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Giving an Account of Evil

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Editor
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Introduction

These proceedings from the 2017 Societas Ethica annual conference follows the format of the 2015 and 2016 proceedings. It contains two parts: (1) the keynote lectures, in some cases the full lectures, and in others, the abstracts, and (2) the abstracts from the short paper sessions.

Thank you to all contributors and participants of the 2017 Societas Ethica annual conference, particularly to the President of Societas Ethica, Dr. Hille Haker, and the board members of the Societas Ethica.

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On the Genesis of Evil in Human Evolution: Homo Sapiens, Homo Loquens, Homo Crudelis

Marcel Hénaff

The question of evil is an enigma we have never resolved and perhaps never will; it is like a bottomless abyss. It is present at the core of myths and narratives of origins; it challenges traditions of wisdom. For a long time the prevailing approaches have been metaphysical, religious, moral, or psychological. The first task incumbent on rigorous reflection is to ask what this notion aims to designate. Beyond specific beliefs or traditions, what can be viewed as pertaining to a reality of evil observable everywhere? For example, social and institutional criteria can be considered; evil is then understood as everything that generates violence among groups, injustice, exclusion, and repression (including torture). Individual behaviors can also be taken into account, such as the will to offend or humiliate others, lie, manipulate, exclude, or hurt them. Those behaviors can be designated as perversity or mental corruption. Where does this collective and individual ability to harm come from? Why are humans endowed with it, while at the same time they are capable of the most generous actions and the most admirable accomplishments?

An enigma thus exists, above all because no genealogy of those behaviors appears possible. This is why every culture has attempted to address them through those narratives of origins we call myths, which express the profound perplexity or even sense of a scandal generated by our inability to confront a kind of curse that afflicts our species. It is probably because of this fundamental impotence that metaphysical speculations and moral treatises choose as their starting point to address evil as a fact whose various modalities must be understood as a challenge to be addressed through appropriate behaviors. In both cases—because doing so appears a reasonable methodological choice—the question of origins is given up, or at least bracketed.

I believe that the time has come to view a genealogical approach as possible, or even necessary. This approach can be both empirical and speculative, based on the results of research conducted over the past decades on the evolution of living species, beginning with the human species. Many works on aggressive behaviors in animal species are available. Among the best known are those of ethologists such as Konrad Lorenz and Franz de Waal. Based on this research I would like to raise new questions, articulating them with anthropological work on exchanges and conflicts in and among traditional societies (M. Mauss, B. Malinowski, G. Bateson, A. Wiener, and Ph. Descola, for example). Those inquiries encourage us to identify what is missing in biological and ethological approaches: the fact that humans are a symbolic species, an animal endowed with language, which changes everything in prodigious ways; this fact opens a new world of problems. Language gives rise to a new order: the order of thought; thus arise a distance and a power of the virtual that completely change our relationship to the world and above all to other humans. Contrary to what could have been expected, this extraordinary increase in cognitive abilities does not decrease the violence that haunts our species; it merely alters and above all complexifies it; it supplies it with unprecedented resources and gives it access to forms of expression found in no other animal species. This specificity can be summarized with one word: cruelty. Along thousands of years the construction of the particular psyche of modern homo sapiens has thus occurred; the question then is no longer the intersection of an aggressiveness associated with evolution, with new cognitive abilities, but the fact of an ability to harm that has become permanent. This can be called evil. Can it be said that homo sapiens shows an inclination to

and above all a will for evil? Along with Kant, can we speak of a radical evil? Along with him, should we recognize this as an irreparable fact? This requires a discussion. The question is then to understand how our species was able to survive, and what answers it has provided.

I – Violence in Human Evolution

If an enigma of evil does exist, it might be assumed to begin with the phenomenon of violence in living species. But is this actually evil? Violence is first of all a fact of normal competition, on the one hand among different species, and on the other among members of the same species; this constitutes one of the main aspects of evolution as a process of selection. Since Darwin's work many observations have been conducted and hypotheses refined. The new research developed by ethology (such as F. de Waal's on chimpanzees)¹ has considerably increased our knowledge of the forms of relationships and conflicts in animal societies. Despite certain limitations, Konrad Lorenz's *Aggression*² remains one of the works of record. Let us consider a few of its main conclusions.

Lorenz explains first of all that in living beings aggression is not in and of itself a negative phenomenon. It is part of the equipment they need to ensure their survival, establish their ecological niches, attack their prey, and resist their predators. Aggression is at the core of life; it is also its expression—but not its only expression, since empathy is another one. It is crucial, however, because its primary purpose is to preserve the species. After Darwin and many others, Lorenz emphasizes the difference between the struggle among different species and the struggle internal to every species. The first involves almost exclusively survival (and, for this very reason, territory). This struggle, which can be summarized as the relationship between predator and prey, generally reaches its equilibrium spontaneously. From an objective standpoint, complementary species spare one another spontaneously. The struggle within every species is something else entirely. Within each group its main stakes are access to reproduction and the protection of the offspring; in the case of social animals there is also a competition for dominance over the group. Leaving aside rare exceptions or accidents, this struggle is not lethal; its aim is to remove competitors, not exterminate them. All kinds of inhibiting mechanisms contribute to preventing conflicts from arising or deteriorating.

But in the case of the human species, Lorenz observes, something has gone astray, which can be described and dated. By the end of the Lower Neolithic (i.e. at the beginning of the domestication of plants and animals, no more than 12,000 years ago), *Homo sapiens* had prevailed over its main enemy animal species; humans were capable to secure sufficient food, find protection from the cold, and establish social organizations. Their potential for aggression, however, remained intact. At the same time, the power of their tools and weapons increased significantly. The two phenomena added to each other: "Then began a nocive intra-species selection. The selective factor was now war among neighboring bands of enemy men."³ More dangerous still, aggression, now limited toward nonhuman species and when competing human groups are far apart, remains available to be discharged within the (usually small) group and is associated with the new means to maim and kill. The missing external stimulus is replaced by an internal stimulus that allows for abreaction (the reduction of tension through the satisfaction expected). This is observed with respect to all kinds of instincts, whether aggression or attachment. In the case of aggressive instincts the result can be disastrous and detached from any evolutionary logic. In the human species there is thus a new fact: *lethal* aggression becomes possible within one species; it is no longer an accident; it

¹ F. de Waal, *Peacemaking among Primates*, Harvard, 1989.

² Konrad Lorenz, *On Aggression*; Mariner Books, 1974, repr. 2002 [*Der sonnigen Böse. Zur Naturgeschichte der Aggression*, 1963].

³ Lorenz, *Ibid.*, p. 48.

even becomes a permanent fact. Another new phenomenon appears: within the same species groups tend to behave toward one another as different and hostile species. This is what Lorenz after Erikson calls *pseudo-speciation*. He even suggests the term *cultural pseudo-speciation*. This means that differences in modes of behavior, language, clothing, physical appearance, etc., are perceived as markers of belonging to a different species. This is probably one of the major turning points in the fate of *Homo sapiens*. We are still experiencing its destructive effects everyday.

Should we therefore wish for the deactivation of aggression? This would be a high price to pay, since the intensity of relationships would be lost as well: "A healthy dose of aggression is involved in the most intimate and personal bonds that can exist among living beings."⁴ This is a surprising claim. And yet this is precisely what emerges a contrario in anonymous groups such as bird colonies or the great herds of mammals whose members mix with one another without aggression, thus free from conflicts but also deprived of "personal" bonds. The very ideas of person and personality thus appear only along with the existence of a privileged bond with a fellow creature,⁵ and without at least some amount of aggression this potential does not emerge.⁶ It is as if in every living being the potential for violence is capable to determine the energy directed toward other living beings, distinguish them, focalize them, and select them for either destruction or bonding. In humans this becomes an alternative between rejection and acceptance, exclusion and love.

The comparative analyses Lorenz proposes set up an innovative parallel among similar behaviors in various animal societies and between those species and humans. The bifurcation--or deviance—he observes in the case of humans is highly illuminating. Yet his explanation is not fully satisfactory. Although it establishes the emergence in humans of a new form of aggression directed at their own species, it does not account for its most worrisome aspect: cruelty. This cruelty comes up in his comparison with a rodent society, brown rats, which form groups so exclusive that, as soon as an individual alien to the group has been identified through its smell, it is mercilessly killed by the members of the group where it has strayed. This is an instructive case of pseudo-speciation. In this case, however, the behavior observed is purely instinctive, and therefore probably does not amount to true cruelty. We need to identify what changes in the case of the human animal, and define his striking specificity, and therefore how this can be viewed as a major form of what we call evil. Lorenz comes close to a possible answer when he discusses the role of language in the formation of violence in our species. This requires a more extended examination.

[B] The Turning Point of Language: Thought, Virtual Worlds, and Cruelty

Ethologists are particularly well situated to know that animal societies have precise and well-developed communication systems. Nevertheless, none of those reaches the level of complexity of human verbal language, or makes use of the conceptual thought human language both entails and makes possible. With respect to our species this should be cause for immense satisfaction. Lorenz notes, however: "All the great perils that threaten humankind with extermination are direct consequences of conceptual thought and verbal language. They expelled man from the Eden where he could simply follow his instincts and do not do what

⁴ Lorenz, *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁵ Lorenz, *Ibid.*, p. 137.

⁶ "From a phylogenetic standpoint anonymous herds must have formed before the existence of personal bonds (...) The formation of anonymous bands and personal friendship are mutually exclusive, because the latter is always tightly associated with aggressive behavior." Lorenz, *Ibid.*, p. 147.

he pleased."⁷ This is a bold and crucial claim. Lorenz also writes that those two new powers have profoundly transformed the course of human evolution. They are at the core of the mechanism that brings together the abilities to know and to transform the world. It is therefore crucial to consider more precisely how verbal language played the defining role Lorenz merely mentions.

We know that verbal language and conceptual thought formed at the same time and that this transformation stabilized in the brain's neural networks according to processes neuro-biological research is still in the process of discovering.⁸ This is an immense question, which cannot be discussed here. Let us only underline one aspect of the acquisition of language that should be of interest to every specialist of evolution, even though it is not a data available for direct physical observation: the acquisition of languages establishes a new *distance* between humans and their world. Any discussion of self-awareness runs the risk of being tautological. Every one of the great founders of linguistic or semiotic theory (C.S. Peirce, F. de Saussure, L. Bloomfield, K. Bühler, L. Hjelmslev, R. Jakobson) underlines this break: verbal language makes the world exist in its absence; it institutes a new reality. This was stated and explained in various ways by many theorists. Karl Bühler's formulation⁹ is especially interesting in the sense that it establishes a distinction between three fundamental functions of human language: expressive, communicative, and representative. The first two of those functions (conveying experiences, calling on an addressee) are shared by most forms of communication in animals, especially mammals. The representative function, on the contrary, is specific to verbal language. For Bühler this function is most apparent in the functioning of description: an absent reality becomes present in the discourse that specifies its elements. Although admirably complex, the communication systems used by insects remain primarily systems of signals constituting information that triggers in addressees a specific behavior. There is a response and a coordination, but not a "comment," that is, a message about the message. Communication remains caught within the operation to be performed. Human language, on the contrary, is capable to formulate substitutes for experience. Mental representations are constructed through the arrangement of phonic materials and the levels of articulation of the formative (morphematic and syntactic) elements. Furthermore, through the use of rules and their combinations, human language is endowed with the virtual ability to say anything, echoing the boundless plasticity of the human brain: it can state an infinite number of contents matching an infinity of situations either experienced or invented, whether possible or impossible.

This capability for distance and inventiveness inherent in verbal language must be considered inseparable from the imaginative or projective function and favorable to the invention of virtual worlds that presuppose, within cognition, a space for play and disinterested experimentation. This distance or separation also has other effects from the perspective of evolution: the possibility to dissociate pulsions from immediate goals, and furthermore to open the field of purposeless actions and generate actions as blank testings of configurations that can be actualized by the very fact that they can be imagined. Cognitive distance is also a playful distance; it frees worlds, or rather it makes them arise at the same time on a logical, narrative, and imaginative level. This involves narratives, poetry, and every form of art, as well as mathematics, logic in general, and conceptual speculations. More generally language makes the world of thought possible; it is the condition of the formation of the human mind and the emergence of culture ; it opens a boundless mental field, even

⁷ Lorenz, *Op.cit.*, p. 230.

⁸ J.P. Changeux, *L'Homme neuronal*, Paris, Fayard, 1984 ; G. Edelman, *A Universe of Consciousness, How Matter Becomes Imagination*, NY, Basic Books 2000; G. Fauconnier & M. Turner, *The Way we Think*, New York, Basic Books, 2002. –

⁹ K. Bühler, *Theory of Language*, Philadelphia, J. Benjamin Publishing, 1988 [*Sprachtheorie*, Vienna, 1934]

making it possible to conceive of the very idea of infinity.

Yet what can constitute on the level of cognition an extraordinary power of invention and innovation can diverge on the level of pulsions into either intense and delicate expressions of emotional bonds or expressions of aggressions and experiences limited by cruelty. The potential for violence bequeathed by the millions of years of evolution of living beings in general and the hundreds of thousand years of the hundreds of years of the process of hominization since the first homo sapiens is still available, but its blending with the cognitive world open by the acquisition of verbal language confers on it a complexity of forms and an endless range of variations that constitute precisely what we call cruelty. This is the point we must consider and argue.

The opening of virtual worlds made possible by the power of representation associated with human language cannot, however, be separated from the evolution of an entire set of cognitive and adaptive processes that are at the same time its condition and its effect. At least three main processes can be mentioned: neoteny, de-specialization, and self-domestication. Neoteny designates the preservation in living adult organisms of typically juvenile features, or a necessary delay in the reaching of adulthood. The observation of many animal species has shown that the more intelligent the animal (ravens, mouse, and of course chimpanzees), the more active and rich in discoveries the formative period, and the longer the neotenic stage. This stage is marked by intense curiosity, a systematic activity of exploration of the environment and testing of the relationships with other living beings. As for humans, not only do they have an extremely long childhood, but their neotenic process (discovery, curiosity, learning) appears to last for their entire lives (neurobiologists document this precisely based on transformations that can be observed in the brain). It has often been said that humans are by nature uncompleted beings. This is why they are creatures of risk. They are born and remain in the openness of possibilities.

This openness also exists with respect to another fundamental human feature inseparable from neoteny: a polyvalence of organic functions and an incomparable ability for adaptation to all kinds of geographic and climate conditions. The human animal de-specialized or, in biological terms, de-differentiated. Humans are no longer bound to a single ecological niche or particular social conditions. They became « the specialist on non specialization.¹⁰ » This indifference guarantees an exceptional plasticity, which increased exponentially humans' capacity for survival and their command of the environment. Their non-adaptation makes them adaptable to anything. This de-differentiation, this space of possibilities, opens up and delineates the field of freedom.

It remains for us to understand how this de-differentiation occurred. According to Lorenz, this was a process of self-domestication—which involves a paradox, since domestication applies to living beings (plants and animals) that humans subjected to their command, forming with them a new biotope. Through this process, however, humans domesticated themselves. They lost the specialization of tasks forced on them by life in the wild. As a compensation they can do anything, and above all create artifacts that externalize and overdrive their own organs; humans have built captors massively more powerful than their own senses and computers faster than their own minds. All of those form the new human biotope. This has inevitably brought on profound transformations in humans themselves. According to Lorenz this ancient process of domestication was associated with three remarkable phenomena: 1. An intensification of neotenic features, including on a physiological level (thickening of the body); 2. An overdevelopment of mating and feeding instincts; 3. A weakening of social instincts and inhibitions linked to aggression.¹¹

¹⁰. K. Lorenz, *Ibid.* p.170

¹¹. *Ibid.* p. 223-232.

This is a remarkable configuration that combines inventive intelligence capable of creating artifacts, a form of sexuality detached from the single purpose of the reproduction of life and no longer restricted to rare time periods, and a quasi-intact aggression free of the inhibitions that life in the wild had developed. Those constitute all the ingredients capable to lead beings endowed with articulated verbal language to a type of violence unmatched in other animal species.

