilia, malignant narcissism, and incestuous symbiosis. Necrophilia, a term Fromm borrows from the Spanish philosopher, Miguel Unamuno, does *not* denote a paraphilia, as it does in the DSM IV. For Fromm, necrophilia denotes a more global and encompassing attraction to death and dying, and a corresponding fear or aversion to life. It belies a fundamental loss of hope about the possibility of real human connection and genuine self-expression. The necrophilic individual is attached to "...all that is dead, decayed, putrid, and sickly; it is the passion to transform all that is alive into something that is unalive.... It is the passion to 'tear apart living structures.' (1964, pp. 37-38)." Here Fromm sounds much like Freud.

Why would someone be attracted to “all that is dead?” In light of the preceding, I suggest that “necrophilia” is an expression of complicated mourning. The fear and aversion to life results from the loss of faith in life. Whether as a result of traumata, or a refusal to accept natural attrition and transformation in one’s life cycle, one develops a ‘contract’ with oneself not to risk further attachments. But, the attraction to death is not only an evasion or denial of loss, but a search for solace and company among the dead. The sense of kinship and solidarity with the dead, embraced passionately in (conscious and unconscious) fantasy, so far exceeds the sense of love and commitment toward the living that faith in the future is suffocated, perhaps extinguished. Meanwhile, attachment to the dead operates as a “defense mechanism” which prevents further vulnerability to attachment, loss and their attendant trials. It also feeds a passionate hostility toward life, to all that exudes vitality and as yet unrealized potential. Another salient factor here is the necrophile’s perverse love of power. Lacking the power to love or to create (and risk further loss), the necrophile seeks power to disfigure, to destroy, to avenge himself on those whose faith in life is still reasonably intact. For Fromm, though, what is decaying in the necrophile is not merely hope, but a sense of self, a sense of vital agency. Compensating for this experience of powerlessness (by overcompensating, in effect) can lead one further along the continuum of decay.

As was the case with aggression, Fromm distinguishes between a narcissism that serves survival and a type of narcissism that works against survival. Human beings need to be a part of the group to survive. If individual narcissism is to foster this endeavor, then it must be capable of being “cathected” to the group. Group narcissism mitigates conflict and competition within the group’s boundaries, and is therefore compatible with

social co-operation, albeit through collective compliance in spite of differences in status, etc. So, natural or healthy narcissism is pliable enough to see group membership as good for itself, at least, and thus, allows for collaboration with others.

Pathological narcissism puts the person at odds with others, thus placing it in proximity to necrophilia. Working against co-operation in interpersonal matters leaves the narcissist alone, fostering self-inflation, and intense loneliness and vulnerability. When this *self-inflation* is challenged (i.e., criticized, overlooked, exposed), the person's reaction suggests that their very *existence* is challenged, provoking explosive rage towards the challenging stimulus. The vicious cycle leaves one alienating the very community that one desires, even if the desire for the community is to mirror one's self-inflation. But the community that one desires limits the project of the self-inflation, thus necessitating communal distance that results in further loss.

Fromm contends, for example, that "...the element of mourning in melancholia refers, in my opinion to the narcissistic image of the wonderful 'I' that has died, and for which the depressed person is mourning (1964, p. 75)." I would add that the death of the "wonderful I" is the result of the death of the mirroring other. Rage, critical deprecation of others, severance of empathic connections, and other compensatory behaviors serve to avoid recurrence of these wounds.

Fromm's work on narcissism predates many more popular understandings of evil as narcissism run amuck. For example, psychiatrist Scott Peck states in People of the Lie that he is borrowing extensively from Fromm's syndrome of decay in general, and Fromm's work on malignant narcissism in particular (1983, pp. 77, 78, 118, 137). Peck sees evil as a "particular variety of narcissism" that includes the abrogation of personal

responsibility, destructive scapegoating behavior, intolerance of criticism, projection, a desire to confuse, and just plain “human laziness (1983, pp. 129, 179, 243).” Evil (as the outcome of destructive narcissism) is driven by a deep dread, revulsion, and/or abject fear, which I argue are rooted in unresolved mourning. Peck writes that for the evil person “...personality change is like death (1983, p. 74).” Evil is located *in the person*, for Peck, and is most often enacted in the use of “...political power to destroy others for the purpose of defending or preserving the integrity of one’s sick self (1983, p. 241).”

Peck quotes the priest Gale Webbe (1964, p. 189), author of The Night and Nothing, who says that one must absorb evil into one’s heart “...in order to loosen its power and see that it goes no further (Peck, 1983, p. 269).” This quote provides a basis for Peck’s argument that “...the healer must allow his or her own soul to be the battleground and must sacrificially absorb the evil,” where a “...mysterious alchemy takes place in which the victim (sacrificer) becomes victor (Peck, 1983, p. 269).” Peck intuits that the very nature of escalating evil is ruled by the law of the talion, though it is not clear whether he is suggesting non-resistance, nonviolent resistance, or some combination of the two, as the best way to respond to evil. He does write of loving such patients, but with little concrete description of behaviors that would show such love.

One major difference between Fromm and Peck is that Peck seeks to make evil a psychiatric diagnosis similar to a personality disorder (Peck, 1983, 129), where Fromm treats it as a non-specific factor implicated in numerous diagnoses; psychoses, personality disorders, paraphilias, etc. Moreover, Fromm’s understanding of evil dwells much more on its social origin and suggests social remedies for it. In doing so, Fromm takes narcissism out of its traditionally intrapsychic framework, and exposes its interpersonal

foundations. Where Peck is oriented toward the *Eigenwelt* regarding the origins of evil, the *Mitwelt* is primary for Fromm. Moreover, as to the hermeneutical-phenomenological emphasis in this project, making evil a psychiatric diagnosis would reduce the limit nature of the phenomenon, even within existential structures.

Peck uses words like “self-purification (1983, p. 268)” in this discussion, but he is not explicit as to how much evil actually resides in the healer himself. Yet, tying self-accountability to the parental environment of nurturance or destruction as the primary factor in the induction of narcissism, Peck writes, “...to come to terms with evil in one’s parentage is perhaps the most difficult and painful psychological tasks a human being can be called on to face (1983, p. 130).” I would add that one’s parentage includes both the evil done to us by our parents and the evil we continue to pass on to our children due to our own narcissism, in spite of our good intentions. Evil passes on from generation to generation, due to what Peck calls “a long series of choices” that “sell out due to loneliness (1983, pp. 81, 190-191).” The cycle promotes the loss or betrayal of community and thus loneliness, aggression towards offenders (or as a defense against further abuse), a denial of loss, and the gradual development of malignant narcissism. It would be inconsistent, though, for Peck to believe we all inherit evil, which I do not think he does, *and* talk of the healer’s self-purification. The language itself sounds purely Pelagian, and Peck’s project presumes evil can be diagnosed and treated, albeit at times only through exorcism.

Admitting to a small percentage of cases that are actually possessions (5%), in contrast to a much larger percentage of apparent possession that are explainable by psychiatric diagnosis (95%), when all is said and done Peck seems to hold evil to rare and

extreme experiences that are nonetheless still on a continuum of personality disorders (195). In this study I, too, argue that evil (and grace) are limit experiences, albeit in an existential sense. Yet, such limit experiences are plentiful experiences in the very structures of our daily existence and still remain limit experiences. Limit is Other, and at times extreme, but not necessarily rare, especially regarding evil and grace. Narcissism and aggression are very common everyday experiences that can range from the banal to the extreme.

The third component of Fromm's "syndrome of decay," namely "incestuous symbiosis," signifies a yearning for a lost womb, and an incapacitating fear that one cannot live without the person on whom one is dependent (1964, p. 100). This in turn generates a fear of the intensity of one's own helplessness, which usually gets transferred onto the "mothering object." The yearning to be protected, to have no responsibility, to be loved like an infant and so forth, leaves one without freedom, integrity, and independence. The loss of these agentic traits and experiences leaves one with an unbearable choice: a murderous rage that seeks to eliminate that which constricts one's agency (in unconscious phantasy), and unbearable fear and guilt at even considering such an act towards the source of ontological security. This incestuous fixation, in an individual or group, impairs or destroys the capacity to love, which is predicated on freedom and responsibility. It is also the root of what Fromm calls "authoritarian religion."

In all three aspects of the "syndrome of decay," the patient is conflicted with his need to extricate himself from his own dependency, in opposition to the incestuous desire to be dependent on those individuals in its community. The necrophiliac seeks solace

and companionship with the dead who will never betray or abandon him, nor revive his painful and largely extinguished hopes for authentic connection and self-expression. This is difficult, as vitality surrounds him, highlighting his loneliness and lack of control over events. The malignant narcissist, lacking any incentive for loving interdependence, ignores the loss by inflating the self. The result is unbearable isolation through a contrived and inflated sense of “uniqueness” and “entitlement.” An incestuous symbiosis with one’s parents (or parental surrogates) entails a refusal or inability to face up to one’s vulnerability and dependency, which is reframed as *the other’s* restrictions and/or control of one’s freedom, which is intolerable. Being uncertain as to one’s own capacities to function autonomously creates *an ambivalent attachment* to the one on whom one depends. Reconnection, though, reawakens feelings of vulnerability and dependency, and the fears and fantasies that accompany necrophilia and malignant narcissism. At such times one typically turns to grace for help.

### ***Fromm and Grace: Toward a Self-Service Humanism***

According to Fromm, the alternative to the “syndrome of decay” is biophilia, a spontaneous inclination toward an affirmation of life and the “cycle of growth.” Faith and love of life, love of human beings, and independence are all fruits of this comportment in the world. Fromm writes, “The tendency to preserve life and to fight against death is the most elementary form of the biophilous orientation (1964, p. 45).” A sense of awe, a love of adventure, and a capacity for love and “critical thinking” are some of the salient traits of the biophilous orientation. Fromm proposes that human nature will naturally grow towards a biophilic direction *if* certain conditions are provided.



Suggesting that these life conditions begin in infancy, Fromm's recommendations read like a manifesto for sound parenting practice: warm, affectionate contact with others who love life; freedom, and the absence of threats; teaching—by example rather than by preaching—of the principles conducive to inner harmony and strength; guidance in the “art of living;” stimulating influence of and response to others; and, a way of life that is genuinely interesting (1964, p. 51).

Conversely, the conditions that result in a necrophilic orientation are growing up among death-loving people; lack of wholesome stimulation; nagging, persistent fear; excessive routinization and boredom; mechanical and indirect organization of human relationships rather than direct and personal ones (1964, p. 52). No further proof is needed. Whatever other factors he involves in passing, Fromm's principle remains that *the social conditions in which we grow will determine our direction of development, necrophilic or biophilic.*

Admittedly, in some respects, Fromm's position attends more closely to the equiprimordial character of the *Eigenwelt*, *Mitwelt*, and *Umwelt* modes of being than Freud or Jung. This fact registers, among other things, in his concept of *existential needs*, which transcend biological impulse or social constraints, like the need for rootedness and transcendence, which, if frustrated beyond a certain point, foster, “the syndrome of decay,” and if nurtured, foster “the syndrome of growth.”

Fromm's confidence in humankind to overcome evil and realize life sounds very Pelagian. As we have just seen, Fromm writes that “...man is not necessarily evil but becomes evil only if the proper conditions for his growth and development are lacking (1947, p. 218).” Evil, therefore, at least for Fromm, is *not* inherent. Fromm states that

“...man is able to know what is good and to act accordingly on the strength of his natural potentialities...(1947, p. 210),” thus sounding just like Pelagius. His assessment of Augustine is blunt. The Augustinian emphasis on our innate depravity has “...darkened man’s mind for centuries (1947, p. 211).” Augustine is a naysayer in Fromm’s mind, disparaging humanity’s ability to discern the path of goodness and fulfillment spontaneously, without external guidance. An understanding of grace that requires any submission to an authority beyond and instead of one’s own powers of reason is anathema to Fromm, who says that this is the essence of “authoritarian religion.” Authoritarian religion, says Fromm, entails a lack of faith of our powers of reason, and therefore requires one to submit to a higher power, and to relinquish personal freedom and responsibility. Fromm contests an Augustinian understanding of grace that argues one can do nothing without God, seeing God as a parent from whom one cannot extricate oneself. By Fromm’s account, such an understanding of grace works *against* growth and development. Fromm leaves open the possibility, though, that grace can come from unconditional, motherly love, whether the maternal support is from mother or any other nurturing person, structure, or community. Social nurturance, from Fromm’s perspective, is as essential to biophilic development. Hence, discussions of evil must take childhood into account (1964, p. 28). Similarly, Augustine agrees that evil begins in childhood, albeit as an inherited propensity, where Fromm says the destructiveness is due to deficits or distortions in the person’s social environment.

Fromm assumes that a nurturing environment will eventually contribute to overcoming egocentricity and will activate the mode of existing in which “...to give has become more satisfactory, more joyous, than to receive,” and in which one “...feels the

potency of producing love by loving (1964, p. 40).” So, although the ‘help’ to grow comes from outside the infant, from an-Other (the m-Other), this graceful nurturance is not outside of humankind; it does not come from an entity that is super-human. Fromm’s faith is that *we are imbued with hope as a result of human love, which in turn allows us to become loving.*

Eventually the infant must grow up. Fromm places the grace-like characteristics of unconditional, maternal love within our own hands, given his conviction that the “...mature person has come to the point where he is his own mother and his own father (1964, p. 44).” However, this is not possible until that person overcomes the illusion that life will always provide a mother and a father, an illusion that abets an escape from freedom and accountability. Fromm observes that “...man is dependent; he remains subject to death, age, illness...but it is one thing to recognize one’s dependence and limitations, and it is something entirely different to indulge in this dependence.... (1950, p. 53).” Maturity does not signify an absence of vulnerability or the longing for love, but a realistic capacity (based on love and reason) to endure anxiety and privation, and to grace *others* with one’s patience, courage and wisdom.