We must therefore consider the following correlation: *the speaking animal, cultured and technically competent, is also the cruel animal*. This is the result not of a random accident, but of a shared structure: a distanced relationship to the world and a boundless plasticity in the experimentation of possibilities, including those that involve the exercise of violence on other beings, beginning with other humans. There is on the one hand a potential for aggression that does not find or no longer seeks external objects to allow for abreaction (a role played by hostile animals during the Paleolithic), and on the other an ability to conceive of actions entirely detached from vital requirements and functional purposes. The meeting of those two elements, or rather their blending and merging, opened the way to a kind of violence that was not part of the evolutionary process. The speaking animal found himself exposed to a new type of violence against which no inhibitions existed. This is at least the hypothesis that can be put forth based on analyses of evolution and animal societies. Lorenz, for example, does not extend his hypotheses this far. He mentions cruelty, but he does not present its functioning. Doing so would have required developing his approach to language and cognitive imagination (which I only outlined here).

[C] – *Homo Sapiens: Symbolic Animal, Institutional Animal*

Before moving further we must raise a few critical questions. We can accept that an approach based on the evolution and emergence of conceptual thought through access to verbal language makes it possible to conceive of the possibility of a specifically human type of violence, sophisticated and perverse, and sometimes extreme. At this point we must note the presence in biologists, ethologists, and cognitivists of an odd reserve: they do not problematize this extension of violence; they only mention it, with concern, as a possible horizon. Yet this is what we must confront and define. The violence unique to humans has generally been explained through three types of behaviors: 1. Instinctual processes of inhibition shared by all social species and the first of which is empathy; 2. The hierarchical distribution of positions, which ensures the necessary distance and the order to be abided by among individuals within the group; 3. Finally—a unique feature of *homo sapiens*—the emergence of a moral conscience, and therefore of internalized norms capable of ruling behaviors. The presence of this third category appears to guarantee that human uniqueness (*homo sapiens* as a moral and free being) is taken into account; and yet this dimension is also incorporated as a variable in the natural process of control of violence.

This approach to the problem is not fully satisfactory, for two reasons. First, it always views human subjects as isolated individuals facing other individuals, equipped with certain cognitive abilities and impulses that allow them to react to their natural and social environment. This biological–naturalistic concept of an individual in general, situated in an indeterminate society, has little meaning for an anthropological approach. Of all phenomena, none is more specifically social—i.e., immediately collective and relational in its expressions—than violence. To this phenomenon animal societies provide answers through regulations hard-wired in their genetic heritage. Such a heritage also exists in humans, but it is always incorporated in and transformed by something else that can be stated as the following: humans are a symbolic animal or, in other words, a ceremonial animal. What does this mean?

First, humans are above all an institutional animal: they are defined by the fact that they live according to (most often implicit) rules. This is crucial, and it changes everything. As a consequence, humans are also a legal animal. It is now relevant to examine more precisely the fact that humans are moral beings, who give themselves norms and proclaim the transcendence of their freedom in the very distinction between good and evil. This mediation through symbolisms and institutions is the element missing in the evolutionary approaches discussed above—as well as in the philosophies that deal with evolutionary data.

What does this mean, that humans are an institutional animal? Two major examples can be given: languages, and kinship systems.

We have discussed verbal language as an ability with which the human animal is endowed; but this ability would be entirely unusable without the existence outside speaking individuals of a linguistic system as a virtual set of means of speech, from phonemes through morphemes and syntactic rules of sentence formation to an entire vocabulary. No word could be uttered and recognized by others without a correct use of language and the existence of grammatical rules. No one forced speakers to use those rules; they came about on their own through collective processes, and they constitute for all speakers an implicit convention of communication, which speakers enter by acquiring the language of their group. We always grow up within a specific language, and we learn its forms and rules. The language we speak is one of the first things we experience in our existence as social beings. This is not an option or an addition to what defines us as human beings. We are humans in the language we acquire. As speaking animals we are from the outset institutional animals.

Even prior to our belonging to language as an already-constituted system that frames our speech, a kinship system exists that assigns us a position within our group. In every society, according to highly diverse modalities, children are born of parents who belong to different groups. In traditional societies this is called the exogamic alliance. It can involve various levels of kinship exclusion, such as the exclusion of consanguineous parents (brothers, sisters, parallel cousins, etc.); this is called the prohibition of incest. Rules of alliance and filiation are always present; they are immensely complex. A child is thus never merely a biological offspring: he/she is so and so's son or daughter... etc., and often has a name that indicates his/her position in the order of birth; every child has rights and obligations. In traditional kinship systems, biological kinship is secondary to social kinship. Every birth is social; every human born is an adopted child of his/her community; every birth is caught within the institution. In short, every birth is a symbolic event. This is less obviously apparent in our own societies, but the principle remains: we are not born as mere living beings; we are born within a network of rules and statuses that make us humans.

Those two examples are highly significant with respect to the question of the control of the violence that inhabits our species, and therefore the question of evil that haunts our humanness. While we are born within institutions (language, kinship), it can be said that on an even deeper level we are born within symbolisms and rituals. Through them humankind has invented the most integrating and effective means to overcome the threat of violence. The most remarkable—in traditional societies—are unquestionably the ritual practices of reciprocal giving. M. Mauss understands this, and he presents it as follows at the end of his *The Gift*:

Over a considerable period of time and in a considerable number of societies, men approached one another in a curious frame of mind, one of fear and exaggerated hostility and [one] of generosity that was likewise exaggerated but such traits only appear insane to our eyes. In all the societies that have immediately preceded our own, and still exist around us, and even in numerous customs extant in our popular morality, there is no middle way: one trusts completely, or one mistrusts completely; one lays down one's arms and gives up magic, or one's gives everything, from fleeting acts of hospitality to one's

daughter and one's good.¹²

This is the choice involved in those first encounters: either war and the risk of a reciprocal massacre, or an offer of peace. But the form taken by this offer is not random; it is not made through words or benevolent gestures alone, but through the ritual offering of precious goods. The purpose of this offering is neither barter nor a mere demonstration of generosity. Those goods are above all guarantees and substitutes of the givers. They are kept by the recipients as testimonies to the alliance that has just been established. This is why it is important to reciprocate by giving other precious goods to the givers, because one cannot enter an alliance alone. This pact expresses the following: we recognize you, we accept you, and we wish to remain allies in the future. No such rituals are observed in animal societies--even though they display other forms of reciprocity--, no exchanges of goods kept over time as proof of a commitment. Furthermore, marriages follow the same logic: the spouse becomes the expression of the alliance, as the precious being that will extend life in the other group.

Those ritual exchanges and exogamic alliances observed in every society were the first form of control of violence among groups prior to the emergence of state organizations that integrate kinship groups. For a long time those groups settled their conflicts by practicing the same reciprocity as in gift exchanges, often with the same participants. This was called vindicatory justice, and it was based on strict compensations and precise rituals. But once the state has emerged, arbitration is provided by courts, and the reference by common law. A transformation has occurred from the old rituals to formal legal systems capable of becoming autonomous and formalizing their procedures. This transformation has been observed in every culture (thus Roman law, at first purely ritual, turned into a system of rules that aimed at rational consistency). Rituals, however, are not non-rational systems; they are mechanisms that make it possible to codify experience and give meaning and purpose to the environment. They are always public and recognized expressions of collective life, and as such, as do language and kinship, they constitute conventions accepted by the group.

Because of this ritualization, very strict sanctions against those who broke the law or prohibitions remained acceptable; this involves a codification of punishment, which distinguishes those sanctions from subjective passions and private vengeance. The very aim of every procedure of modern law is to secure this objectivity. Through rituals and the law we have been able to contain the violence that still threatens us because it remains part of what defines our species. We can claim along with Kant that without conflicts we would not be truly humans, and that conflicts are not separable from what makes us free beings; this is what he calls « unsociable sociability. » But does accepting this provide any comfort when we confront the reality of war, massacres, torture, humiliation, and injustice, which still afflict our societies?

There is thus a more profound evil, which our institutions have not been able to overcome. Should we talk along with Kant of a "radical evil"? This formulation surprised his contemporaries. For him this evil is situated at the core of the free will of the subject who can recognize evil and still chooses it, through a kind of internal twist by which he lies to himself. I believe that we must consider this radicality of evil from a less mental perspective. Let us remember Lorenz's analyses, which show that aggression is the crucial condition of a strong personal relationship in living beings, especially mammals. This observation can be extended

¹² M. Mauss, *The Gift*, London, Routledge, 1990 tr. W.D. Halls.

into a more ambitious hypothesis about humans: the infinity of possibilities and representations language opens up for us, indexed on the violence and energy present in our species, has radically transformed emotional bonds and turned impulses into a desire as immense as the worlds born of thought; but at the same time as those emotions of attachment and love, emotions of rejection and hatred are also caught in the power of the infinite. Against this evil no ritual or law can stand. Faced with this hatred that sometimes inhabits and grasps us, there is only one possible answer: the decision to reject it. This is the power to start over, which we call forgiveness. It is probably the only radical answer to radical evil.

Justice and Mercy as Attributes of God in the Face of Evil: Last Judgement with Dual Outcome or *apokatastasis panton* (ultimate reconciliation)?

Maureen Junker-Kenny

The experience of evil has given rise to widely divergent intellectual responses in the Bible, in philosophy, and in the history of Christian thought. The lecture will explore the relationship between God's justice and God's mercy in the Bible, and investigate differences in the theological anthropologies and doctrines of God of Irenaeus, Augustine, and Friedrich Schleiermacher. The philosophical analyses of Kant and of P. Ricoeur on evil and on hope will be used as a resource for systematic theology and ethics.

Evil as a Problem for Moral Philosophy

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Moral philosophers are supposed to seek criteria of rightness and wrongness of actions, as well as of goodness and badness of characters of agents and of states of affairs aimed at and brought about. The concept of evil usually refers to particular, extreme kinds of badness, the study of which is essential for a deeper understanding of the limits and the failures of ethics. My paper will focus on an analysis of aspects of moral evil, involving wickedness, cruelty and atrocity, with a view to discussing different explanations of their roots and origins, which moral philosophy has to take into account in the pursuit of its practical goals. I shall also deal with conceptions of natural and metaphysical evil, which may also be regarded as a problem for moral philosophy, insofar as it is concerned with broader issues of value and the meaning of life.

Die Grammatik des Bösen und ihr ethischer Impetus: Hören und Antworten

Antje Kapus

Beim Bösen fällt zunächst ein Paradox auf: auf der einen Seite haben wir sehr deutliche Signaturen und "Ikonen" des Bösen in unserem Menschheitsarchiv und kollektivem Gedächtnis (Zivilisationsbruch Auschwitz), doch Spiegel unser normalsprachlicher Gebrauch eine denkwürdige Unterbelichtung. Überall sind umringt von Eigenarten und Verhältnissen, die wir - wären wir nur ehrlich genug - als "böse" bezeichnen würden. Werden fremde und ferne Menschen durch radioaktiv verseuchtes Meerwasser von Fukushima in ihrer leiblichen und körperlichen Integrität verletzt, hat der Betreiber dies zwar ursprünglich so nicht intendiert, aber es als etwas mit hervorgebracht, das wir als (moralisch) "böse", und nicht nur als akzidentell schlecht bezeichnen müssten. Zukünftigen Generationen in 10.000 Jahren möglicherweise Chancen wegzunehmen, müssten wir streng genommen ebenfalls als "böse" betrachten, als uns in Unschuld zu wiegen.

Allein diese Varianten zeigen an, dass wir gewöhnlich mit verschiedenen Nuancen des "Begriffs" "böse" operieren. Ganz oben steht das Prädikat des Absoluten (das Böse), gefolgt von einer unspezifischen Allgemeinheit (Böses), und abgeschwächt von einer unhintergehbaren Faktizität: es gibt Böses - so wie es Ordnung gibt, Leben und Tod und Geburt gibt, Muttersprache gibt usw. Darin verüben (oder praktizieren, hervorbringen usw.) Menschen böse Entitäten (Taten, Ereignisse, Wirkungen usw.), die wiederum ihrer Bosheit, Boshaftigkeit oder Bösartigkeit entkleidet werden, wenn man sie nur als "schlecht, nicht gut, nicht passend" bezeichnet und sich damit genuin moralphilosophischen Reflexionen entledigt.

Bei den Überlegungen zu diesem Thema kamen mir selbst verschiedene Auslegungsmöglichkeiten in den Sinn, die ich kurz andeuten möchte:

1. Die Übersetzung des "Bösen" in die Menschenwürde-Problematik. Wenn eins der höchsten Begriffe die "Unantastbarkeit", Unangreifbarkeit und Unverletzlichkeit ist, dann stellt sich zwangsläufig die Frage, welchen Status, Macht und Bedeutungen dann das Böse hat und in welchem Verhältnis es dazu steht.
2. "Böses" artikuliert "sich" selbst in einem sehr ausgefeilten Geflecht verschiedener Sprecherpositionen, die es Instrumentalisiert und missbraucht, aber auch verletzt. So ist beispielsweise in einer "bösen Tat" wie einer terroristischen Attacke zu rekonstruieren, welcher Sprachgebrauch vorliegt, wer wie in einem Sprachakt Urheber, Sprecher, Äußerer oder Wiederholer ist.

Böses impliziert enorme Angriffe auf ein (leibliches) Selbst, seine Sinn-Annahmen (z.B. Zuverlässigkeit von Anstand und gelebter Sittlichkeit, aber auch vertrauen in andere und die Welt), seinen Horizont und Vermögen. Die Analyse dieser pathischen Dimensionen und der Antworten darauf könnte neue Befunde ergeben.

4. Der Entwurf einer "negativen Transzendenz" des Bösen. Die These im Hintergrund wäre, dass "Böses" verschiedene Formen von (negativer) Transzendenz zur Verkörperung bringt, indem es über die Ebene eines bloßen "Preises" hinausschießt und auf der Ebene von Äquivalenz nicht zu berechnen ist. Eine Skizze der verschiedenen Transendenzen wäre dann ergänzt worden durch unterschiedliche "Pflicht"-Anforderungen, dem zu begegnen oder zu widerstehen.

5. Eine Analytik der Problematiken des Bösen, wie sie insbesondere in Amivalenzen, Konfliktkonstellation und Kontexten von Unbestimmtheit und Unschärfe auftreten bzw. auch im Disput unterschiedlicher Positionen (reproduktives Klonen oder ein "Designerbaby" lehnen wir ab, weil.....aber woanders wird man in Zukunft diese Begründung nicht akzeptieren, weil...was ist und was heißt dann böse?).

Für den Vortrag habe ich mich letztendlich auf eine grundlegende Vorarbeit konzentriert, und zwar auf eine metaethische Erörterung, was man mit einer Rede vom Bösen meint, in welchen Kontexten mit dieser Vokabel operiert wird usw. Der moralphilosophische Impuls dahinter besagt, dass unserer "ethisches" Vermögen gesteigert, differenziert und besser sensibilisiert werden muss, um den Gegebenheiten gerecht werden zu können (Broca-Bsp.)