Are there any situations that are beyond the potential and capacities of human rescue from evil? Like Augustine, Pelagius and Peck, Fromm notes that *habitually choosing* evil fosters a deepening self-estrangement that erodes the person’s willingness or desire to do good. This makes liberation much more difficult, but not impossible. Fromm’s solution is to rekindle the patient’s hope for loving, for cultivating non-incestuous connections with others, and for genuine self-expression. This activates the “syndrome of growth.” Fromm, at his most Pelagian, writes, “We must not rely on

anyone's saving us, but be very aware that wrong choices make us incapable of saving ourselves (1964, p. 150)." This last comment precludes reliance on unearned grace from any Other to move us from the syndrome of decay to the syndrome of growth. Grace is from God, but 'God,' for Fromm, means "...not a symbol of power over man, but of man's own powers (1950, p. 49)." So, the grace to become an autonomous and free individual must come from the individual. Alternatively, it may come from an outside source in infancy, childhood or adolescence provided that the outside source is not an authoritarian one that shames, coerces, or intimidates the person, fostering passive dependency or a willingness to forfeit their potential for autonomous functioning. Grace can come "from the outside" and not violate or impair human freedom when the Other is *human*, and not an otherworldly deity to which human beings exchange their freedom for eternal security. Yet, there is an ever-present danger that one can still become incestuously fixated if one does not learn to become one's own "mother and father."

Fromm explicitly discusses grace in Martin Luther within the context of motherly, fatherly, Godly, and self-love in The Art of Loving. Fromm places grace in the context of the differentiation between motherly and fatherly love. Motherly love is an "...unconditional affirmation of a child's life and his needs (1956, pp. 41-42)." Fromm continues that "...this experience of being loved by mother is a passive one. There is nothing I have to do in order to be loved—mother's love is unconditional (1956, p. 39)." Fromm is referring to a type of love that is absolutely necessary for a child's growth, without which the child's self-care, biophilic growth would be impossible. As with other experiences of grace, motherly love is given unconditionally without, supposedly, being earned, coerced, manipulated, or deserved. There are positive and negative aspects of

motherly love. Unconditional love can instill in a child a love of life and the validation that can come with being loved without having to earn such love. Fromm uses the Biblical metaphor of the promised land flowing with milk and honey as a description of the nurturance and sweetness of motherly love (1956, p. 41-42). Negatively, though, mother's unconditional love cannot be acquired, produced, or controlled; if it exists it is a blessing, if it does not, one has little recourse but to accept the absence of mother's love (1956, p. 33). One can be left feeling impotent at one's incapacity to elicit love. It is this very point that Fromm says is the strength of fatherly love.

Fatherly love includes such qualities as thought, law, order, discipline, travel, and adventure (1956, p. 35). Fatherly love guides the child into the world, though is conditional in its offerings. Again, this has both positive and negative aspects to it. Positively, since love is conditional, I *can* earn it, and thus, love is not outside of my control; I can acquire it (1956, p. 36). Subsequently, I can feel my own potency in my ability to elicit such love from father. The negative aspects of this conditional love, though, are obvious (1956, pp. 35-36). Father's love has to be deserved, which can have at least two effects. One concern is that a child is left with the message that obedience is the main virtue to secure, and sin is disobedience, punishment being father's withdrawal of love. This can lead to the problem of authoritarianism mentioned above. Secondly, father's conditional love leaves one with the "bitter feeling" that one is loved only to the extent that one pleases the father (1956, p. 35). The way these two types of parental love are integrated affects one's future relationships.

Fromm believes healthy love, the awareness that "I am loved because I love," and my love *for* the *other* person invokes my need of them (rather than the other way around)

can be achieved if one progresses in the movement from motherly love to fatherly love, to our integration of both types of love in ourselves as we *self-parent* (1956, p. 37). The development of mature love through parental love, for Fromm, cannot be separated from the love of God (1956, p. 68). Transferring from human to divine parentage, we progress from a helpless attachment to the mother Goddess, to an obedient attachment to father God, to an awareness that God does not exist for us as an outside power and becomes a symbol for our own ability to love, foster justice, and actualize our potential (1956, p. 68). It is within the discussion of motherly and fatherly love, and as a result of Fromm's insight of the connection between our human parentage and our God-imaging that Fromm discusses Martin Luther and grace.

Fromm writes that although Lutheran doctrine is quite patriarchal, it nonetheless carries a hidden, but powerful matriarchal element (1956, p. 56). God's love *is* grace, for Luther, which, for Fromm, is likened to motherly love. Fromm points out that, for Luther, God's love cannot be acquired; it is there or it is not. Paradoxically, as the Lutheran tradition removed explicitly matriarchal aspects from theology and religious practice, converts ended up expecting *unconditional* love from *father* God (1956, p. 56). In effect, this is a return of the repressed, which attests to the power of the maternal imago, which re-asserts itself even in very patriarchal surroundings.

Although Fromm approaches evil from a *Mitwelt* perspective, his understanding of grace has an *Eigenwelt* bias (mature love as self-parenting without dependency on any other). This is precisely the point Don Browning pursues in his discussion and critique of Fromm in Generative Man (1968), by comparing Fromm and Erik Erikson on these matters. Browning critiques Fromm's Pelagianism by contrasting Fromm's "productive

man” with what Browning calls “generative man,” the latter characterization based on Erik Erikson’s penultimate epigenetic stage in human development, generativity. Erikson, like Fromm, views one’s image of God as being directly related to one’s parentage. In Young Man Luther, Erikson describes the formation of “basic trust” as “...an original ‘optimism’ that ‘someone is there’ without which we cannot live (1958, p. 118).” Erikson argues that primordial faith in mother’s love is the foundation of our God images, particularly our appeal to a provider, to Providence (1958, p. 118). The maternal matrix, for Erikson, with its provisions, caution, and care, grounds all subsequent development (1958, p. 117). Paternal love, on the other hand, guards and guides (1958, p.124). The father’s love, though, is a different gift to us than the mother’s love, and is much more conditional. Erikson notes that the father “...could have annihilated us before we were strong enough to be rivals,” thus we “owe our fathers two lives”: one by way of conception, the other by way of a “voluntary sponsorship (1958, p. 123),” adding that “...next to the recognition bestowed by the gracious face, the affirmation of the guiding voice is a prime element of man’s sense of identity (1958, p. 124).”

As adults, says Erikson, we mourn for “childhood lost,” the blissful unity of the maternal matrix, the paternal voice of guiding conscience, for “mutual recognition,” and the preparental Self (1958, pp. 115, 118, 264). By resolving various crises in human development in which we combine the maternal and paternal principles in a viable post-adolescent identity, we eventually achieve the ability, and indeed the *need*, to “teach” and foster subsequent generations and nurture *their* growth. Erikson calls this trait “generativity.” In the generative phase of development we review the value of lessons

learned and nurturance gained for *their* benefit. Thus far, the parallels between Fromm and Erikson are obvious and impressive.

Despite these deep thematic convergences between Fromm and Erikson on these points, Browning critiques Fromm's notion of self-parenting or "productive man" in light of Erikson's theory of "generative man." Browning considers Fromm's productive personality a "utopian vision" that affirms human being's rootedness in nature and his movement toward transcendence, and *still* views evil as "...neither necessary nor inevitable...at least on the theoretical level (1973, p. 116)."

Productive man's eyes are almost totally cast towards the future, as the future has yet to be made, and so can't receive very much from the past (1973, p. 139). Indeed, according to Browning, productive man has "...free access to his potencies...(and) does not shrink from the vague freedoms of modern existence (1973, p. 21)." But in turning his back on the past, he denies his roots, seeking a specious kind of transcendence or universality, one which denies his historicity and particularity.

Erikson, on the other hand, is more dialectical than Fromm, says Browning, in that "...the high in man must not exclude the low, just as the civilized must not exclude the primitive, the mature become dissociated from the infantile, or man's progressive advance become estranged from his more regressive renewals (1973, p. 21-22)." Hence, "...generative man is at once more mature and more childlike...truly animal and truly human...both primitive and civilized (1973, p. 22)."

Browning's problem with Fromm lies in what he calls Fromm's "undialectical progressivist point of view (1973, p. 21)." By this he means that Fromm "...does not balance the *high* in man with a deep enough appreciation for the *low* (1973, p. 21)." The



*high* for Fromm is the actualization of human potential, freedom, and autonomy. The *low* for Browning is "...the infantile, the primitive, and the passive (1973, p. 21)." Browning argues that "Erikson knows better than Fromm that men act partially out of their own energies but also partially because they have been acted upon...man's giving is partially guided by his own will but is also very much a product of the spontaneous gratitude that comes from having received (1973, p. 139)." Browning concludes, "...there may be more of a place in life for *grace* than Fromm would like to admit (1973, p. 139)." Therefore, Browning applauds the balance and wisdom of Erikson's position, in which "neither innovation nor tradition" is privileged (1973, p. 23), which, from our perspective, tempers the role of agency in both evil and grace. Ignoring the dialectic of the "high" and the "low" can result in evil when the primitive is denied, or when the actualization of possibilities are overlooked. Likewise, grace, as the autonomous actualization of human potential (*a la* Fromm's notion of productivity), ignores and erodes an on-going need to maintain basic trust in (and by implication, some dependency on) the Other.

It appears, for Fromm, as if the more mature and productive (free, autonomous, creative) a person becomes, the less one is dependent and in need of others. Moreover, early nurturance is essential for early development, but must be transcended to obtain adult maturity. Browning's critique points out how Fromm lacks a "...well-articulated epigenetic principle...which states that all the elements of the high and the mature are found in an undeveloped form in the early, the low—the very beginning (1973, pp. 136-137)." Fromm appears to forget that we enter the kingdom of God when we become as little children, which, I argue in this context, is to appreciate the potentiality of the low

qualities of our existence as a key to grace as unconditional, vulnerable, accessible, and something to be received.

Fromm's maturing *Eigenwelt* appears to need guidance and nurturing sustenance from the *Mitwelt* less and less. *Eigenwelt* gives to the *Mitwelt*, but does not seem to receive much, nor need the offerings of the *Mitwelt* to continue its productive project. In fact, dependency on the *Mitwelt* mitigates against *Eigenwelt's* actualization. In other words, Fromm's *Mitwelt* bias as per the nature of evil gives way to an *Eigenwelt* bias regarding grace. Either way, the equiprimordality of these various modes of being is forgotten.

Having compared the lines of thought between fourth century theologians and twentieth century psychologists about the limit nature of mourning in the complementary phenomena of evil and grace, I now turn to Karl Jaspers. I argue that Jaspers better maintains the equiprimordality of evil and grace as limit mourning phenomena, and more adequately provides a foundational limit language for both theological and psychological discourse in describing the limit nature of our mourning-in-the-world.

## Chapter Six

### On Foundering Towards Eternity:

#### Jaspers, Mourning, and the Psychology of Evil and Grace

Karl Jaspers' theories place considerable emphasis on mourning and transcendence as inescapable, experiential structures of evil and grace. Yet, following a lineage that stretches from Heraclites through Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, he focuses on existence as *unalterably* contingent, transient and immanent. He differs from Augustine in that he views the mutability of existence as itself an assurance of transcendence as "...what lies beyond all objectivity...not in existence as a given fact, but as a chance of freedom (Jaspers, 1969, p. 77)." Trained as a psychiatrist, then as a philosopher of contingency and transcendence, Jaspers provides a solid framework for the elucidation of various interrelated themes in this project: evil, grace, mourning, limit experience, agency, complementarity, equiprimordality, as well as a model of writing and thinking at the interstices of philosophy, theology, and psychology.

First, Jaspers stresses the empirical grounds for his thoughts of these matters. He writes, "...it takes reality to reveal transcendence. About transcendence we can know nothing in general; we can hear it only historically, in reality. Experience is the font of transcendent ascertainment as it is the font of empirical knowledge (1971, p. 114)." For Jaspers, "...the encounter between existence and transcendence is an encounter in the world...there is no direct knowledge of God and existence (1950, pp. 14, 39)." But, as I will show, it is precisely this tension between limitation and possibility, between knowing

and not knowing, that makes Jaspers' thought so applicable to my project of interpreting 'evil' and 'grace' as limit or boundary phenomena experienced *in* mourning.

Jaspers maintains an equiprimordial understanding of being and avoids the *Umwelt*, *Mitwelt*, and *Eigenwelt* biases that have run from Augustine's dialogue with Manichean Gnosticism and the Pelagians in fourth century theology, through the writings of Freud, Jung, and Fromm in twentieth century psychology. He does so without reducing either discourse to the other, or reducing the limit experiences of evil and grace to just mere psychological diagnoses, socio-economic structures, or genetic encoding. At the same time, Jaspers' grasp of transcendence is not a lapse into otherworldliness or an a/historical account of "Being-in-the-world." Evil and grace are empirical experiences *and* outcomes of encounters with boundary situations. In short, for Jaspers, transcendence always occurs *within* historical existence.

The goal of life, in Jaspers' thought, is a deep communion with ourselves and one another as *Existenzen* within existence through dialogue and communication (1970, pp. 52-53). By maintaining the German word, *Existenz*, Jaspers hopes to differentiate it from mere *existence*, or mundane, biomechanical living (1971, pp. 3-9). *Existenz* is not a static state or thing, nor our objectified self-image, but purposeful stance of engagement with the world. We cannot come to ourselves merely by our *own* efforts; we experience this goal *only* through encounters with others and with transcendence, which resists being grasped or comprehended in-itself, and *only* occurs within authentic communication. Transcendence is the experience of possibility, openness, and freedom. At the very moment it becomes an object "...it disappears, it dissolves. The relationship of *Existenz*

to Transcendence is never stable, but forever in process, in continuous flux (Hoffman, 1957, p. 197).”

Without transcendence, *Existenz* is merely *existence*. Our drive to know is inherently a ‘cipher’, or symbol, of transcendence (similar to Bernard Lonergan’s work), yet also the very thing that could seduce us to objectify and systemize. Ciphers are empirical representations of transcendence that are in themselves *not* transcendence (1971, pp. 113ff). In the desire to know we seek security by totalizing, categorizing, and objectifying our knowledge of others, the world, and ourselves. This project, however, is inevitably “shipwrecked” on the rocks of “boundary situations,” which are extreme experiences that remind us of our limitations in thought and action, namely, suffering, death, chance, conflict, and guilt. Our encounters with boundary situations leave us vulnerable and foundering. We come to know the encompassing, or the ever receding horizon of that which is more than us all, when confronted with boundary situations; we come to know our limitations and humility in the presence of the totality of existence.

Out of these experiences we realize our incompleteness and seek communion with others who have also confronted boundary situations, who, too, are foundering. When we seek mutual illumination as *Existenzen* through mutual recognition that we are both a part of more than we are together, we receive intimations of the ineffable. Transcendence *is not* an escape from our existential finitude and historicity, and, in fact, can only occur within our encounters with each other as particular individuals in specific, situated circumstances. Don Browning observes that existentialist thinkers usually equate evil with either a flight into transcendence (ignoring finitude) or a flight into finitude (ignoring transcendence), “...although evil as flight into transcendence is often

emphasized more (1973, p. 117).” Jaspers avoids both these alternatives by maintaining transcendence as an *existentiale*, avoiding a flight into finitude, while locating transcendence intimately *within* our situated structures.