I. Die triadische Struktur einer Grammatik und die Virulenz pathischer Singularität

Böses scheint sich in einem dreigliedrigen Geflecht abzuspielen: Ein X (Täter, Verursacher usw.) verübt Böses (Gewalt, Schaden, Zufügung von Leid) gegenüber einem getroffenen und verletzbaren Y (Opfer) und wird bei Enthüllung von einem Dritten beobachtet oder beurteilt (Zeugen, Partizipanten, Richter, staatliche Organe wie Behörden oder Polizei, Unbeteiligte, die Medien usw.). Während der "Täter" üblicherweise seine Spuren zu verwischen versuchte, in neueren Formen jedoch dezidiert spektakuläre Zurschaustellungen und Inszenierungen produziert, ist das Opfer meistens gegen seinen Willen mit unwillkürlichen Fragen nach der Bedeutung dessen konfrontiert, was es zu erleiden hatte: Was war das? Wie konnte das geschehen? Warum ist das eingetroffen? Warum hat es mich getroffen? Diese Rede, die bereits deutliche Spuren einer pathischen "Gewalt" zutage treten lässt (etwas widerfährt mir, dessen ich mich nicht widersetzen konnte), zeigt jedoch auch an, inwiefern das betroffene Selbst in die Einzigartigkeit der Erfahrung eingeschlossen ist und nach "Ausgängen" sucht. Im Kontrast dazu produziert hingegen der Diskurs des Dritten eine Form ausgleichender und retributiver Gewalt, indem die *singuläre* Erfahrung des Opfers in die verfügbaren Raster von Regularität (welches Übel liegt vor? Welchen Verstoß

spiegelt es?) und Judikabilität (welche Bemessung soll erfolgen?) übersetzt wird. Philosophisch liegt mit diesen Gesten die Einordnung eines Besonderen in ein Allgemeines vor. Doch der allgemeine Diskurs ist in zweifacher Hinsicht problematisch. Auf der einen Seite wird ein Böses theoretisch „rationalisiert“, indem ihm ein *Wesen*, eine *historische Sinnbestimmung*, ein moralisch verbrämter *Nutzeffekt* oder eine *heilsgeschichtliche Bedeutung* zugesprochen wird (so ist eine Notlüge zugunsten eines Heils erlaubt). Auf der anderen Seite werden Dimensionen des Bösen bagatellisiert und ignoriert, indem es a) als Problem nicht thematisiert und reflektiert wird, b) auf die Ebene eines bloßen *Faktums* reduziert und pathologisiert wird (dieser Übeltäter/Kriminelle war ein "Spinner" oder nicht zurechnungsfähig) oder c) (*sozio*)*pyschologisch* auf zufällige, empirische *Bedingungen* und *Kausalitäten* zurückgeführt wird. Die erste Möglichkeit liegt z.B. in dem Fall vor, dass Richter ein 10-jähriges indisches Mädchen per Gesetz zwingen, ein durch ein Verbrechen (Übel/ Böses) erzeugtes Kind austragen zu müssen, aber niemand dem Kind beisteht, eine Erfahrung artikulieren zu können und sich daher mit anderen und für sich selbst mit dem auseinandersetzen kann, was eigentlich zugefügt wurde. So wird dem Mädchen auch die Chance genommen, jemals nach außen und von selbst eigentlich dasjenige auszusprechen, was es im innersten bewegt, schmerzt, umtreibt. Stattdessen soll es sich stumm und widerstandslos mit der auferzwungenen Version abfinden, es habe gegen jede Normalität einen Stein im Bauch, der dann per Schnitt herausgenommen wird. Das pathisch erfahrene Böse (1. Ebene), dass durch generalisierende Diskurse auf der 2. Ebene durch ein operatives Böses überdeckt wird, wird nun auf einer dritten Ebene durch eine weitere Variante des Bösen überhöht: Bedeutungen werden zur Verfügung gestellt, die das Böses des Ereignisses „auf einen Nenner“ bringen und die Singularität des Opfers in dieser Subsumtion vergessen.¹

2. Grammatiken des Bösen und Implemente von Bedeutung

Unser alltäglicher Sprachgebrauch lässt unsere Unsicherheiten erkennen: Die Rede vom Bösen hat eine gewisse Nähe zum "Sandhaufen"-Argument: Man kann von einem Broker nicht sagen "Er handelt mit Bösem" (selbst wenn seine Aktivitäten moralisch fragwürdige Konsequenzen haben). "Böses" rekuriert auf einen sogenannten „Algorithmus“ des Menschen: Ein Mensch wird entgegen seiner Singularität auf eine Zahl degradiert, wenn der Tod von zwei Personen oder von sechs Millionen in 2. Weltkrieg verglichen wird. Müssen wir bei einem Militäreinsatz von 10 Opfern oder von 100.000 zu beklagenden Toten ausgehen? Sollen zwei „Frühchen“ durch kostenintensive Intensivmedizin notdürftig gerettet werden oder sollen die eingesparten Kosten nicht besser

¹ Gängige Theorien des Realismus, des Konstruktivismus, der „dichten Beschreibung“ und aber auch anderer müssten sich hier auf Korrekturen öffnen.

Herzinfarktpatienten zugute kommen? Der Algorithmus des Bösen tritt auf, wenn die Bedeutung des Menschlichen, des Personalen oder des singulären Anlitzes in die ökonomische Bedeutung übergeht. Auf der Gegenseite droht eine ähnliche Tendenz, wenn sich eine ursprüngliche Bedeutung in eine leere Spielbedeutung verwandelt oder der Sinn nicht nur verloren geht, sondern auch in einem Sinnverzicht verschwindet: an diesem Punkt wird "eigentlich" Böses nicht mehr erkannt und wahrgenommen als Böses. Dazu kommen weitere Unterscheidungskriterien wie a) *Sprechakt* (Böses wird teleologisch und instrumental *für* etwas gebraucht, z.B. eine Erpressung anstelle einer Bitte), b) der *Sprechtätigkeiten* (inwiefern spiegeln die verwendeten Bedeutungen Böses, z.B. ein gefälschter Untersuchungsbericht über Folteropfer), c) einem *semantischen Aspekt* (bestimmte Formen finden nur oder meistens unter bestimmten Umständen statt) und d) *kontextueller Funktionen* (Böses ist abhängig von Systemen, die Bedeutung transportieren, wie Habitus, Techniken, Routine usw.) muss auch zwischen zwei weiteren Ebenen differenziert werden: Bedeutung im Sinne eines *Meinens* geht auf ein Ziel oder geht in eine bestimmte Richtung, während der *Gebrauch* „lediglich“ die Operation in verschiedenen Kontexten anzeigt. Was diese Differenz bedeutet, wird am Ende deutlich werden. Im Hintergrund wird das Relationsgefüge modifiziert:

a) Es gibt einen Exzess des Bösen über die Bedeutung

So hat die Debatte um den Holocaust gezeigt, dass erlittenes Böses teilweise nicht in Bedeutungen aufgefangen werden können. Der Exzess dieser Gewalt ist so immens, dass keine Vorstellung oder Repräsentation das Erfahrene zur *Darstellung* bringen kann.

b) Es gibt ein Böses ohne Bedeutung

Böses gilt in diesem Fall als *sinnlos*: insbesondere der Schmerz unter dem Leiden extremer Erfahrungen markiert eine Zone, in denen Sinn und Bedeutung des Ereignisses unauffindbar sind. Jede persönliche „Theodizee“ veranschaulicht diese unendliche und vergebliche Suche nach Sinn. Paradigmatisches Beispiel ist Hiob Insofern Menschen hochgradig verletzbare Wesen sind, spiegelt sich hier die "inskriptive" Gewalt eines Bösen, die ihre Spuren hinterlässt.

c) Böses bricht an der Bedeutung

Die Erfahrung böser Dimensionen (Übel, Verbrechen, Gewalt usw.) kann hier nicht in einer Bedeutung ausgedrückt werden, da sie nicht *artikulierte* werden kann. Zwar besteht eine Kompetenz zum Ausdruck, aber die performative Kraft ist zerbrochen. Dieses Phänomen markiert gleichzeitig

die Grenze jener Philosophien, die hauptsächlich *einseitig* und unmoduliert an Kriterien wie Logos, Selbstbewusstsein, Autonome usw. orientiert sind. Das Opfer scheint von einer Übermacht des Bösen dermaßen in Beschlag genommen zu sein, dass es ihm/ihr buchstäblich die „Sprache verschlägt“ und es verstummt. Es gehört zu den weniger rühmlichen Kapiteln der Philosophie, dass dieser *Mutismus*, der bereits bei Homer und bei Platon angedeutet wird, bisher nicht als philosophisches Thema reflektiert wurde.

In den Reflexionen wird "Böses" mit einem unterschiedlichen Stellenwert betrachtet:

1) Böses dient als *Gegenbegriff* zu einem dominanten Leitbegriff. Als Leitbegriff kommen drei Platzhalter in Frage: die Vernunft mit der Fähigkeit zu Sinngebung und Bedeutungsstiftung, Kultur und Zivilisation. Die jeweilige Kultur bildet den Gegenpol zu einem (bösen) *Naturzustand* (*homo homini lupus est*) oder einem *animalischen* Zustand der Bestialität. An diesem Punkt wäre auch fraglich, Böses ethologisch-anthropologisch (Lorenz, Fromm, Ehrenreich), moralisch oder politisch verortet wird. Aus diesem Grunde werden auch in den jeweiligen ideengeschichtlichen Kontexten entsprechende Gegenbegriffe markiert, so die *Freundschaft* in der Antike (Aristoteles/Foucault), die Idee des *Guten* mit ihren zugehörigen Tugenden (Platon/MacIntyre, Taylor), diverse ethische und religiös inspirierte Varianten einer *Überwindung* des Bösen (Tötungsverbot, Feindes- und Nächstenliebe, Ethik der Anteilnahme usw. und das *Kontraktmodell* (Habermas/Rawls). Eine Zivilisation bildet die kultivierte und elaborierte Form gegenüber früheren und überwundenen Formen des *Ursprünglichen* und des *Primitiven*. Sie dient als Distinktionsmerkmal.

2) Böses dient als *Selektionsbegriff* zwischen dem Eigenen und dem Fremden.² Dieser Begriff dient nicht nur zur *Identifizierung* von Tat und Täter, sondern auch zur *Ausgrenzung* desselben. Im Innern dient dieser Begriff einer Klärung dessen, welche symbolische Ordnung, welche Praktiken und welche Wertvorstellungen etabliert worden sind.

3) Böses dient als Negativfolie für *Normalisierungsbegriffs*.³ In diesem Rahmen dient sie zur Bezeichnung und Klassifizierung derjenigen Randzonen, die eine Toleranzgrenze vom Gemeinschaften indizieren: welche Grenzen und Spielräume werden akzeptiert? Soll beispielsweise die Unterbrechung der Schwangerschaft strafbar oder straffrei sein? Bis zu welchem Grad wird

Gewalt im gesellschaftlichen Apparat verankert (Medien) oder einkalkuliert (Opfer)? Gilt

² Vergleiche von Bernhard Waldenfels *Der Stachel des Fremden*, Frankfurt am Main 1998.

³ Dieser Begriff erfolgt in Anlehnung an Bernhard Waldenfels' *Grenzen der Normalisierung. Studien zur Phänomenologie des Fremden*, Bd. 2, Frankfurt am Main 1998.

Vergewaltigung im Haus als ein privates Problem oder soll sie durch öffentliche Organe strafrechtlich verfolgt werden? Virulent wird insbesondere dieser Begriff der Normalisierung in Grauzonen, in denen entweder noch keine rechtlichen Bestimmungen zur Regulierung entsprechender Sachverhalte vorliegen oder in denen eine symptomatische Asymmetrie zwischen einer Ebene der Bedeutung (*quid* – das ‚was‘) und einer faktischen Ebene von Sachverhalten (*quod*

– das ‚dass‘) vorliegt. Diese Asymmetrien führen zu nicht unbeträchtlichen Problemen. In modernen Wissensgesellschaften manifestiert der wissenschaftliche Fortschritt mit all seinen Implikationen und Konsequenzen ein höheres Tempo als die moralische Reflexion oder der gesellschaftliche „Konsens“. Oft kann nicht hinreichend geklärt werden, welche Bedeutung (*quid*) nachträglich den jeweiligen vorgängigen Faktizitäten (*quod*) zugeschrieben werden soll: Ist dieses X „nur“ ein Zellhaufen oder „bereits“ ein Lebewesen, das wir unter den Schutz der Menschenwürde zu stellen haben? Wo diese Asymmetrie zwischen dem *quod* und dem *quid* nicht hinreichend geklärt oder verhandelt werden, öffnet sich die Tür für neue Formen von Interaktionen. Symptomatisch sind zur Zeit der in der Bioethik drohende Dammbruch zur verbrauchenden Embryonenforschung, in der internationalen Politik der Dammbruch zum Unilateralismus in Abweichung vom internationalen Völkerrecht, in der Globalisierung ein ungeregelter Liberalismus im Kontrast zu traditionellen Werten von Solidarität und Gerechtigkeit.

4) Böses dient als *Kompromissbegriff*. Der Terminus „Kompromiss“ indiziert zwar einen Konflikt an, doch wird offensichtlich dieser Modus als ein Interaktionsmedium zugelassen. Hier verschieben sich ebenfalls Bedeutungen. Böses assoziiert sich hier beispielsweise mit Gewalt und wird umgedeutet. Ursprünglich fungiert Gewalt in der „originären“ Ordnung (z.B. Friedenszustand) als ein geächteter Zustand, doch bestimmte Ausnahmerebedingungen (z.B. ein Angriff) können zu einer

Umwertung der Situation führen und bewirken, dass auf Formen von Gewalt als berechtigte Gewalt rekuriert wird (z.B. Verteidigung gegen Terroristen). Gewalt wird hier als ein „*notwendiges, unvermeidliches* oder *gerechtfertigtes* Übel“ eingesetzt und in bestimmten narrativen Strategien in ihrer Bedeutung verformt. Diese Gewalt operiert auf zwei Ebenen: als Gewalt *gegen* eine Intrusion in die eigene Ordnung durch eine andere Ordnung oder als Kampf *um* die eigene Ordnung. Der bekannteste Topos ist in diesem Kontext die Bedeutungsvariante von Gewalt als „legitime Verteidigung“. Diese Modalitäten legen aber auch die Grundlage für jene Inkommensurabilität, in der sich Bedeutungen von Gewalt so grausam greifen können (s.u.). Gewalt, die als physische Kraft oder als moralischer Zwang (z.B. ein Kind zum ungewollten Zeugen der Ermordung seiner Eltern im ethnischen Bürgerkrieg oder im Genozid zu machen) verübt wird, greift damit als *Intrusion* in das leibliche Universum der betroffenen Person ein und zerstört ihr Sinn- und Bedeutungsuniversum.

5) Böses bildet die Folie für *Kompensationsbegriffe*. Dieser Begriff manifestiert eine hybride Form und macht deutlich, inwiefern die klassische Form der Trennung ausgedient hat, z.B. in einem

Begehren nach dem Bild, das Bedeutung *fungibel*, *transpassibel* und *multipel* macht.

III: Kritik einer Semantik und Syntaktik des Bösen

Diese Verwendungen folgen noch einem instrumentellen und einem funktionalen Paradigma. Sätze wie „Shakespeares Shylock besteht auf der Einlösung seines Pfandes, selbst wenn die Erfüllung des Vertrages Barbarei bedeuten würde“ oder „Der Anklage hat sich der Vergewaltigung schuldig gemacht“ machen zweierlei deutlich: man versteht, was *gemeint* ist und dass Böses im Sinne von *Agentenschaft*, d.h. in einer *instrumentalen* Form gebraucht, nicht aber im *semantischen* Sinne aufgefasst wird. Die instrumentelle Definition kommt in ihrer kürzesten Variante in einer dreistelligen Relation zum Ausdruck: ein Akteur (meistens der Täter) benutzt ein Objekt als Instrument einer Waffe, um einen Anderen (meistens das Opfer) eine Wirkung hinzuzufügen, so dass es zu einer Einschränkung von Rechten kommt, einer Beeinträchtigung von Qualitäten (Handlungsspielraum usw.), einer Schädigung von Dimensionen (z.B. Ruf) oder einer Verletzung von körperlicher oder seelischer Unversehrtheit. Symptomatisch ist diese Auffassung z.B. in Scarrys Werk über die Erfindung der Kultur durch Schmerz. Böses als Instrumentalität von Gewalt geht hier mit Agentenschaft und Vollzug einher.