*Existenz*, however, is never achieved through the accumulation of objective knowledge alone, but through a particular lived out expression of one’s encounters with others around boundary situations. “As *Existenz*,” Jaspers writes, “I can only come to myself in the boundary situation...no objective, independently extant validity relieves *Existenz* of dealing truly with anything that must be dealt with originally (1970, p. 220).” Psychological testing alone will not provide the nature of one as *Existenz*. Neither can one come to himself alone. We all are dependent on authentic (honest and risky) communication with each other as we come to ourselves. Jaspers writes that “...this is a conversion from continuous self betrayal...to the seriousness of the unconditional (1951, p. 60).” Truth, for Jaspers, is not the outcome of dogmatic defense or well-reasoned, syllogistic argumentation, but a *lived process* that allows for us to know ourselves.

How does one come to know oneself if his actual self-image is quite different from *Existenz*? The first step towards this goal is to embrace, or at least engage, the truth that is secondary to the experience of shipwreck (Hoffman, 1957, p. 101), which is that *we are participants in a contingent and mutable world*. Boundary situations confound our narcissism and solipsism. “Crashing upon these rocks” opens us to the necessity of the other, not for my own needs alone (which is the same seed of evil for Jaspers as for Kant), but because *Existenz* depends on coming to my authentic self through encounters with other authentic selves. For me to be authentic, the other can neither be assimilated into me, nor I accommodated to the other, to the extent that either one of us ceases to be

differentiated participants; this is a “loving struggle.” We experience the fleeting moments of transcendence when we are no longer objects for each other, but are open, honest and utterly ourselves.

The tragic shipwreck in boundary situations in itself is not enough to move from existence to *Existenz*. It is merely a pre-condition. Moreover, shipwreck cannot be wished for, chosen, or orchestrated, but only faced and embraced with courage when encountered. Jaspers beautifully writes: “If there is no getting around the pain of death, not for the dying and not for the survivor, it can be eclipsed only by existentially uplifting realities: by the risk of action, by the heroism of commitment, by the high-minded swan song of farewell—and by plain loyalty (1971, p. 83).” Reclamation, compensation, retaliation, retribution, or reunion cannot erase or efface the reality of loss; these attitudes betoken fantasies of bargaining for a reversal of temporal and spatial boundaries in hopes of finding life *without* shipwreck.

Jaspers argues that *contingency and mutability must be embraced and individual self-expression must be risked in mutual communication*. This is especially true in *mourning*. Jasper’s description of ‘foundering’ is of immediate relevance to the experience of *bereavement*. Foundering is our faltering, failing, or falling as a result of our “thwarted endeavors,” or eventual (if not perpetual) “coming up against a wall (Thyssen, 1957, p. 314).” We founder between shipwreck and communication. Foundering is experienced as being unmoored when our reach towards objectification, control, and totalization crumble.

*Grief* is the reluctance to embrace contingent and mutable existence; it seeks to negotiate retrieval and/or compensation; it is a struggling, isolated existence without

transcendence, which can lead to complicated mourning. Jaspers does not mince words: “All human life, activity, achievement, and success are doomed finally to suffer shipwreck. Death, suffering, sickness, and mortality may be veiled from sight, but in the end they engulf us. For life as existence here and now is finite...Life perishes (1952, pp. 94-95).” Again, Jaspers makes us aware that “...without exception, universal shipwreck is the *fundamental characteristic of every existence*. This includes accidental misfortune, guilt that is specific and avoidable, and the misery of suffering in vain (1952, p. 95, italics mine).” But if universal shipwreck is a fundamental existentialle, then so is the meaning-making and affective mastery of these experiences, which I argue are *modes of mourning*. Mourning, then, is not just an expression of sadness at the severed attachment and loss of a loved one who has died. *Mourning is an existentialle, or essential structure of human existence. To live is to mourn.*

We do not reach transcendence through securing immutability (an impossible task), but through encounters between post-shipwrecked *Existenzen*. Hence, we find glimpses of eternity *in existence among Existenzen*, in which transcendence is neither equated *with* existence per se, nor any specific *Existenzen*. Nevertheless, the experience of transcendence is an inevitable consequence of authentic, mutual self-expression. Jaspers writes, “The unfulfillment of communication and the difficulty of bearing its shipwreck become the revelation of a depth which nothing other than Transcendence can fill (1955, p. 104).”



### *Jaspers on Evil*

Highly influenced by Immanuel Kant, Jaspers regards evil as “...the immediate and unrestrained surrender to passions and sensual impulses...true evil...consists in what Kant called perversion: I do good only if it does me no harm or does not cost me too much (1951, p. 59).” Consequentially, evil seeks to destroy the other who makes demands of the self, or costs the self safety, seclusion, and the illusion of control. Evil in the raw, then, is the “...will to destruction as such, the urge to inflict torture, cruelty, annihilation, the nihilistic will to ruin everything that is and has value (1951, p. 60).”

In his philosophical autobiography, Jaspers explicitly defines evil as the “...total demolition of communication, absolute self-will (1951, p. 87).” Evil, for Jaspers, is a function of the will, thus sounding very much like Augustine. As I have stated above, I believe that the sense of absolute self-will and the refusal to embrace mutability are ways of severing the bridge from grief, a personal reaction to loss, to mourning, an interpersonal sharing of the meanings and experiences of loss and new attachments. A central task in all mourning is the movement from private emoting and meaning-making to public and interpersonal sharing of such experiences. Once severed, the isolated will implodes, and melancholy is the result. Then “evil,” writes Jaspers, “...takes up the cause of mutinous empirical self-existence against the possible self-being of *Existenz*, ...one that wills nothing but ...to leave existence unfulfilled (1970, p. 151).” “In choosing evil,” Jaspers continues, “my will freely voids itself; intending to ruin *Existenz*, it actually intends its own destruction (1970, p. 151).” And again, evil is “...uncommunicative and seclusive. Willing the vacuity of self-existence, it is a *will to the void* (1970, p. 151).” Yet, how does *self*-destruction affect the destruction of *others*?

Evil destroys the other (and the self) by destroying genuine communication. Refusing to participate in authentic and mutual self-expression in *Existenz* also destroys genuine communication. *Existenz* is nullified by a lack of participation, for self-talk and monologues are inadequate substitutes for *Existenzen* in communication. By cutting myself off, thus preventing my own “coming to be myself, “...I simultaneously do the same to others (as others can do the same to me). This is destruction by omission, the most extreme form being suicide. The choice is to either realize myself with the other in communication, or relapse, alone, (and naked), into mere existence (1970, p. 74).” The latter decision is not made in isolation and affects the relational world that I inhabit. Paradoxically, growth is usually seen, at least in Western culture, in the direction of self-sufficiency and self-autonomy. Yet, as Jaspers points out, the understanding that “I did this alone,” apparently feeling good about my accomplishments, can become evil “...when I rest on it and claim possession (1970, p. 153).”