Von dieser Definition ist die *modale* Definition des Bösen abgegrenzt, die beispielsweise Levinas vorstellt: Als Gewalt des Bösen wird eine Handlung bezeichnet, bei der man handelt, als sei man allein auf der Welt und als sei der Rest der Welt nur existent, um diesen Akt in Empfang zu nehmen. Gemeint ist die vollständige Expansion des Eigenen unter Missachtung des oder der Anderen.

Beide Bestimmungen sind insofern reduktiv, als das enthaltene Böse immer *Verletzung*, und zwar zudem Verletzung von Singularität bedeutet, da diese Erfahrung von niemanden stellvertretend übernommen werden kann. Diese Verletzungen können nicht in den Kontexten von Instrumentalität und Modalität artikuliert werden. Sie werden vollends in den drei Modi einer Syntaktik des Bösen unterschlagen, die nach dem jeweiligen Richtungssinn verübter Handlungen fragt.

1) Laterales Böses: Die Bedeutung eines Bösen richtet sich *gegen* den Nebenmenschen (Freud), den Mitgenossen (Ricoeur), den Nachbarn (Altes Testament), den Feind (Neues Testament). Die Figur des Konfliktes geht in einen moralischen Diskurs über, wenn eine *Anatomie* (von Übel) nicht nur mit einer *Physiologie* (die Rolle der Affekte), sondern auch mit einer *Narrativik* überdeterminiert wird.

2) Vertikales Böses: Böses wird mit Rekurs auf eine übergeordnete Bedeutung inszeniert und praktiziert. Die vertikale Ausrichtung bewirkt eine Umdeutung der von Bedeutungen.

3) Regressives Böses: Regression wird gemeinhin mit pathologischen Entgleisungen, irrationalen Desorientierungen oder regressiven Phantasien assoziiert. Der gemeinsame Nenner dieser Optiken besteht in einer gemeinsamen Prämisse: Regression meint den Abfall von einer geteilten Bedeutung (Logos) in „bedeutungslose“ und auch sinnlose Regionen des menschlichen Seins. Als klassischer Fall gilt der Amokläufer, in dessen Gewalttat keine eigentliche Bedeutung erkannt werden kann. Es bleibt aber fraglich, ob diese hermeneutische Deutung ausreicht oder angemessen ist. Doch bereits gegen die Optik einer Regression wird der Einwand erhoben, dass nicht „unser animalisches Erbe“ Interaktionsformen ermöglichen (z.B. Krieg), sondern unsere Begabung zur abstrakten Begriffsbildung und Bedeutungsgebung (gut – böse, Freund und Feind), die mit entsprechenden Physiologien überdeterminiert werden (Rache, Hass, Zorn) und schließlich in einem performativen Appell zur Umorientierung gegen den anderen Menschen führen. "Böses" wird als Differenz implementiert: a) z.B. als Aktualisierung von Gewalt unter der *Suspension von Bedeutungen*, z.B. eines religiösen Gebotes (Du sollst nicht töten), eines moralischen Tabus (Du sollst Dich nicht an Autoritäten vergreifen), von kulturellen Grenzen, von zivilisatorischen Standards oder politischen Minimalbedingungen. Diese Spielarten operieren allesamt mit Hemmschwellen des Bösen, die ein inhibierendes Potential als Suspension oder Verschattung von Bedeutung außer Kraft gesetzt wird.

IV) Der Anspruch einer Antwort auf Böses

Es besteht kein Zweifel darüber, dass wir nach den Katastrophen des 20. Jahrhunderts auf schmerzliche Weise zu einem Minimalstandard des Menschlichen gekommen sind, der uns in den Stand versetzen sollte, den Menschen nicht mehr zu „entmenschlichen“, sondern ihn *als* Menschen zu betrachten und zu behandeln. Dies betrifft Grenzzonen (Lebensbegriff), Grauzonen (gefährdetes Leben) oder Möglichkeitszonen (künstliches Leben), und zwar im Anspruch einer elementaren Achtung, die nicht in die Grammatiken "des Bösen" abgeleitet. In dieser Auslegung ließe sich auf der einen Seite argumentieren, dass z.B. Lockes berühmte „Philosophie des Feindes“ durch eine *bessere Begründung* abgelöst werden könnte. Locke hatte dezidiert erklärt, dass ein Mensch, der einem den Krieg erklärt oder der sich als Feind gegen die eigene Existenz herausstellt, „wie ein Raubtier“ behandelt, verfolgt und getötet werden darf. Diese Auffassung wiederholt sich immer wieder. In dieser "Vernunft" jedoch muss er keineswegs *als Mensch* betrachtet und geachtet werden, weil er sich (analog zu den „feindlichen Figuren des 21. Jahrhunderts“) nicht unter das „gemeine Gesetz der Vernunft“ stellt. In Kontrast dazu tritt der Versuch, Entitäten anders zu sehen und in ihren eigenen Ansprüchen vernehmbar und hörbar zu machen. Einer Naturalisierung des

Lebens steht dann die menschliche Geste entgegen, den Anderen als Menschen zu „achten“, selbst

a) wenn er mich verfolgt (mir also böses antut), wenn ich b) in einem Notfall gegen ihn mein Leben aus Gefahr retten könnte oder c) sein Leben nicht „genug“ Leben, sondern „nur wrongful birth“ ist. Zugegebenermaßen kann es sich hierbei um sehr strapazierte Sachverhalte und Herausforderungen handeln. In allen Kontexten bestehen der Primat und die Grenze des Handelns in der Rücksicht auf (s)eine Menschenwürde. Auch dem Verfolger muss (s)eine Würde zugestanden werden – mit diesem Argument werden elementare Rechte, die für moderne demokratische Rechtsstaaten die Grenzen jedes Handelns formulieren, geschützt. In diesem Sinne betont selbst Levinas mit Hannah Arendt, dass einem „Henker“ wie Eichmann ein „Gesicht“ zugestanden werden muss. Man überblende diese Geste mit den gegenwärtigen Debatten um die Aushebelung des modernen Völkerrechtes mitsamt aller politischen Konsequenzen. Sogar das eigene Leben darf im Notfall gegen anderes Leben nicht „abgewogen“ werden, selbst wenn ein solches Handeln „nachvollziehbar“ wäre. Doch die Grenze dieses Handelns ist „nur einsehbar“, das *Prinzip* des Handelns (aus Menschenwürde) selbst kann nicht begründet werden. Und „beschädigtes“ Leben (so grausam und abscheulich dieser Terminus auch ist) steht ebenfalls unter Schutz, selbst wenn in gesellschaftlichen Dynamiken die persönlichen Optionen in eine andere Richtung weisen. Relevant wird daher eine Philosophie der Einsicht, eine Art des ethischen *ars videndi*. Sie gleicht einer „*moralischen Aisthesis*“, welche das Herzstück der Achtung als Abweisung von Bösem in eine geschuldete Aufmerksamkeit übersetzt.

Damit unmenschlichen Behandlungen des Anderen in Form einer Nicht-Achtung nicht auftreten, muss zuerst gewährleistet werden, dass jemand *als achtenswert* wahrgenommen wird. Die Achtung von Ansprüchen wäre daher auf der ersten Stufe kein Fall einer identifizierenden Wahrnehmung, sondern die Antwort auf einen Anspruch, der an mich ergeht und dem ich mich nicht verweigern kann und soll. In diesem Sinn könnte Kants Rede von der *Schuld*, die wir in der Achtung schuldig sind, aufgegriffen werden: Schuldig bleiben wir, wenn wir uns Ansprüchen verweigern. Waldenfels beschreibt sie daher in Analogie zu zwei äußerst starken Motiven der klassischen Philosophie, und zwar einerseits in Analogie zur Akrasia, andererseits zur Verkehrung des Bösen: „Missachtung bedeutet mehr als Unaufmerksamkeit, die man analog zur Willensschwäche als Aufmerksamkeitsschwäche verstehen kann. Missachtung bedeutet, dass man dem Anderen die schuldige Achtung vorenthält. Es handelt sich um eine Aufmerksamkeitsverkehrung, vergleichbar der „Verkehrung des Herzens“, von der Kant in der Religionsschrift ausgeht (B 36).“ Dazu ist eine innere Dialogizität notwendig, die in responsiven Worten ausgedrückt werden könnte: „Das Gebot der Achtung und das Verbot der Missachtung setzen bereits voraus, dass wir auf etwas hören, dass wir aufmerken und aufhorchen. Wie auch Kant in seiner *Metaphysik der Sitten* feststellt, besteht die

Gewissenspflicht einzig darin, „die Aufmerksamkeit auf die Stimme des inneren Richters zu schärfen und alle Mittel anzuwenden (mithin nur indirekte Pflicht), um ihm Gehör zu verschaffen.“ Um aufzuzeigen, inwiefern das Ich gegenüber einem Du, könnte es daher sinnvoll sein, die Kantische Formulierung des Imperativs in zwei verschiedenen Tonlagen zu interpretieren. Das Gesetz *gilt*, sofern es auf der neutralen und *transpersonalen* Ebene eine Forderung *allgemein* und propositional aufstellt. Soll aber „ich“ als Adressat mich der Forderung des Anderen unterstellen und diese durch Treue bewahrheiten, dann muss das Gesetz *mich* ansprechen. In diesem Moment wechselt die Geltung in den *Appell* der Stimme, die sich an *mich* richtet und die von mir verlangt, dass ich gegenüber dem Du in einer bestimmten und konkreten Weise handle: „Deshalb unterscheiden wir zwischen der Stimme des Gesetzes, in der sich ein „Du sollst“ ausspricht, und den Satzungen, in denen etwas in der Form eines „man soll (nicht)“ geboten und verboten wird.“ Das Gesetz, das ein „Handle so...“ an mich heranträgt, verlangt folglich eine *obligatio* im Sinne eines *gerundivischen* Handelns: „Halten wir uns dagegen an das, was im Hören selbst geschieht, so kommt im Imperativ zum Ausdruck, was vom Adressaten zu tun ist (vgl. lat. *mihi faciendum est*). Das Sollen, das Kant auf eine äußerste Spitze treibt, ist etwas, *das auf mich zukommt, bevor ich darauf zugehe*. Es erzwingt meine Achtung, bevor ich einem eigenen Gefühl der Achtung folge und meine Achtung oder Missachtung bezeuge.“

Wovon ich im Bösen getroffen werde, fügt sich aufgrund der Singularität nicht einfach ein in den Rahmen von Kausalität und Freiheit. Es muss vielmehr als dasjenige berücksichtigt werden, was Teil und *Leben* des Subjektes ist, das es aber aufgrund der Getroffenheit nur nachträglich aufnehmen, niemals aber vollständig einholen und integrieren kann. Waldenfels sagt daher mit Husserl: „Das Getroffensein erzeugt rückwirkend seine Geschichte, es strahlt auf das Vergangene zurück“. Die fragliche Ursache gleicht dem kantischen Ding an sich, dass nicht wiederum bestimmten Möglichkeitsbedingungen unterliegt.“ Diese Verspätung modifiziert jedoch auch Sinngebung und Zielsetzung eines Selbst, so dass nicht nur die klassischen Themen von Autonomie und Verantwortung, Freiheit und Wollen betroffen sind, sondern das Selbst. Es spaltet sich unter der Wucht des Bösen und im Versuch einer Antwort darauf auf in das „*wovon* wir getroffen sind“ und in das „*worauf* wir antworten“. Es versucht zu handeln als *Agens*, durch das etwas geschieht, und antwortet als ein *Patiens*, der mit einem Geschehen des Bösen zurecht zu kommen versucht. Es liegt auf der Hand, dass Theorien des Selbst, des Anderen, der Handlung und der Welt eine andere Kontur annehmen, wenn die Sachverhalte, mit denen wir in der Philosophie konfrontiert sind, im Lichte dieser Koordinaten betrachtet werden. Man überblende beispielsweise die klassischen Lehren von Rechtfertigung und Verantwortung mit den zeitlichen Modellen dieser Aufspaltung und übertrage sie auf neuartige Kontexte der Repräsentation, der historischen Verantwortung und der Stellvertretung für andere. Am Ende geht die geschuldete Aufmerksamkeit in der Achtung mit einer

Modifikation des Bösen einher. Dies, wenn die Vermögen des Selbst sich nicht auf die klassischen Formen von Mimesis und Spur reduzieren, sondern der (moralisch relevante) Blick die Dimension eines "Blick-Bildes", eines Blick-Anrufes erreicht.

Diese Kategorie tritt mit Formen des Entzuges und des Fremden auf, und zwar in Form des Blicks, der uns als fremder Blick berührt und trifft. Durch diese Überkreuzung beginnt der eigene Blick „anderswo“, an einem „Nicht-Ort“. Dieser Blick erzeugt keine Evidenz, sondern Brechungen, Entgegenwärtigungen. Die grammatischen Operationen beruhen nicht in Ähnlichkeit und Erinnerungsspur. Im Zentrum dieser Form steht vielmehr eine responsive Struktur, die sich in der Formel bekundet: *x fordert auf zu y*.

VI: Aufmerken auf Blick-Bilder als Antworten auf Böses

Ein Beispiel kann dies veranschaulichen: In seinem Buch "Borken" schreibt der französische Philosoph und Kunsthistoriker Georges Didi-Huberman über seinen "Besuch" eines Ortes, den wir als Inbegriff und Extrem des Bösen betrachten: Birkenau und Auschwitz. Was heißt aber, einen solchen Ort "zu besuchen"? Mit den dort "wahllos" gemachten Fotografien "dekonstruiert" Didi-Huberman den Diskurs des Besuches. Eine Fotografie zeigt einen Vogel, der sich zwischen zwei Zäunen niedergelassen hat. Erst zuhause fällt Didi-Huberman die Tragik dieses Sinnbildes auf. Wir müssten besser sagen: ihm springt (pathisch) als "Blick-Bild" die Dimension dieses Bösen ins Auge: der Vogel hatte sich in aller Freiheit (welche die Insassen des Lagers nicht hatten), zwischen die Markierungen gesetzt und damit gleichzeitig gezeigt, wie absurd und pervers die Sprache eines "Besuches" ist, wie aber auch heutzutage dieses Böse pervertiert wird. Auf der einen Seite stand der originäre Stacheldrahtzaun dieses realen "Ortes", auf der anderen Seite der neu montierte "Bühnenbild-Zaun" eines Museums, das Auschwitz als "Ort der Barbarei" in einen "Ort der Kultur/Museum" verwandelt hatte, in dem alles neu ausgestaffiert und zurechtgemacht wurde. Es scheint zunächst "kein gemeinsames Maß" zwischen beiden zu geben. Und doch statuiert Didi-Huberman eins: "Es besteht darin, dass der Ort der Barbarei ermöglicht wurde - nämlich erdacht, organisiert, getragen von der körperlichen und geistigen Tätigkeit all derer, die daran gearbeitet haben, das Leben von Millionen Menschen zu vernichten von einer gewissen Kultur, einer anthropologischen und philosophischen Kultur (der Rasse, z.B.) einer politischen Kultur (des Nationalismus z.Bsp.), ja sogar einer ästhetischen Kultur (die es z. Bp. zu sagen erlaubt hat, eine Kunst könne "arisch" und eine andere könne "entartet" sein). Kultur ist also nicht die Kirsche auf dem Tortenstück der Geschichte, sie ist immer wieder der Ort von Konflikten." Die beiden Zäune indizieren zwei unterschiedliche Zeiten, zwei unterschiedliche Arten von "Behandlungen derselbe

Parzelle von Raum und Geschichte. Der Vogel hatte sich, ohne es zu wissen, zwischen Barbarei und Kultur gesetzt.

Response of Islamic Mysticism to the Evil of Terrorism

Mahmoud Masaeli

The recent wave of so-called Islamic terrorism has raised many questions as to how to defeat this ideologically jihadist evil. The mainstream perspective in western policy assumes that Islam is ideologically violent and that it therefore takes security measures to defeat this evil. This perspective ignores the potentials that exist within Islam against the violent (Salafi/Wahhabi) reading of the faith. This paper aims to explore the very potential from Islamic mysticism to counter terrorism. It will be argued that from a Sufi perspective, the main message of faith is to attain a mystical experience of Oneness that in the end reunites the spirit of the believer with God. The spiritual journey towards God starts from the purification of the soul of the lover for love of the Beloved.

Since the essence of faith is a mystical experience, everyone must choose her own journey towards the Beloved, Who is everywhere, experienced by everyone, and is evident at all times. Notably, intoxicated mystics believe that the Beloved loves all lovers no matter from what road they approach Him. Jew, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sufi, or Zen, as Rumi puts it, are all drunk lovers of the Beloved. Their place is the placeless, because they all belong to the Beloved. Sufis, then, fabulously recognize that the believer's own experience of oneness begins with the purgation of the spirit (major Jihad within). Whoever denies this mystical experience (the jihadists), and embarks on terrorizing others, according to Qur'an, "are like livestock; rather, they are more astray. It is they who are the heedless. They are ignorant".

This doctrinal difference between Mainstream Muslims and Sufis turns into a political discourse with constructive implications on the fight against terrorism. From the perspective of terrorist jihadists, non-believers in Islam as well as Sufis are evils whose abode is hell, and hell is their destination. The devil must be overthrown through Jihad. Sufis go against this view. For them, evil does not exist, because God creates only good things. Since "God is beautiful and He loves beauty" He does not will evil. What He does is good. The believer loves all beings because there's none good but God. Hence, evil is essentially nonexistence. In other words, evil is created in the spirit of the ignorant, who loses the right journey to God.

Here is where contemporary, sometimes called universal Sufism, reveals its greatest potential against terrorism. Sufism is not an unsocial and isolated path of worshiping. Rather, Sufis are the global game changers, the social activists, and the counter-force against terrorism. The voice of Sufism must be heard by both westerners and the Muslims since Sufism is a way of life devoted to the love of the Beloved. This social mission for love deserves the Sufis to rest in the arms of the Beloved God.

What America's White Evangelicals Just Did: A Christian Ethical Analysis of the Evils Involved in the Election of Donald Trump

David P. Gushee, Mercer University (USA)

I. Greetings and Prologue

I am happy to bring greetings to my colleagues in Societas Ethica from the presidential cabinet and board of the Society of Christian Ethics. We deeply appreciate the collegial relationship that our Societies share. I personally am grateful for the invitation to offer a keynote address at this conference, and thank you as well for welcoming my sister Kate Gushee among us this weekend.

I have decided to tackle the biggest question in American life, and one of the biggest in the world, in this address. I am asking about evil in connection with the election of Donald Trump as president of my country.

This so easily could just be a series of cheap shots against a politician whom I personally dislike. That is not my intent, and you will have to judge whether I have managed to avoid doing this. I acknowledge that in our two-party system, I am a registered Democrat rather than Republican. But Donald Trump himself only became a Republican recently, and many of those most bitterly opposed to him and what he stands for (the so-called #NeverTrump movement) are also Republicans. Trump represents a different kind of person and a different kind of threat to the values that many of us hold dear than has been the case with any significant American politician in my adult lifetime.

The use of the word "evil" in connection with the election of a politician is certainly grave. You will notice that I have stepped back in two ways from simply attributing the character quality of evil – grave defect of soul, of human moral formation -- to the man Donald Trump.

In this paper, I am instead speaking of "the evils involved" in the election of Donald Trump. I intend to address deeply problematic dimensions of the nature of his campaign, the motives of many of his voters, and the social-political factors that made him a successful candidate.

I am focusing on the electoral behavior, and to some extent the behavior since the election, of white evangelicals, one particularly large and important group of Christians in America who supported Mr. Trump overwhelmingly. I think that examining the attitudes and behavior of white evangelicals has the advantage of attending to the country, and not just the man. Leaders need followers. A leader without followers is no leader at all, just a person seeking attention. Sixty-three million Americans voted for Donald Trump.

White evangelicals are theologically conservative Protestants of European background. They comprise multiple denominations and streams of tradition, though in the US their center of gravity has tended to fall within the Reformed tradition. Some people classified by analysts as evangelicals would not self-identify as such, but instead simply as Christians or by

denomination. Others have embraced the label. Some people classified as evangelicals really would better be labeled as fundamentalists, but it is best to think of these categories as rough, with believers falling along a spectrum in the level of their theological rigidity. Depending on how they are measured and defined, there may be as many as one hundred million white evangelicals in the United States. They are the largest Protestant community, or set of communities, in the United States, probably doubling in size the current mainline or liberal Protestant communities.

I focus on white evangelicals because they were the most supportive single bloc of Trump voters, because their leaders, at least, purport to engage politics from an explicitly Christian moral framework, and because I know this community well. I became an evangelical Christian as a teenager, a recognized evangelical ethicist in the 1990s, and one of the leading dissidents from evangelicalism in recent years. For two decades, I sought to influence evangelicals toward public engagement that I thought comported with the way of Jesus Christ. These days I mainly find myself a critic of white American evangelicalism.

So let us proceed.

II. What White Evangelicals Just Did, in Violation of their Own Proclaimed Values

No group of American voters bears more responsibility for the election of Donald J. Trump as the 45th president of the United States than do white evangelicals. Their 81% vote on his behalf far exceeded his share of support in any other religious community. Given America's political divisions, an 81% vote can only be described as overwhelming, something about as close to a consensus as one ever sees in American politics.

Donald Trump received a higher share of the white evangelical vote than any Republican candidate since the dawn of the Christian Right – and therefore since 1978-79, since the emergence of white evangelicals as a mobilized voting bloc nestled within the Republican coalition. More than Ronald Reagan in 1980 or 1984. More than George W. Bush in 2000 or 2004. More than Mitt Romney in 2012. In terms of the decades-old Republican/evangelical strategy of moving white evangelicals decisively into the Republican camp and turning them out to vote in large numbers in presidential elections, the election of Donald Trump can only be described as the greatest success ever achieved.

Let us ponder for just a moment five propositions about the contradiction between the character and behavior of now-President Trump and what were once believed to be evangelical religious and moral values:

- (1) The consensus white evangelical vote was for a candidate married three times and unfaithful in marriage, not an active churchgoer, only nominally Christian, and known for his vulgarity and crude public talk about sex (not to mention the late-discovered bragging about what amounted to sexual assault, along with the dozen accusations from specific women) – all of which explicitly and obviously violates the proclaimed standards of Christian commitment and personal morality cherished by white evangelical Christians.
- (2) The consensus white evangelical vote was for a candidate whose character has revealed obvious flaws such as lack of self-control and lack of truthfulness, and whose entire business career has been embroiled in false promises, ethics questions, and lawsuits, obviously violating proclaimed evangelical standards of personal and business integrity.

- (3) The consensus white evangelical vote was for a candidate who launched his campaign with an attack on the character of Mexican immigrants, who pre-launched his campaign by leading the “birther” movement against Barack Obama’s legitimacy as president, who during his campaign told inflammatory lies about American Muslim responses to 9/11 and at one time called for a ban on their immigration, and then once president wrote an ill-conceived executive order partially blockading Muslim refugee- and immigrant entry into the United States – violating what ought to be obvious standards of Christian morality related to treating all persons with dignity, welcoming the stranger with hospitality, and attending especially to those who are most vulnerable.
- (4) The consensus white evangelical vote was for a candidate who created rally environments latent with mob violence and hate speech, who declared both the polls and the vote rigged and fraudulent, and who threatened to create a constitutional crisis by refusing to accept the results of the election if he lost. All of this behavior violates obvious standards of Christian morality related to civility, violence, and support for democratic norms.
- (5) The consensus white evangelical vote was for a candidate who articulated the most extreme form of nationalism seen at the presidential level in memory, who insulted many US allies, scoffed at international norms, institutions, agreements, and treaty commitments, and spoke favorably about the use of torture. In my view, these behaviors violate important shared norms and obvious standards of Christian morality.

In my view, the near-consensus white evangelical vote for Donald Trump, followed by the continued very strong support offered to Trump as president despite all that has transpired and been revealed in his presidency thus far, has shattered whatever survived of the moral witness of white evangelicals to American culture and to the world. It also has driven many white evangelicals into the ex-evangelical camp. This includes me, though admittedly I was already hanging on by a thread.

The remainder of this essay seeks to discern why 81% of white evangelicals voted as they did, and how those of us who dissent must now respond. I will offer ten reasons.

III. Why Trump?

It must be remembered – perhaps with astonishment – that the story does not begin when the two plausible choices were Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. It begins when Donald Trump was one of seventeen candidates on the Republican side. Republican primary voters, including a disproportionately large and committed white evangelical bloc, by their own choices consistently selected Trump over alternatives such as Governor Mike Huckabee, Senator Rick Santorum, Ben Carson, Carly Fiorina, Senator Marco Rubio, Senator Ted Cruz, Governor John Kasich, Senator Rand Paul, and Governor Jeb Bush. Every one of the other sixteen GOP candidates would have offered policy prescriptions that people like me would have disliked. But not one of them could be described in the five propositions outlined above. Donald Trump stood in uniquely flagrant violation of what had once been core evangelical commitments related to the faith, character, and values of their preferred presidential candidates. This demands at least an attempt at an explanation.

Specialists in political science and voting behavior will eventually be able to put numbers to what this essay can only offer as surmises based on almost forty years of living and working among white evangelicals. But what follows are my top ten surmises as to what attracted white evangelical Christians to Donald Trump. I will arrange these claims from the least to the most controversial.

A. White evangelicals were attracted to the security promises of Donald Trump.

Donald Trump promised to protect US borders from unlawful immigrants and to protect US citizens from terrorist attacks. The latter was probably more salient for more voters, but a minority had become convinced of the false narrative that “illegals” were running rampant and committing all kinds of heinous crimes. And even though the US has been hit by fewer mass terror attacks than have been seen in Europe in the last few years, we have indeed experienced a few such attacks, and events in Europe have had their impact on us. Voting their security fears, many white evangelicals found Donald Trump a more persuasive defender of their lives and their families than his competitors either during the primaries or in the general election.

In my view, providing security is one of the primary purposes for which government exists. This does include border security. I do not share the increasingly prevalent tendency on the American left to act as if illegal immigration is not a problem. I do not challenge the legitimacy of candidates addressing the security fears of citizens, even while recognizing how often such fears are manipulated by political candidates to advance an oppressive agenda. This is certainly one primary path to outright political evil.

Candidate Trump’s approach to security was deeply problematic. By whipping up an exaggerated fear of the purported criminal character of Mexican and other Latin American immigrants, he was both untruthful and inflammatory. His language heightened the risk of prejudice and discrimination against Latino/a Americans of all types -- citizens, legal visitors, and undocumented immigrants. The same is true of his approach to the problem of terrorism. Ignoring other forms of terrorism in the United States, including that emerging from the racist and reactionary white nationalist fringe, Trump focused entirely on Islamist terrorism. His support of a Muslim ban, and his false claims about American Muslims celebrating after the 9/11 attacks, have contributed to a darkening landscape for America’s Muslim citizens. Attacks on those perceived to be Muslims, as well as on mosques, are on the rise. Trump’s rhetoric toward Muslims contrasts most unfavorably with the careful and inclusive language used by his fellow Republican, George W. Bush, after the 9/11 attacks.

B. White evangelicals were attracted to the economic promises of Donald Trump.

White evangelicals had no history of voting along class lines or for economic reasons before the 2016 election. The agenda at least of mobilized, organized Republican evangelicals was always moral-values-based: abortion, gay marriage, and so on.

But polling clearly revealed in this election that Donald Trump found a way to speak to the economic fears and frustrations especially of working-class and downwardly mobile white evangelicals, and notably small-town, rural, and exurban evangelicals. (It must also be noted that the difference between white evangelicals and fundamentalists fades to invisibility in many parts of the United States, but especially in these areas.) Donald Trump’s promises to restore American jobs, to negotiate tougher trade deals, and to shame American companies that send jobs to other countries were very appealing to many who have faced tough economic times. This message did not appeal to many evangelical elites, such as high-end pastors, professors, and lobbyists, but of course their economic situation is very different from the high-school-educated displaced factory worker in lower Ohio.

At one level, this was an agenda of economic nationalism, tinged by more than a bit of xenophobia. The anti-(illegal)-immigrant message connected, because at the lower end of American economic life it does appear to be the case that blue-collar immigrant laborers compete with American citizens with similar skills and training. Many Americans have also experienced the loss of decent-paying blue-collar and factory jobs, as globalized corporations answerable to shareholders rather than local communities have routinely closed factories and shipped jobs overseas for cheaper labor or weaker environmental protections.

Mr. Trump may be a billionaire, but his persona, language, and style have working-class elements. In New York City parlance, he's "outer-borough," not Manhattan; he's Fox News, not National Public Radio. He just seemed to many working-class Americans to care more deeply about their plight, to be more culturally familiar, and to be free of loyalties to the cosmopolitan economic and political elites who have arranged reality in the way it is currently arranged. The resonance of an appeal to that vast number of Americans who have been left out of our prosperity was also evidenced by the surprising success of socialist candidate Bernie Sanders. By contrast, Hillary Clinton appeared too wired into the New York financial elites and their current way of doing business.

There is little reason to believe that Donald Trump has either the interest or the capacity to do much that will aid coal miners in West Virginia, factory workers in Detroit, or anyone else whose job will be shipped overseas due to the pressures of the global marketplace. But a political campaign is a sales job, and Donald Trump proved to be an effective salesman relative to his competition. Especially given the way we elect presidents according to state-by-state Electoral College tallies, Mr. Trump's appeal to unhappy working-class people in Rust Belt states like Michigan and Ohio was pivotal in his election victory.

European ethicists do not need to be reminded of the power of economic populism in hard times or in times of grave economic inequality. Human beings need to eat, feed their families, and feel economically secure. They are susceptible to demagogues who offer such promises, however empty, perhaps especially when they also offer convenient external targets for voters to affix blame.

C. White evangelicals were attracted to the nostalgic nationalism of Donald Trump.

There is a fifty-year-old split in American culture on the issue of patriotism, or its more exaggerated expression, nationalism. American excesses during the Cold War, and then the grueling fight over the moral legitimacy of the (conduct of) the Vietnam War, divided us between what I would call critical patriots and uncritical nationalists. It was only during this era, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, that many Americans began to develop an allergy to flag-waving, uncritical, my-country-right-or-wrong nationalism. Confidence in the truthfulness of American government and the goodness of our people began to weaken. This was not just about foreign policy, but also became connected to searching critiques of our structural racism, sexism, and economic injustice. But these critiques were strongly resisted by a whole "other America" that considered them overblown, misplaced, or vaguely traitorous.

White American evangelicals mostly took the conservative and nationalist side in this cultural split that has remained with us for half a century. This was apparent at the top, with leaders such as Carl Henry and Harold John Ockenga, and at the grassroots. Evangelical Christian schools, churches, and many families taught a very deep conflation of God and

country. This became connected to a narrative of America as originally a godly Christian country that had been damaged by liberalism and secularism, such as that visible in street protests where hippies burned the sacred American flag. This became part of the “traditional values” agenda of the Christian Right, which has always been suffused with patriotic/nationalist fervor.

Long after many Americans had either abandoned patriotism, abandoned religion, or both, millions of evangelicals remained both deeply patriotic and deeply religious, and had not been taught any real differentiation between the two. I think of the thousands of Christian schools in which children each morning recite the Pledge of Allegiance and a pledge to the Christian flag in the same ceremony. Donald Trump’s campaign slogan was “Make America Great Again.” It was brilliant, one might say diabolically so. It combined nostalgia for an imagined great past (“again”) with a promise of renewed greatness today. This was nostalgic nationalism, and it appealed to a large number of Americans, including evangelicals who had been schooled in a more Christian version of the same theme.

Many of our countries have seen the power of nationalist appeals, both in the past and today. As Reinhold Niebuhr pointed out so long ago, nationalism feels virtuous because it focuses not on the self’s private projects but on something bigger than the individual. But this can amount to little more than a collective egoism, in Niebuhr’s terms.