Jaspers points out the incomprehensible nature of evil and how we seemingly contain the good through our desire to know, which one would think could overcome evil, yet, by definition, “...this is what evil is: a will that knowingly turns against itself...Its only grandeur...lies in the radicality of its destructiveness (1970, p. 152).” Ironically, though, Jaspers describes evil as if “...it were *behind the back* of my good will (1970, p. 152).” In short, Jaspers distrusts the purity of “moral pathos,” and seems aligned with Augustine in cautioning against pride. The most common form of evil, Jaspers shows, is in the *conditionality of our goodness*; we are good “...provided it will serve our self-existence...a will qualified by the empirical drives of self-existence cannot be unconditional, *the lack of unconditionality implies the possibility of evil* (1970, p.

152).” Revenge, resentment, and retaliation are examples of a different relational economy than unconditionality, indeed, this *conditionality* makes evil a possibility. When falling short of unconditionality, we are not evil for we may *intend* unconditionality (again sounding Kantian). The unconditionality that Jaspers is referring to is our unreserved and generous sacrifice towards authentic communication without detachment or deceit. By contrast, evil withholds.

Theodicy, for Jaspers, is the rational attempt to objectify the experience of evil in our lives. Our incessant desire to know fuels theodicies, and more particularly our desire to understand unmitigated, undeserved destruction amidst presumed goals or promises of security and immutability. Yet, in honest foundering we come to the intuition that “we cannot understand them,” and in turn experience “...the utter impossibility of knowing a solution (1971, p. 69).” Self-destruction, and the destruction of others who call the self away from destruction and into communion, are attempts to avert boundary situations and the accompanying illumination of our finitude.

Jaspers reminds us that “...if insight could solve the questions of guilt and struggle, of all evils and their origin, there would be no more boundary situations. Possible *Existenz* would have lost its original experience (1971, p. 69).” On the other hand, Jaspers writes: “The failure of every theodicy is an appeal to the activity of our freedom, which keeps us capable of defiance and surrender (1971, pp. 69-70).” Out of our freedom come both the volitional decisions to destroy, and gain access to, *Existenz*. Through foundering we have the possibility to soar; when we lose our lives, we can save them.

### *Jaspers on Grace*

Grace is embedded into the very nature of coming to ourselves. *We cannot, however, accomplish this project alone.* For Jaspers, this process can only occur in connection with the transcendent, which illuminates *Existenz*. *Existenz*, in turn, is realized only in communication (1970, p. 213). We come to ourselves, therefore, not through *a*-gency alone, but through *co*-gency; the movement toward coming to ourselves among risking, willing and differentiated individuals. As Fritz Kaufmann has noted, for Jaspers “...the truest, most intimate communication has this paradoxical feature about it: that it respects, emphasizes and intensifies the differences between one existence and the other, instead of dwarfing, slurring and hiding them (Kaufmann, 1957, pp. 212-213).”

Transcendence erupts from the mutual experience of overcoming inner and interpersonal defenses. It presupposes courage and risk communicating for the sake of self-preservation, and security, by its very posture, nullifies dependence on transcendence as necessary to experience *Existenz*. Ignoring the necessity of transcendence, while relying on human potential alone to achieve *Existenz* leaves one positing what Jaspers calls the “...super-erogation of man, who wishes to owe only to himself what has been bestowed upon him by grace (Jaspers, 1951, p. 90).” The Other is necessary for coming to ourselves, and thus, *Existenz* is predicated on grace. Healing through acceptance of mutual recognition, as Gerald May puts it in Addiction and Grace (1988, pp. 138-139), is to be (once again) “truly vulnerable to attachment,” and I would add, an attachment of mutually recognizing and accountable subjects. Grace facilitates the process by which we can mourn such that we can once again be vulnerable to new, albeit mutable, attachments.

On the other hand, Jaspers rejects any understanding of grace that entails supernaturalism of any kind. Jaspers argues that "...God does not speak through the commands and revelations of other men but in man's selfhood and through his freedom..." and furthermore that "... any restriction on man's freedom, created by God and oriented to God, is a restriction upon the very thing through which God manifests himself (1951, p. 90)." Remembering that fulfillment, as Jaspers puts it, comes with the freedom to risk oneself in communication towards Existenz; God speaks through risky, mutual communication. Or better put, "transcendence is experienced" in ciphers, for God can never be known directly or objectified. Such communication promotes openness and vulnerability to new losses or rejection that is never an incestuous symbiosis (à la Fromm), but a "loving struggle" between two differentiated persons.

Any attempts to absolutize the transcendent by objectifying, securing, or controlling encounters, results in the loss of Existenz, as well as the loss of these very projects in the face of inevitable boundary situations. If I do not engage the boundary situations (which is a resistance to mourning the lost illusion of immutability) I can never know myself as Existenz. In this loss I can neither recognize the necessity of the other's participation in my Existenz, nor my own self-limitations. Grace facilitates the movement from foundering in isolation to communing among Existenzen, which is the mourning process. Grace is not that which overrides, expiates, compensates for, protects us from, or allows us to ignore our foundering. Otherworldly, a/historical understandings may regard grace as originating in (and returning to) immutability. But, for Jaspers, this is a misunderstanding of the ciphers of transcendence and eternity. On the contrary, for Jaspers we encounter transcendence when we actually embrace mutability. Grace

facilitates our embrace of foundering, which results in the surprise of transcendence in Existenz.

Only grace (as the intervention of the Other through the other-in-communication-with-me) can move self-destructive agency in existence into self-disclosed, vulnerable communication among Existenzen. For Jaspers, we have an inherent desire for self-illumination, which, in spite of its tendency to achieve this goal through manipulation and objectification, nonetheless shipwrecks in boundary situations. This is a very vulnerable time. One can resign or withdraw from life in reaction to the boundary situations, and hence move toward the evil: self-destruction-via-non-participation-in-communication.

How does the intervention of the other, or grace, avert or deliver one from this direction? For Jaspers, this cannot come through the “personal manipulations of the psychotherapist,” who cannot force the volitional and free choice towards one’s surrender to being (1923, p. 809). The individual must make the shift from abstract categorization into personal encounter; “...to set about God, not about faith, about Being, not about Thinking; about someone he loves, not love itself; about performance, not experience; about realization not about mere possibilities...for their own sakes alone (1923, p. 810).”

How could one, though, make the shifts from isolation and abstraction to interpersonal engagement in Existenz by one’s own volition (a Pelagian position), if grace is the Other’s intervention that initiates or facilitates this shift (an Augustinian position)? Jaspers argues that one can neither accomplish this shift by one’s own volition, nor could Existenzen ever meet without it. Jaspers sees a false dichotomy embedded in the question of absolute agency or absolute Otherness as the more accurate understanding of grace.

To briefly review his position, human agency by nature seeks to understand others, the world, and ourselves, though it does so, typically, by objectifying, absolutizing, totalizing, controlling, manipulating, and other manifestations of volitional self-seeking. Eventually, we run into boundary situations, which are not created by our own hands, that shipwreck this project, leaving us aware of our finitude and need for others. We then have a choice to surrender to this awareness, or attempt “end runs” to avoid it. Our choice is highly influenced, though, by the “...drastic lesson that in everything we are dependent...we have needs that can only be satisfied from without (1923, p. 326).” The shift from mere existence to Existenz comes through clarity of heart and mind, as a result of encounters with boundary situations. But, for Jaspers as for Augustine, even clarity of mind is a gift. Jaspers argues that the individual “...does not create himself; he has to be given to himself from a source he does not know...he can create himself only by grasping at something else and he can trust himself only by trusting one thing else, Transcendence (1923, p. 763).” More directly, Jaspers writes, “Man in his finiteness stands within the infinite...all human activity and thought is at the service of something incomprehensible within which it operates and by which it is absorbed and overborne whether we like to call it fate or providence (1923, p. 765).”

Jaspers offers us cautious direction when faced with the challenge of boundary situations. He writes, “...the truly life-giving but risky course is to help clarify the boundary situation (1970, pp. 270ff),” in order to “tease out entanglements,” which are misperceptions of possibilities and limitations in the misnaming and misunderstanding of finitude and the ciphers of transcendence. Existenz founders because it aspires to things

infinite; it seeks to impose unconditionality on a conditional world (Thyssen, 1957, p. 322). I call these entanglements complicated mourning.

Jaspers notes, though, that there is a dangerous risk that what could get clarified is the depth of the very loss the client is attempting to master in the first place. One must respond as *Existenz* to an unconditionally negative and suicidal person with authentic love. Contrary to being a particular technique, which would negate communication among *Existenzen* anyway, Jaspers writes that "...there is a chance of rescue if communication succeeds...only the love in it that permits no thought-out conduct, no guidance according to plans...at its most unconstrained and clear-sighted...both all-permissive and all-exacting can help (1970, p. 270)." Jaspers is quick to add that "I cannot will this love," but "...those who love him are linked by the very transcendence that has now split...this love alone puts me into the same boundary situation that imperils the one I love. In the final analysis he can be helped only because he is loved; there is no repeating this help, no copying it, and no setting up rules for it (1970, pp. 272, 279)."

### ***Complementarity***

Though not originally intended for that purpose, Jaspers's descriptions of foundering and boundary situations demonstrate the complementarity of evil and grace. Foundering is a point of "access to eternity." Only as I fail in my attempts at totalization, including totalizing attempts to communicate, can I be open to the transcendent. Writing out of his own philosophical biography, Jaspers shows that "...the essence of man becomes conscious of itself only in ultimate situations (1955, p. 84)." Seeking to fail, self-creating unnecessary suffering will not lead us to *Existenz*. In fact, romanticizing the



tragic, an anathema for Jaspers, invites evil. He writes that the “nothing-but-tragedy” attitude “is a perversion of tragic knowledge” that can elevate the “arrogant nihilist to the pathos of feeling himself a hero.” Jaspers further warns that this “...sets free the turmoil of dark impulses: the delight in meaningless activity, in torturing and in being tortured, in destruction for its own sake, in the raging hatred against the world and man coupled with the raging hatred against one’s own despised existence (1952, p. 101).” The difference between tragedy as an avenue to evil or tragedy as an opening for grace lies solely in whether we embrace or deny our mourning of lost immutability, brutally experienced in the face of boundary situations. The former pathway leads to destruction of self and others; the latter to eternity experienced as one coming to oneself.

In the shipwrecking of rational certitude transcendence is glimpsed; it is “...adventurous, as it were, a gift, and its realization can be forced by no plan and no will (Hoffman, 1957, pp. 107-108).” We find transcendence in mourning, and begrudgingly celebrate our shipwreck. Evil and grace are outcomes of how we manage and respond to boundary situations. “Through the tragic,” Jaspers writes, “something different speaks to us, something that is no longer tragic...(1952, p. 94).”

### ***Contributions and Limitations of My Study***

One of the unique aspects of this study is its emphasis on understanding evil and grace as limit experiences that are also expressions of mourning-*in-the-world*. Evil is the compensatory, destructive outcome of the *refusal* to mourn the loss of immutability. Evil attempts to transcend mutability by enforcing immutability, whether through inducing death, confinement, sterility, subjugation, control, inorganicity, disintegration, or

hegemony as payback for, or prevention against, the threat or reality of mutability. Grace is another type of transcendence that expresses the agency-of-mourning. Grace *enables us to* mourn the loss of immutability by allowing us to embrace and reframe *mutability as 1) an existential given that is 2) nonetheless the experience of possibility and freedom;* here transcendence is not an escape from mutability, but a radical descent *into* mutability without being equated *with* mutability.

Tying evil and grace to the common human experience of mourning as an aspect in every moment of our lives, albeit as limit phenomena, brings together seemingly divergent philosophical, theological and psychological disciplines in reflection and conversation regarding evil and grace as empirical experiences in the existential sense.

Existential reality, however, is experienced equiprimordially, which, in highlighting this point, offers another particular contribution to discussions of evil and grace. In reviewing three orientations shared by some fourth century theologians and twentieth century psychologists which emphasize the selective primacy of the *Eigenwelt*, *Mitwelt*, and *Umwelt* solutions, I contend that each position is deficient in their appreciation of the equiprimordality of these modes of “Being-in-the-world.” Multiple variations on these positions have been developed over the years, but the core convictions that animate them have remained the same. Another contribution of this study is my argument that Jaspers avoids the biases and blind spots inherent in these disparate strands of thought, while more centrally locating complicated and facilitated mourning at the heart of evil and grace.

The first position is an Augustinian-Freudian orientation that views evil as inherent in human nature, and treats grace as random luck towards evolutionary survival,

which I call an *Umwelt* bias. Our environmental, biological, and natural milieu are also essential for Jaspers, in spite of his emphasis on transcendence and communication. For instance, the boundary situations are themselves *Umwelten*. Jaspers insists that *Existenz*, and thus our encounters with transcendence, occur *within* our situated existence. If anything, *Existenz* can differentiate and identify itself from existence only against the resistance of nature (Thyssen, 1957, p. 322).

Yet, Jaspers is far from holding an *Umwelt* bias. Unlike an *Umwelt* bias that would see evil as inherent in the passions or genetic structure of human existence, evil is not a thing-in-itself for Jaspers (following Kant and Augustine), but a volitional distortion and destruction of communication (similar to Fromm). Jaspers is explicit: evil is "...not definable by substance (1970, p. 151)." The entire structure of Jaspers' thought rests on the distinction between *Existenz* and existence. Evil and grace both are understood only within this larger framework. Evil is the volitional *refusal* to move into *Existenz*, where grace is that which *invites* persons into *Existenz*. A process, event or item of information can be physically, biologically, or even evolutionarily true, and yet not *existentially* valid. Existential truth, as Jaspers uses it, is experienced among *Existenzen*.

Jaspers' self-negation, though much like Freud's death instinct, is still quite different from it. The goal of evil, says Jaspers, is not inorganicity, but the intentional destruction of communion and authentic connection through the destruction of the self. Evil is not *merely* the aftermath of random collateral damage in genetic natural selection, even though the inherent conflict therein is itself a boundary situation. Jaspers argues that conflict and existential guilt are inescapable and natural aspects of our movement towards communion, and adds that "...all living things are struggling for existence, even

unwittingly and unwillingly...My existence as such deprives others, just as they deprive me...I must *fight for manifestation* to be assured of my being (1970, pp. 204, 212).”

Notice, though, that the fight is not a fight *against* life, but *for* coming to ourselves in relationship with others doing the same. Mourning the losses incurred in confrontations within the *Umwelt* are neither introjected into the unconscious as in melancholia, nor avoided through the desire for inorganicity. For Jaspers, mourning itself is a cipher of transcendence, signaling the possibility of *Existenz*.