Still, in a country riven by divisions, an appeal to shared patriotism or nationalism can feel uplifting and inspiring from a certain perspective. It’s better than the mere self and its tiny projects. It can also be perceived as more meaningful than cosmopolitan or globalist projects, which in fact are looked upon with suspicion by many Americans, and by many evangelicals. It’s not a coincidence that “world government” and the United Nations figure as antichrist tropes in some overheated apocalypses produced by fundamentalists and evangelicals. Donald Trump’s nationalist appeals compared favorably with Hillary Clinton’s cautious globalism to a significant chunk of voters, including most evangelicals. The critique that must be offered from a “way of Jesus” perspective, of course, is obvious. Nationalism has little if any place in a serious life of Christian discipleship.

D. White evangelicals were attracted to the Christian tribalism of Donald Trump.

Donald Trump often sent signals that the polite multi-faith inclusivity that had prevailed under Barack Obama and would undoubtedly have continued under Hillary Clinton would be supplanted by a (re)privileging of Christianity – America’s historically dominant religion and still the stated religious belief of a strong majority of Americans. Shopkeepers on 5th Avenue would once again display signs saying, “Merry Christmas,” rather than Happy Holidays, if Donald Trump had anything to do with it. In various ways, Mr. Trump communicated that Christianity would be restored to its privileged place in the American public square. An ironic aspect of these promises, of course, is that President Trump has only practiced the most nominal Christianity himself. He would be a protector of Christianity even while not making much of an effort to pretend to be a committed Christian himself.

I think it appropriate to call this a form of Christian tribalism, a phenomenon that has certainly been seen in the history of Europe even as it has faded considerably in recent decades. It was painfully visible during the bloody breakup of the former Yugoslavia, in which the best rough labels for the main warring parties were mixed ethnic-religious identity

markers that can only be described as tribal: Bosnian Muslim, Serbian Orthodox, Croatian Catholic, and so on.

Donald Trump treated white evangelical and fundamentalist Christians as an American religio-ethnic tribe, competing especially with tribes of secular and religious liberals. In a variety of events often involving “evangelical leaders,” he positioned himself as the protector of their tribe, both in all kinds of symbolic ways (this tribe is always hungry for symbolic affirmation; perhaps all tribes are equally hungry) and in terms of a few specific policies, notably his support for their approach to religious liberty vis-à-vis gay rights claims as well as his championing of their “right” to politick freely from their church pulpits.

In return, conservative evangelical and fundamentalist leaders offered him the normal services offered by religious-right leaders: visible endorsements, public prayer, speech opportunities, fawning media, and of course the usual certainties about God’s blessing and endorsement.

For Donald Trump, the relationship seemed, and seems, transactional, a return for services rendered. For at least a few of the most enthused conservative Christian leaders, it is (once again) a matter of faith. As for the degradation of Christianity represented in being reduced to a voting bloc, a manipulable tribe, a group whose interest in American public life is reduced to having our tribe’s rights and privileges advanced, one can only wince in pain.

- E. White evangelicals were attracted to the promises of Donald Trump related to the Supreme Court.

One of the most enduring aspects of the Christian Right/GOP alliance since the late 1970s has been the GOP promise that its elected presidents would only nominate Supreme Court candidates who could be counted upon to overturn *Roe v. Wade* – and in other ways give conservative Christians what they seek from the Supreme Court. Donald Trump made perfectly clear that he would maintain this bargain. Evangelicals voted accordingly. Trump delivered when he nominated and got confirmed Justice Neil Gorsuch, in perhaps his most (only?) skillful delivery on a political promise in his early presidency.

The background here may be worth recalling. As American politics has hardened into left/right polarization since the 1960s, many of the most contested issues have been and continue to be morally laden. They involve issues, such as abortion, gay marriage, or race, that are simultaneously legal, political, moral, and often religious in meaning. For a variety of reasons, many of these issues are finally resolved only by our nine-member Supreme Court. This means that every Supreme Court vacancy becomes (for some) the most important open position in the nation. It has been true for some time that a small but not insignificant portion of Americans votes in presidential elections almost entirely based on the likely Supreme Court nominees of prospective presidents.

As a presidential candidate, Donald Trump very shrewdly posted his top list of judicial nominees. He was heavily dependent on highly educated, well-regarded conservative jurists recommended by a group called the Federalist Society. Neil Gorsuch was on that list. Trump also stated clearly that he would nominate candidates who would vote to restrict abortion access, an issue which remains very important not only to conservative Protestants but also to conservative Catholics. This promise, now delivered, was highly significant in locking up strong support among these constituencies.

I have argued elsewhere that it distorts the American judiciary to make it serve as the Umpire of Last Resort on our most contested moral issues. It also distorts our presidential elections for so much weight to be placed on this one aspect of presidential performance. We could be marching toward war, tyranny, or constitutional crisis, and it seems that a substantial portion of our country would not notice or care as long as the president appointed the right kind of judge (on abortion). This is very dangerous.

F. White evangelicals were attracted to the exaggerated masculinity of Donald Trump.

Millions of fundamentalists and evangelicals, and not only white versions of same, believe that God's will, as taught in the Bible, is that men should lead in homes, churches, and even in society. The advances of feminism have softened this patriarchalism to a profound extent in many Christian circles, often reducing its reach to home and church. Still, male leadership remains doctrine in many thousands of churches. The American electorate holds millions of people who do not believe it is God's plan for men to be under female authority. In any election between a man and a woman, this is obviously significant.

It's not just maleness, it's also masculinity that matters. One aspect of modern feminism has been to challenge historic gender roles and behavioral expectations. This has only intensified with current theories suggesting that gender itself is entirely socially constructed and has no real biological, natural, or certainly not divinely established, basis.

Conservative Christianity is one sector of American society that largely rejects feminism, including its most common approaches to gender, as it pertains to both men and women. Traditional understandings of maleness and femaleness, and of masculinity and femininity, still resonate deeply in conservative American Christianity. Leaders tend to be both male and traditionally masculine – strong, authoritative, direct, athletic, and so on.

Donald Trump may have won among Republican candidates partly because he exuded a certain hyper-masculine toughness of this type. He was more crude and more brash than the typical preferred evangelical father or pastor, and yet his type was and is not unknown both in the past and today.

This helps to explain why he was not destroyed by the surfacing of video in which he was speaking with extreme crudeness about what would amount to sexual assaults on women if the words were to be taken literally. This "Access Hollywood" scandal did not destroy Trump's candidacy, I believe, in part because even though the described actions would not be acceptable to evangelicals, the masculinist aggression just might be.

In the general election, when it was Donald Trump vs. Hillary Clinton, the potential first woman president, the game was up. Hillary Clinton violated traditional understandings of gender just by being in the race as well as by aspects of her demeanor, while Trump continued and even intensified his masculinist approach. Trump easily triumphed on this parameter.

G. White evangelicals were attracted to the authoritarianism of Donald Trump.

Many evangelicals run their families and their churches in an authoritarian rather than democratic way. Based especially on a literalist reading of scripture, they favor strong central authority around a single (male) leader or group of leaders. This, again, is the understood

biblical paradigm for both home and church and can easily be extended to other sectors, as it often has been.

The Bible was written long before the birth of modern democracy with its diffused authority, checks and balances, and other means of limiting authoritarianism. It is easy to tell the story of modern western political history as the gradual or dramatic defeat of Christian authoritarianism by democracy. That story is complicated when we see the elements in scripture itself which underwrite democracy, notably its realism about human sin and the dangers of centralized and tyrannical power. This, after all, was a central theme in the prophets.

But in my experience, the political vision of contemporary American evangelicals is not nourished by the prophets as much as it is by Romans 13 and the pastoral epistles, read within a literalist/inerrantist framework. God/Christ is king. God establishes persons (mainly men) under his kingly authority to rule in various sectors, such as home, church, and state. These rulers are answerable to God, not really to those “under” them. They are to be trusted with their God-given authority unless they grossly abuse it.

I think of the thousands of churches founded by one man and controlled by that one man with little oversight. I think of the continued popularity of Reformed church models, in which an all-male elder board functions as a kind of spiritual oligarchy. Then, of course, there are the millions of families run by the husband/father/patriarch according to the will of the Heavenly Father. While there are also millions of Christian families and churches that are governed as democracies, it is fair to say that the majority of churches in America (Catholic, Protestant, and Eastern Orthodox) are not democracies. It is my surmise that Donald Trump’s tendency toward authoritarianism resonates deeply with many; or, at least, does not offend.

Donald Trump is no democrat. This is increasingly clear. He evinces little respect for democratic institutions and norms. This would matter to his conservative religious constituency if they cared about democratic institutions and norms. But they show little sign of doing so. More often they join their president in treating the institutions of democratic accountability, such as an opposition party and a free press, as enemy.

H. White evangelicals were attracted to the wealth, glitz, and celebrity of Donald Trump.

Donald Trump is the first celebrity and billionaire president, a man with no political experience. His only near-precedent might be President John F. Kennedy, but Kennedy had served in government.

It has been a worrying trend in recent years to watch Americans become increasingly fixated on ephemeral celebrities on social media and reality television. Meanwhile, our long fixation on wealth and our celebration of “lifestyles of the rich and famous” is a ubiquitous feature of our culture.

The foregoing statements are relevant to the whole of American culture, but they also apply in a specific way to conservative American Protestant religion. I speak here not just of those churches that have explicitly embraced the “prosperity” or “health and wealth” gospel, in which preachers teach that God rewards the faithful with worldly success. These churches continue to grow, and make their pastors rich.

But I want to broaden out to the idea that the massive megachurch movement within evangelicalism and fundamentalism especially bears a striking resemblance in many ways to the business and political model offered by Donald Trump. Everything revolves around an attractive central (male) figure, usually the founder-entrepreneur, who exudes power, wealth, and success, and is usually accompanied by an equally beautiful wife and children. Most of our largest churches today fit this paradigm, regardless of their politics or the message of their pastors: Rick Warren at Saddleback, Bill Hybels at Willow Creek, Andy Stanley at North Pointe Church, can all be taken as examples. In that sense, at least, Donald Trump fit the paradigm.

I. White evangelicals were attracted to the attacks on “political correctness” by Donald Trump.

White evangelicals often feel embattled and belittled by the dominant powers of American culture – Hollywood, New York, Boston; CNN, *New York Times*, and Professor So-and-So at State U. Hollywood tells us who we are supposed to want to be, the *Times* tells us what we are supposed to count as news, and Professor So-and-So tells us what counts as truth. The fact that often these authorities offer views that totally contradict those of white evangelicals is not lost on the latter. This broiling resentment at the major voices of elite culture has often been missed by leaders in higher education and media. It is now hard to overlook.

Donald Trump is not a white evangelical, but his bristling attack on “political correctness” spoke profoundly to shared resentments. This helped seal the relationship between him and his voters in a way that few other things could do. Trump was against what they were against: snooty college professors laughing off conservative perspectives, liberal reporters telling the “news” in biased ways, Hollywood movies in which religious characters and beliefs are belittled. All these resentments were, and are, powerfully summed up by the phrase “political correctness,” which signals liberal loyalties dressed up simply as facts and truth. I recall experiencing the power of this resentment over 30 years ago when attending Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and hearing conservative students bitterly complain about the derision they believed that they received at the hands of more liberal students and some professors. Such resentments were jet fuel in the fundamentalist movement within the Southern Baptist Convention, and they remain jet fuel in politics and culture today.

Since the election, President Trump’s attacks on the mainstream media, now immortalized as “Fake News,” have grown all the more obsessive and toxic. They have contributed to the balkanizing of the American media landscape and the crystallization of permanently irreconcilable versions of “truth.” And when it comes to these two versions, that which is offered by President Trump and his friends at Fox News and Breitbart, over against that which is offered by the *New York Times* and CNN, conservative evangelicals were already predisposed to go with the former.

J. White evangelicals were attracted to the thinly veiled white racism of Donald Trump.

This claim would be bitterly disputed by most white conservative evangelicals. The vast majority of white evangelicals do not believe that they hold racially prejudiced beliefs or act in racist ways. Evangelical individualism also makes it difficult for white evangelicals to accept the reality of structural or systemic racism. And yet the record on race of the modern (neo) evangelical movement has been quite disappointing, and it has been plausibly argued by historian Randall Balmer that outrage over federal government action requiring racial

integration in the 1960s and early 1970s certainly helped fuel the rise of the Religious Right, especially in the South.

The space for this essay is too short to further consider these complex historical issues, so let me make a quite circumscribed claim. Many American voters, including millions of Christians, believed that the total body of statements made by Donald Trump during his public career and especially the campaign, related to, for example, Mexicans, immigrants, Barack Obama, black people, and Muslims, itself morally disqualified him from the office of president. They believed that whatever else one might say about the candidate, these statements so violated their conscientiously held beliefs related to racial and ethnic inclusion, respect, and justice, and so marked Mr. Trump as a risk to such values if elected, that these voters could not support Donald Trump.

Those who voted for Mr. Trump obviously did not agree. Perhaps many neither liked nor agreed with his most inflammatory language about racial and ethnic groups, but they voted for him anyway. Their concern, if they had it, about his comments did not rise to the level of disqualification. This at least makes them complicit with what he said and will now do in relation to race. For many people of color and ethnic minorities in the United States, this fact is the primary reason why the results of the election felt so much like a betrayal by white Americans of their non-white neighbors – and by white Christians, of their non-white sisters and brothers in faith.

Conclusion: What Do We Now Do?

The evils involved in the election of Donald Trump as the 45th president of the United States were many and varied. A few were garden-variety evils in politics, seen in many countries – a candidate demagoguing security and economic worries. Some of this election's evils flowed out of longstanding cultural divisions, such as over gender, race, and immigration, over nationalism and the role of the media, over the immense power of our Supreme Court. And some were impossible apart from the strong residual religiosity of the American people, especially the still potent but fading power of white American evangelicals who found a champion giving them one more (one last?) shot at achieving their elusive goals.

Some of us American Christians have begun to face the fact that white evangelicalism is no longer our religious community, even if it is our religious heritage.

We post-evangelicals are finding each other and finding others of like mind for shared articulations of dissent and actions of resistance. The early days of the Trump Administration certainly provide a target-rich environment for dissent. Different ones of us will “feel called,” in evangelical parlance, to different struggles. For some, it might be immigration/refugee issues. For others, it might be peacemaking and international relations issues. For a different group, it might be climate issues. For still others, it might be protecting advances in health care coverage under the Affordable Care Act. Each individual has limited bandwidth, but everyone can do their part.

Ultimately, we must move into a posture of radical solidarity with those who are most threatened by the new political context in which we find ourselves. We ourselves feel disempowered and afraid, but our disempowerment and fear pales in comparison to that of many, many others. Whatever privilege and power we might have, we must invest for others.

We leave our morally bankrupt religious tribe, and find new community. We state our clear dissent and give good reasons for it. We practice resistance where we can. We stand in solidarity with the oppressed. As believers, we pray that God might be merciful to our country and the world beyond what we deserve. This is what we do now. At least, it is a start.

Response to Gushee

David Wellman, DePaul University (USA)

I very much appreciate your beginning your paper by stating your intention to analyze the evils involved in the election of Donald Trump, rather than simply focusing on the man himself. This is because Trump is, in my estimation, a symptom rather than a cause of a profound system-wide problem many years in the making.

The results of the 2016 American election are also part of a wider narrative, one which readily invites a systematic ethical interrogation of what has long passed among many dominant American groups as a normative set of assumptions. These assumptions concern the relationship between popularly held moral claims associated with American Christianity, political ethics, and American identity.

Your paper does a very fine job of addressing the role of one particular portion of our nation's population, which travels under the catch all name of White American Evangelical Christianity. Yet despite this group's high percentage of turn out for Trump, this group did not deliver Trump's victory on their own. Nonetheless, your very clear naming of the profound contradictions between some of the core moral claims of White American Evangelical Christianity and the words and actions of Donald Trump are quite useful – not only in order to question the moral legitimacy of White Evangelical American Christianity in its current form, but also as an invitation to interrogate the role many expressions of Christianity have played in supporting numerous American Presidents—Presidents whose conduct has stood as completely contrary to what are broadly understood core moral norms associated with the Christian tradition.

Recent events in the United States have called attention to the fact that the Trump Administration is actively supporting policies, individuals and groups which are unequivocal advocates of White supremacy, with the wholehearted endorsement of millions of people who describe themselves as Christian. The term “White supremacy” is most popularly associated, among White people, with the ideologies of extremist organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan or White nationalist movements such as Neo-Nazis.

But the term White Supremacy is understood by people of color (and should be understood by all Whites) as the maintenance of economic, political, social or religious systems which maintain White peoples' ability to make decisions for everyone one else, and reap multiple benefits. I submit that White supremacy is evil, and the promotion of systems which perpetuate White supremacy, whether through active support or silence and inaction, is also evil. The support of White evangelical Christian groups, as you have noted, has not waived in the face of Trump also supporting explicitly xenophobic, nationalistic, misogynistic, authoritarian, Islamophobic, and anti-Semitic individuals, policies and communities.

In fact, there are a number of emerging studies which point to the conclusion that Trump's positions on all these issues were not something many Whites who identify as Christian were simply willing to overlook – these positions were in fact something which strongly attracted them to supporting him. The brief time I have does not allow me to go into detail regarding the ethical implications of each of these positions, so for brevity's sake, I am going to focus on Trump's positioning himself as an advocate of White supremacy, as I

believe it provides a useful hermeneutic to examine Trump's popularity among conservative American White Christians, and trends that emerged long before the 2016 election.

White supremacy is hardly new to the United States, as its foundation rests on the twin projects of genocide and slavery – institutionally supported actions which brutally and unapologetically extinguished the lives of millions of people. Nor is White supremacy new to the contemporary White House – either explicitly in ways which Whites can readily identify, or systemically in ways that support systemic White supremacy. In 1980, Ronald Reagan launched his candidacy for President by giving a speech in Philadelphia, Mississippi, a very small town best known as the city where three Civil Rights workers, Michael Schwerner, James Chaney and Andrew Goodman, were famously murdered during the Civil Rights movement by members of the Ku Klux Klan. Reagan's speech focused on the theme of "state's rights," the favored ethical framework of those in the South who advocated for the right of U. S. states to preserve the segregationist laws of the Jim Crow era.

Jim Crow refers to the era in which laws in many American states supported strict segregation between Whites and people of color, in terms of schools, housing, employment, and even the use of restaurants or hotels. Jim Crow also refers to the era in which thousands of African-Americans were lynched by Whites, often in broad daylight and witnessed by large crowds as a form of entertainment. The crowds who witnessed and often actively participated in these lynchings included government officials., clergy and many Whites who understood themselves to be good Christians. Reagan, like Trump, was not long after his speech in Philadelphia endorsed by the Ku Klux Klan. However, unlike Trump, Reagan was politically sophisticated enough to publically repudiate the Klan's endorsement – but not before he had earned it.

Like Trump, as you noted, Reagan was strongly supported by White Evangelical Christians, and would go on to attribute to them his ability to remain in the White House for eight years. The ethical question which I believe is most clearly suggested by your paper concerns the past, present and future of Christian Ethics as a discipline in the United States. If one of the primary roles of Christian ethicists is to work to promote the theo-ethical literacy of Christian leaders and lay people, which will allow them to apply the core teachings of our tradition to real world events, then I must conclude that our guild has largely failed in the United States, if I am to judge by the quality and intellectual sophistication of moral public discourse by the most widely disseminated individuals and groups who claim to represent Christianity in the United States.

I arrive at this conclusion with a heavy heart, because in making this pronouncement I recognize my own complicity as an American Christian ethicist for the place we now find ourselves. My complicity is embodied in the fact that I have not made my work and the work of my colleagues and lineage of extraordinary teachers more relevant to American Christian discourse than they are. This truth is demonstrated in the fact that the most common image associated with Christianity in the States is found in that of a White, socially conservative, pro-military, free market advocating Republican.

This leads me to a number of questions. Is it possible for us as progressive American Christian ethicists to offer a credible response that will gain traction among those whose interpretation of Christianity affirms the Trump Administration? Or, is our task to lend intellectual and physical support to both religious and secular progressive people across multiple boundaries of difference, and more firmly enmesh our own work with the efforts of our like-minded Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, and Indigenous colleagues? Then there is the question of the relationship between secular progressive Whites and progressive White

people of faith such as ourselves. To what degree has our propensity as Christians to not speak as clearly and loudly of our beliefs as we might in secular progressive circles left a void – a void that has allowed the Right wing to define the moral norms of Christianity for the majority of Americans?

I think it is safe to say that you and I, David, are extraordinarily privileged people. The moral question for me thus becomes this: in what ways do we need to become willing to leverage our privilege in ways that we currently are not? I have a colleague who once said to me that while tenure is earned, one does not remain truly worthy of keeping their tenured status unless they are saying and writing and doing things that would result in a non-tenured person being fired. The question I thus know I need to be asking myself is this: what have I done today to merit keeping my tenure, and what am I going to do tomorrow to merit it again?

Perhaps our efforts need to begin by becoming clearer and more effective in the way we explain the ethical claims of our tradition to a broader audience than we have thus far been able to reach.

This leads me to ask you this: what do you believe are the moral claims that we can agree are not negotiable with regards to those who would claim to represent Christianity in the United States? You have named a number of these in your paper. Here are some that I would add, or elaborate on:

1. The way we treat the marginalized is a direct reflection of the degree to which we respect the God we claim to believe in.
2. Money is not an outward sign of inward virtue, nor an indication of proximity to God.
3. As Christianity claims humility as a virtue, the privileging or celebration of celebrity is not congruent with Christianity. Nor is electing a celebrity as our President.
4. Willfully and systematically depriving people of access to shelter, affordable food, employment, clean water, good health care, and equal education is evil. Doing any of these things while claiming such actions as congruent with the moral norms of Christianity is a perversion of our tradition. And in actively affirming such activities, or remaining silent while others pursue them, we undermine the moral credibility of Christianity in the eyes of millions, we affirm selfishness as a Christian virtue, and we utterly betray the teachings of the Gospels.
5. Favoring or disfavoring people based on racial, ethnic or national identity is anathema to the moral teachings of Christianity. The Jesus of Nazareth figure who Christians claim to follow was a non-White, non-English speaking Jewish refugee, who advocated for non-violence and was arguably more of a feminist than the 52% of White American women who voted for Trump. Of course, in order to interrogate the roots of the flawed logic which leads so many White American Christians to make choices clearly contrary to core Christian moral claims, we must repudiate the false but persistent representation of Jesus as a European man. This is the European image of a Jesus who affirmed and blessed the genocide and slavery of non-Whites that the United States was founded upon and through which Whites became extraordinarily wealthy, and which was never comprehensively or systematically challenged, let alone rooted out, by White Christians on either side of the Atlantic. As such, this image of Jesus persists in multiple and pernicious ways. While many White American Christians had naïvely come to believe that they had largely evolved beyond this appalling contradiction of Christian moral teachings, it has always been patently obvious to non-White Americans all along that this was not the case. It is only now under Trump that

more White Americans are finally seeing for themselves what their non-White neighbors have seen for their entire lives.

In the conclusion of your paper you note that “we must move into a posture of radical solidarity with those who are most threatened by the new political context in which we find ourselves.” I could not agree with you more. My question is thus this: how far you are willing to go in your practice of radical solidarity, what do you believe this solidarity should look like and what do you specifically believe is the moral obligation of Christian ethicists in fulfilling this call? What do you believe are the most powerful types of ethical resistance we can mount in light of our training and positions? Can we continue to allow those calling themselves Christians to continue to support White supremacy and ethno-nationalism, without mounting a louder and more unapologetic resistance as Christians than we have so far? Pushing this question further, do you believe that someone is actually a Christian simply because they say they are? And to what degree are those who advocate positions absolutely contrary to the core moral claims of the Gospels able to continue to be viewed as Christian in the eyes of millions of Americans due to yours and my failure to fulfill our moral responsibilities as Americans who call ourselves Christian?

I want to conclude my observations by widening this conversation given who we are and where we are as participants in a *Societas Ethica* conference. First of all, I want to acknowledge the fact that half of our Society’s membership are secular philosophical ethicists, and I want to thank each of you for indulging two Christian ethicists in this intramural exchange. Secondly, I want to make an observation in light of the fact of where we are this morning – Europe - and that the bulk of my research has taken place for the last number of years in France. It is impossible for me to engage in the conversation we are now having without reflecting on the fact that similar phenomena we see in the US is also unfolding in France and across many nations in Europe. While it appears that France and the Netherlands have repudiated nationalistic, xenophobic and in the case of Marine Le Pen, Christian White supremacist candidates in their recent elections, the European histories and current circumstances that led to the popularity of Wilders, Le Pen, Fillon, A. F. D., the Freedom Party, the Northern League or Golden Dawn, among others, are unfortunately not going away any time soon. Nor are the circumstances such movements are leveraging to boost their popularity and power.

For example, more refugees are coming – many more than have come so far. Furthermore, the denial that Americans persist in in refusing to acknowledge the ontological connection between the genocide and slavery that established the United States and the factors that led to the election of Trump, is arguably paralleled by a European reluctance to acknowledge that the waves of non-White immigration to Europe are directly connected to the political, social and ecological destabilization of Africa and the Middle East by European colonialism, as well as contemporary European and American neo-colonialism. To the degree to which Le Pen and other European nationalists can claim Christianity as their faith tradition and the justification of their nationalism, what are the steps that European Christian ethicists must take to counter them?

And for philosophical ethicists, what do you believe are the most effective approaches to take in the face of the rise of secular European political leaders and movements which mimic some of Trump’s nationalistic worldviews? In France, for example, Michel Houellebecq is but one of many secular thinkers whose xenophobic hatred of Muslims can match that of any fundamentalist Christian.

There are so many other points I would like to touch on, but I will stop here. Thank you.

Short Paper Abstracts

Demonic Evil in Kierkegaard, Sartre and Løgstrup

Svend Anderson

Sometimes people commit acts of such horrific character that ordinary concepts of evil do not seem to suffice. As an example one could think of the massacre in Utøya near Oslo in 2011. It is hard to understand how a human being can intentionally cause the death of almost 70 innocent young people. The traditional idea of the personified non-human evil, the Devil, comes to mind.

As an intermediate category between the 'ordinary' human and the satanic, it may be useful to look at the demonic evil. In my paper, I will present the category of the demonic as outlined by Søren Kierkegaard in his *Sickness Unto Death*. According to Kierkegaard the demonic is one version of despair in the sense of a "discrepancy" in the self.

K.E. Løgstrup, in his *Auseinandersetzung mit Kierkegaard* gives an account of the Kierkegaardian argument and tries to illuminate it by comparing it with J.P. Sartre's figure Goetz von Berlichingen in his drama *Le diable et le bon Dieu*.

After having presented the line of thought in Kierkegaard and Sartre, as interpreted by Løgstrup, I will discuss its possible relevance for understanding extreme evil. Rüdiger Saffransky's book *Das Böse* may be included.

When Persons Fail to Flourish: Christian Smith and Luigi Sturzo on the Personal and Social-Structural Roots of the Evil of War

Matthew Bagot

In the past few years, sociologist Christian Smith has argued for a methodological re-casting of the social sciences in order to account for the reality of human personality. In Smith's view, "much of the social sciences, informed by positivist empiricism, give us views of human persons and social life that are too simplistic." Instead, he maintains, "that certain things that are real are not visible to direct human observation, that not everything real is empirical (observed) or even actual (what happens in the world when real capacities are activated, even if we do not observe them)." In other words, "reality has a deep dimension often operating below the surface of empirical experience." To think otherwise is to commit the "epistemic fallacy"—to reduce what is to what we can empirically observe.

In this light, Smith develops a "critical realist personalism," according to which human persons, on the one hand, emerge into being from the operation of systems below the level of personhood (bodies, organs, cells, molecules, atoms, etc.), and, on the other, give rise to levels of reality above personhood such as social realities, (the political, the economic, the family, etc.) by virtue of their own nature, capacities, and tendencies. The point here is that "persons are real and do possess natural properties, capacities, tendencies, and limitations proper to their being as persons."

Smith goes on to claim that persons are motivated to all action by six basic human goods (bodily survival; knowledge of reality; identity coherence; exercising purposive agency; moral affirmation; and social belonging and love), which are oriented ultimately towards human flourishing. It is a vision rooted in the *eudaimonian* ethical philosophy of Aristotle; as Smith puts it: people are "most genuinely happy when they develop and actualize what they by nature *are*."

Flourishing is dependent, moreover, on the presence of particular kinds of environments that nurture (or fail to nurture) proper human development towards flourishing. But people very often fail to enjoy the kinds of environmental conditions needed for their development toward flourishing. Smith refers to this developmental stunting of persons as "social-structural evil" (in this regard, he lists nine "personal and social-structural conditions" that are necessary for realizing the six basic human goods, and which inhibit flourishing if they are not met). Thus flourishing depends on good and virtuous social orders. Here Smith very briefly recognizes the extent of our social interdependence in a globalized era. He writes: "Flourishing is, of course, ultimately always a personal accomplishment for (or failure of) each human being. But flourishing *also* should be and in some ways arguably is a collective project of humanity as a whole, pushed forward by our accumulated understanding and long-term growing potential for realization through historical experience, developments, and learning across millennia and centuries of human history."

Prescient of Smith in this regard, Luigi Sturzo aims to show the complex roots of world history and global politics and to present a social theory of them both rooted in "the dialectic

of human process.” Sturzo (1871-1959) was an Italian priest perhaps best known as an activist social reformer and founder after World War One of the Christian Democratic party (originally called the *Partito Popolare Italiano*) in his native Italy. With the failure of Italian democracy, and the victory of Benito Mussolini’s Fascists in 1922, however, a demoralized Sturzo removed himself to London in 1924 and was obliged to stay there for the next twenty-two years. It is no surprise, therefore, to find that Sturzo’s principal interest in the international sphere is with the idea of the eliminability of war. But war for Sturzo is in its nature inseparable from the concrete structure of the international community, which, in turn, is rooted in the basic datum of human personality, understood as both individual and social in light of its eternally evolving relations.

In this paper, then, I will argue that Sturzo extends Smith’s cursory acknowledgement of the significance of a globalized society for human flourishing in a similarly “personalist” vein. But Smith provides Sturzo with some vitally helpful conceptual tools for enhancing the latter’s vision regarding the eliminability of war. Indeed, Smith suggests that “flourishing as a collective historical project is also advanced and clarified by the failures and violations of it in human historical experience, by which humanity sometimes learns more about human flourishing, at least in certain ways.” Thus the two scholars, though writing in different times and contexts (Smith was born a year after Sturzo died), can complement one another and together contribute to our understanding not only of international efforts to overcome evil and enhance human flourishing, but also of human personhood itself.

Keywords

Critical Realist Personalism, Human Nature, Basic Human Goods, Social Theory, International Community, Eliminability of War.

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Überwindung des Bösen: Wie der Mensch antwortet, wenn er vernimmt, was nicht gut ist

Gunther Barth

Statt der Frage nachzugehen, was das Böse sei, widmet sich der Beitrag der Frage: Wie kommt der Mensch zum Guten? Wie wird das Böse durch Gutes überwunden?

Die christliche Tradition hat dazu die Praxis der Buße entwickelt. Im Laufe der Geschichte ist diese Praxis an ihre Grenzen gekommen, wenn sie formalisiert oder technisiert werden sollte und damit in ihrer Dynamik eingegrenzt wurde.