Jaspers highlights an idea often overlooked among theorists with an *Umwelt* bias, namely, the inherent and natural tendency towards mutual aid in nature. In fact, he directly states that “...all existence rests on mutual aid (1970, p. 206).” This stands in stark contrast to Freud’s Hobbesian conception of “the state of nature,” in which conflict and competition are unceasing. According to Jaspers, we are biologically pre-disposed to relate soulfully to one another, as object-relations theory suggests. To state this in existential language, our *Mitwelt* resides *within Umwelt*, which pulls for an equiprimordial perspective on modes of being-in-the-world. The *Eigenwelt* relates to these other modes of being by deciding whether or not to surrender to the shipwreck of *Umwelt’s* boundary situations and risk “coming to oneself” in communication.

The second line of thinking in this project is the *Eigenwelt* bias of a Manichean-Jungian position that views evil as the outcome of psychic disintegration and grace as an unconscious process that facilitates integration. In spite of how active agents are in either willing destruction or in surrendering to communication, for Jaspers, the very nature of *Existenz* belies an *Eigenwelt* bias. Jaspers writes that when “...the in-itself of *Existenz* fails; wherever I am authentically myself, I am not only myself (Thyssen, 1957, p. 316).”

Unlike an *Eigenwelt* bias, *Existenz* (individual self-illumination) can only occur when we are also committed to the self-illumination of the other (and they, us). Reciprocity is at the heart of *Existenz*. We struggle together towards “inexorable mutual illumination (1970, p. 205).”

Jaspers’ focus on *Existenz* sounds similar to Heidegger’s thinking about *Dasein* (another *Eigenwelt* biased position), though Jaspers strongly emphasizes the differences. One’s own authenticity is impossible without the other’s participation. The other is not, though, existing as a means for my own authenticity. “Being there,” in Jaspers’ words, “...is possible only with other being-there...existence can come into its own only with other existence...(1950, pp. 73ff).” Personal authenticity arises out of interpersonal communication. Jaspers stresses that “...the will-to-communicate...never means simply to submit oneself to the other as such, but rather to know that other, to hear him, to will to reckon with him even unto the necessity of a transformation of oneself (1950, pp. 91ff).” Jaspers is astute enough to know that just because we are inherently social creatures does not mean that we automatically avoid solipsism.

Jaspers views the Jungian emphasis on the drive to inner wholeness at the expense of dialogue as potentially evil, and radically misconceived. What Jaspers considers “incomprehensible” can become evil if we do not engage and mourn our inherent *incompleteness* (1969, pp. 150, 151; 1970, p. 69). Any self-centered totalization is doomed to shipwreck; this process ushers us into our never-to-be-healed incompleteness and dependency on otherness. Grace allows me to *accept* this aspect of coming to know myself, *not* overcome it. I mourn the loss of an *illusion* of integration and completeness.

At first glance, Jaspers' emphasis on relationality seems to saddle him with a *Mitwelt* bias, but not in the long run, as it turns out.

The third and final strand of thought explored in this project is the Pelagian-Frommian *Mitwelt* bias, which construes evil as the result of thwarted human potential due to oppressive social and historical conditions, grace being the sustenance for my *own* agentic extrication from evil. Although Fromm and Jaspers (as well as Buber) share an acknowledgement and respect for unavoidable and inevitable tragedy in existence, as well as for the primacy of interpersonal culpability in these matters, Jaspers nevertheless makes his own point about a humanistic strand in psychology arising out of a *Mitwelt* bias (something Fromm critiqued as well) that shies away from tempering human potential. Jaspers writes, "In reality nothing conquers ... everything becomes questionable, the hero as well as the universal. Compared with the transcendent, all is finite and relative...it neither dominates nor submits; it simply exists (1952, pp. 51-52)." The experience of transcendence is predicated on an acknowledgement that I cannot accomplish my own coming to myself without the other. The very realities of foundering and tragedy negate any human success or excellence at overcoming or reaching transcendence *by oneself*. The more successful I am, the more tragic and distant from transcendence I find myself. Jaspers notes that "...precisely when we are most highly successful we most truly fail (1952, pp. 93, 96)." True communication can never be won or established by oneself.

Secondly (though not opposed to Fromm), Jaspers normalizes multiple ways of being-with-each-other in the *Mitwelt*, which includes nurturance *and* conflict. Jaspers writes that "...men must support each other in community, and they must battle in

collision. Tragic knowledge sees those battles, which are unavoidable...incompatible needs, duties, motives, and qualities of character are locked in combat (1952, pp. 46-47).” Conflict, collision, and tragedy are not due to the absence of reasonableness or maternal nurturance; they would occur in spite of these factors as necessary in the “loving struggle” towards authentic communication among *Existenzen*.

Although Jaspers acknowledges (with Fromm) the need to alter oppressive social conditions, he also emphasizes the need to own our complicity in maintaining or perpetuating them, a point Jaspers argues at length in The Question of German Guilt (1947). Yet, Jaspers maintains that all the nurturance in the world cannot dispense with conflict and struggle, which are boundary situations that remind us of our limitations and need of each other; an awareness that simultaneously is an awareness of transcendence.

Equiprimordality, therefore, guarantees against the collapse of *Existenz* into mere existence. *Existenz* is an individual’s coming to himself through loving struggle and deepening communion with the other’s *Existenz* in shared confrontation with boundary situations that are simply inherent in all human life. Evil and grace are neither solely the outcome of natural instinct, nor social oppression or liberation, nor intrapsychic splitting or integration. Evil and grace are disparate modes of addressing the realities of mourning and loss in an existential situation that calls for a definite choice: surrender to, or resist, existential communion. Jaspers has in mind a vision of “...a great and noble life: to endure ambiguity in the movement of truth and to make light shine through it; to stand fast in uncertainty; to prove capable of unlimited love and hope (1952, p. 105).”

One intended and unapologetic limitation of this study is its lack of formal clinical and/or protocol data to support my theoretical claims. The hermeneutical-

phenomenological approach in this study intends to interpret texts and theorists in light of the common human experience of mourning in order better to clarify both. I believe that the theoretical positions on mourning, evil and grace addressed in this study are predicated on rigorous dwelling with actual lived experiences of mourning-in-the-world. Nevertheless, an additional study could entail a correlation of this project with a more formal one in protocol research involving actual descriptions of self-reported experienced of mourning, evil and grace.

A second limitation of this study is its content parameters; I focus on a select few theorists in meaning-oriented psychology, ending with Jaspers, and even fewer Christian theologians. Many other discussions of evil and grace occur outside of the Christian tradition that are at variance and/or are sympathetic with my project; the various perspectives on evil in the Eastern religious traditions are cases in point. I am not a practitioner of the Eastern religious traditions, and I do not want to make presumptions about the richness of these traditions “out of class.” A comparison of this study with a comparable one focusing on this tradition would be fascinating. The limitations of this study would not allow such an investigation.

In spite of difficulties with operationalizing concepts such as evil and grace, much can be said from a quantitative and experimental psychology viewpoint about the function of these beliefs in pathology and in therapeutic successes. My perspective, though, is that the very action of operationalizing evil and grace will reduce our understanding of them to less than limit experiences, which would be the point for an experimental psychologist, but from my perspective would be tragic for us all. In the



bask of grace's holdings, one thing remains in confessions of survivors of evil, let us never forget the profundity of these experiences as we mourn well into new life.

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