Vor 500 Jahren veröffentlichte Martin Luther 95 Thesen. Die erste lautet: „Wenn Jesus Christus sagt: ‚Kehrt um, denn das Himmelreich ist nahe herbeigekommen‘, dann will er, dass das ganze Leben der Gläubigen Buße sei.“ Diese These stellt seitdem die ständig neue Herausforderung zu fassen, was Buße sei. Luther wendet sich gegen drei gängige Verständnisse der Buße 1. als historisierende Praxis zur Beibehaltung des status ante, 2. als Institut zur moralischen Besserung und 3. als Geschäftsmodell zur Finanzierung einer moralischen Heilsanstalt.

Die Buße ist vielmehr eine zur Überwindung des Bösen geeignete ethische Praxis der Umkehr. Dabei gilt es folgende Eckpunkte ernst zu nehmen:

1. Die Krise ist der Ausgangspunkt zur Erneuerung. Sie muss festgestellt und bestimmt werden, damit deutlich wird, welches Unrecht überwunden werden soll.
2. Die Buße gründet in der Reue Gottes, der immer wieder den Gedanken verwirft, den Menschen zu vernichten. So ermöglicht auch die von dorthier verstandene Reue des Menschen ein Leben ohne Angst vor Vernichtung.
3. Die ethische Praxis der Umkehr ist getragen von der begründeten Hoffnung auf ein Leben jenseits der Krise. Diese Hoffnung ist zu unterscheiden von der Utopie.

Keywords

das Böse, Überwindung des Bösen, Phänomenologie, Buße, Gewalt, Überwindung von Gewalt, Krise, begründete Hoffnung, Reue, Sühne

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Hackers: Fighters for Justice or Vigilantes With No Restraint?

Ross Bellaby

In recent years the power and reach of prominent hacker groups such as Anonymous and Lulzsec has been clearly demonstrated. Bringing down websites of governments, large corporations and terrorist groups is only the beginning of what they can do. However, in a world increasingly obsessed with superheroes and villains, what do hackers represent? Are they a new force for good fighting against terrorist and hate groups, work the state is either unable or unwilling to do. Or do they hide in cyberspace carrying out their private wars fuelled by personal beliefs and vendettas with no oversight or control.

Evidence for both sides is clear. On the one hand they have attacked hate groups and terrorist organisations such as the KKK and ISIS receiving popular support and being portrayed as heroic fighters against the quintessential bad guys. While on the other hand, attacks against politicians they disagree with (famously Sarah Palin being an example) or legitimate organisations such as Visa, Mastercard and PayPal portray their arbitrary and self-centred nature, casting a different light on their actions and the lack of control and oversight.

Understanding if they are good or evil is, however, quite difficult. Retributive justice is often understood as the direct purview of the state and anyone else who attempts to carry it out is seen as inherently bad. A vigilante. But if the act protects the vital interests of others or delivers the punishment that is ethically necessary, should they not be seen as good. Why does delivering the same justice a state would, but it be done by a private citizen, make them evil; can they ever be a force for good? Or is the chaos they bring just that, simply chaos. How much power should such elite, private groups of individuals have? What role can these mavericks play in terms of online privacy? Should private individual actors be left alone to use their privileged mastery of technology to violate the online privacy of individuals, other groups and organisations, or even states?

This confusion is understandable not least because there is no existing ethical framework that deals with such a modern problem, but also because they themselves are unclear in their ethical objective. For Coleman Anonymous is simply too fluid or 'rhizomatic' with too many influences to be pinned it down to a particular understanding of good or evil.¹³ So, while Greenberg argues that Anonymous does have some overarching political orientation towards freedom of speech and anti-corporatism,¹⁴ Steven Mansfield-Devine argues that 'most

¹³ Coleman, G. 'Hacker Politics and Publics' *Public Culture* 23/3 (2011) p.511. Liu, A. *The Laws of Cool: Knowledge Work and the Culture of Information* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. 2004). p.361-367

¹⁴ Greenberg, A. *This Machine Kills Secrets: Julian Assange, the Cypherpunks, and their Fight to Empower Whistleblowers* (New York, NY: Penguin Group, 2012) p.183. Also Fuchs, C. 'The Anonymous movement in the context of liberalism and socialism' *Interface* 5/2 (2013) 345–376; Columbia, D. *Cyberlibertarianism: The Extremist Foundations of 'Digital Freedom.'* Retrieved from [http://www.academia.edu/4429212/Cyberlibertarianism_The_Extremist_Foundations_of_Digital_Freedom_\(2013\)](http://www.academia.edu/4429212/Cyberlibertarianism_The_Extremist_Foundations_of_Digital_Freedom_(2013)) p.7,15; Borsook, P. *Cyberselfish: A Critical Romp through the Terribly Libertarian Culture of High Tech* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2000).

Anons are driven by the desire for anarchic cyber-fun rather than any ideological conviction'.¹⁵ Which for Padmanabhan is nothing more than an act of cyber-terrorism.¹⁶

The debate therefore, is how we should even begin to understand their ethical nature. In order to solve this problem this paper will propose an ethical framework that can help delineate what an ethical hacker would look like and evaluate what they have previously done. By combining an updated version of retributive justice with the just war tradition this paper will develop a framework that will outline the hacker's role as cyber-vigilantes and develop a means of understanding when vigilante justice, normally relegated to the unjust and evil category, can be justified. It will argue that when acting to protect vital interests of others – as a form of self-defence – then the hacker can act. While the idea of 'who' acts needs to be re-examined so that private citizens can be classified as a legitimate authority when it comes to instances where the state has failed, refuses, is unable to act or is the source of the harm itself.

¹⁵ Mansfield-Devine, S. 'Anonymous: serious threat or mere annoyance?' *Network Security* 11/1 (2011) p. 8

¹⁶ Padmanabhan, S. (2012). 'Hacking for Lulz1: Employing expert hackers to combat cyber terrorism' *Vanderbilt Journal of Entertainment & Technology Law* (2012) 15, p.191

Bureaucratic Proceduralism and the Problem of Evil

Jeffrey Bishop

First articulated by the American judges at the Nuremberg Trials, the Nuremberg Code seems to have been the late-modern West's solution to the problem of evil presented by the Nazi doctors (Annas and Grodin). The authors of the Nuremberg Code hoped to procedurally disrupt morally problematic research. As an answer to the problem of evil, the Code seems at best incongruous to the problem and at worst incoherent. More importantly, the Code seems impotent in the face of large bureaucratic research apparatuses. After all, the articulation of the Nuremberg Code did nothing to stop suspicious ongoing human experimentation in the United Kingdom and the United States. In fact, German law itself should have prohibited the experiments (Benedek). German law had already been modified to require consent in the early 20th Century in response to Albert Neisser's morally problematic 1898 experiments on syphilitic patients without their consent (Neisser).

Thus, German law could not prevent the evil of the Nazi experiments; nor did the Nuremberg Code itself do anything to stop the structural evil inherent in experimentation in the UK or the US. The problem, I shall argue, is that the late-modern West offers only bureaucratic responses to atrocities of human experimentation because it has no robust conception or understanding of the good for society or the good for human beings. Certainly, all experimentation is aimed at some good, even the Nazi experiments; the problem is that the good as such is not part of the inquiry. Focusing on the instrumental means of achieving those thin goods is insufficient to the problem of evil for a number of reasons. To make the case, I will examine the Nuremberg Code in detail, showing that it has very little in the way of a conception of the good of experimentation, or the good for humans.

First, the Code focuses on the harms that might arise in the research procedures, rather than focusing on final goods, precisely because the late-modern West has no way to conceive of robust goods. From the time of Francis Bacon, final causes ceased being a part of the consideration for human knowledge. Bacon claimed that final causes led to confusion in the endeavor to know, and that formal causes could rarely be known in any robust sense. With Bacon, the emphasis for human knowledge began to shift away from formal and final causes to material and efficient causes, or proximate causes or instrumental causes. Thus, when presented with the evils of the bureaucratic research apparatus, the emphasis is placed on a bureaucratic response to the evil; the response is aimed at its procedures. For Bacon, the telos—or final cause—of any knowledge can only be added back after the instrumental knowledge has been achieved (Bacon). Thus, science today is conceived as an endeavor aimed at the goods of the many, that is to say, it is aimed at the goods as conceived by the state. The problem is not that the Code did not sufficiently consider the goods of society. Rather, the Code, when speaking of the societal benefits of knowledge, has no way of adjudicating the differences between the societal goods and the goods of individual humans.

Thus, we come to the second point; there is an ontological problem that the Code does not address. Not only did the Code not sufficiently consider the goods of society, but it has a larger problem in that it cannot conceive of the good for individual humans. The problem was not that the Nazi scientists did not get the consent of their subjects or that they did not

sufficiently consider those individual goods in relation to societal benefits—as the code suggests; rather the problem was that the scientists did not consider their subjects to be sufficiently human in the first place. The problem is one of the ontological good of human being in general and human beings in particular.

Finally, the Code cannot confront evil, precisely because those who generated the Code have no way of engaging or articulating the good for humans qua human. By closing off inquiry into final causes for human activities related to human beings, the late-modern West has no recourse when evil becomes manifest. In fact, it may not be able to recognize the results as evil at all until it is too late. The bureaucratic procedures of the Code, with its emphasis on procedural means of ensuring “good” research, offers very little to combat the evil that inevitably will arise in large-scale research projects.

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Starre Identität als Ursprung des Bösen

Kathrin Bouvot

In meinem Vortrag möchte ich das Phänomen der Entstehung des Bösen in Situationen beleuchten, in welchen eine große Diversität an Kulturen und Religionen auf engem Raum zusammentreffen und dabei die These verteidigen, dass es die Reduktion des Menschen auf eine zu starre und unflexible Identitätskonzeption ist, welche zu Gewalt, Rassismus, Ausgrenzung sowie einer vorurteilsbehafteten und von Hass geprägten Gesprächskultur führt.

Gerade jetzt, wo Europa mit einer besonders hohen Anzahl von neu ankommenden Menschen umzugehen hat, ist es besonders wichtig, sich darüber Gedanken zu machen, wie eine tolerante und gewaltfreie Begegnung zwischen den unterschiedlichsten Kulturen ermöglicht werden kann und wie bestehenden Problemen, wie Islamfeindlichkeit, entgegengewirkt werden kann.

Vielversprechende Ansätze für den Umgang mit dem Anderen, mit dem Fremden bieten die Ansätze Armatya Sens, insbesondere jene, die er in seinem Buch *Die Identitätsfalle. Warum es keinen Krieg der Kulturen gibt* ausführt. Sen vertritt die Position, dass ein einzelner Mensch aus einer nahezu unbegrenzten Diversität von unterschiedlichsten Identitätsmerkmalen besteht, weshalb es in Anbetracht dieser Tatsache unmöglich ist ihn auf eine einzige starre Identität zu reduzieren. Sen erachtet die solitaristische Identität als einen bloßen Mythos, als ein „willkürlich erdachtes Einteilungsschema, dem alles andere untergeordnet wird.“ Bei jeder Identität handle es sich, so Sen, immer um eine Pluralität von Identitäten, da jede kulturelle Identität aus mehreren Bestandteilen besteht und laufend neue Elemente aufnimmt. Der Anfang jeglicher Form von Gewalt ist einer solchen Reduzierung der menschlichen Existenz in eine einzige starre Identität zu sehen, wie Sen schreibt: „Der Gewalt wird dagegen Vorschub geleistet, wenn wir die Ansicht hegen, wir müssten unausweichlich eine angeblich einzigartige – oft streitbare – Identität haben, die augenscheinlich weitreichende (und zuweilen höchst unangenehme) Forderungen an uns stellt. Das Auferlegen einer angeblich einzigartigen Identität gehört oft als entscheidender Bestandteil zu der »Kampfkunst«, sektiererische Auseinandersetzungen zu führen.“ Sen vertritt den Standpunkt, dass jeder Mensch die Freiheit und somit auch die Pflicht hat, sich mit der Diversität an möglichen Identitäten auseinanderzusetzen und eine reflektierte Wahl in Bezug auf die Frage zu treffen, welchen Identitäten er sich zugehörig fühlt. Sens Polemik richtet sich gegen eine Identitätskonzeption, welche davon ausgeht, dass jeder Mensch unabänderlich einer einzigen Identität zuordenbar ist. Diese Art der Identitätskonstruktion bezeichnet Sen als »solitaristische« Deutung der menschlichen Identität. Sen erachtet die Einteilung der Menschen nach einem einzigen Kriterium nicht nur als Angriff auf die Menschlichkeit, auf das Menschsein, sondern auch – und diese Ansicht wiederholt er immer wieder – als Wurzel für die Entstehung von Kriegen und vom Bösen an sich selbst. Wenn zwischenmenschliche Beziehungen darauf reduziert werden, welcher Identität das jeweilige Gegenüber angehört, dann entsteht unvermeidbar eine Spirale aus Gewalt und Hass, welche darauf zurückzuführen ist, Menschen unbedingt in bestimmte Kategorien einteilen zu wollen.

Wenn man akzeptiert, dass jeder Mensch aus einer Pluralität von Identitäten besteht und die eigene Identität einem permanenten Wandel unterworfen ist, da neue Identitäten

hinzukommen, ist eine Öffnung für das vermeintlich „Andere“ bzw. „Fremde“ leichter möglich. Berührungspunkte mit dem vermeintlich „Fremden“ und Tendenzen, Menschen in Gruppen einzuteilen und so zu isolieren, werden durch die Annahme von flexiblen Identitätsmodellen verringert.

Der Vortrag möchte zeigen, dass Integration oft an zu starren Identitätsmodellen scheitert oder von diesen erschwert wird, da diese zu gegenseitiger Intoleranz und ausgrenzendem Denken führen und darüber hinaus die Tatsache, dass wir alle Menschen sind, auch wenn wir unterschiedlich sind, auf radikale Art und Weise untergraben. Wenn man die menschliche Identität als eine Pluralität und nicht als eine Singularität begreift, führt dies dazu, dass der Gedanke abgebaut wird, verschiedene Kulturen seien miteinander inkompatibel. Der Gedanke der Inkompatibilität kann aus Sens Sicht überwunden werden, indem Gemeinsamkeiten, indem überschneidende Elemente in Form von Kommunikation gefunden werden: „Die Hoffnung auf Eintracht in der heutigen Welt beruht in hohem Maße auf einem klareren Verständnis der Vielzahl unserer menschlichen Identitäten und der Einsicht, daß diese sich überschneiden und damit einer scharfen Abgrenzung nach einem einzigen unüberwindlichen Einteilungskriterium entgegenwirken.“ Der Fokus des Vortrags wird auf die Frage ausgerichtet sein, inwiefern und in welchem Ausmaß die Annahme einer solitaristischen Identität dafür verantwortlich gemacht werden kann, dass Integrationsbemühungen durch Gewalt und Rassismus erschwert werden. Das Ziel meines Vortrags soll darin bestehen, zu erörtern und zu diskutieren, ob Sens Konzeption von kulturellen Identitäten den Umgang, die Integration und das Zusammenleben mit neu hinzugekommenen Menschen aus den unterschiedlichsten Kulturen und Religionen verbessern und bestehende Probleme, wie Fremdenfeindlichkeit und Islamfeindlichkeit, abbauen könnte und inwiefern seine Ausführungen als ein hilfreicher Ansatz für eine Ethik der Integration verwendet werden können.

Keywords

Entstehung des Bösen – Identität – Gewalt – Rassismus – Ausgrenzung – Islamfeindlichkeit – Amartya Sen – Immigration – Religion – Kultur – Integration – Frieden – Zusammenleben – Kommunikation – Intoleranz – Berührungspunkte – Pluralität der Identitäten – das „Andere“ – das „Fremde“ – solitaristische Identität – Pluralität – Kompatibilität – Fremdenfeindlichkeit

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The Unreality of Evil: The Theological Return to Nothingness

Deborah Casewell

The understanding of evil as privation is outlined in Augustine's *Enchiridion*, restated by Aquinas in his *Summa Theologiae*, and has shaped theological engagement with evil. The purpose of this paper is to look at how this account of evil as privation was re-developed in response to the Shoah, examining the views of two Protestant theologians, both of whom are working to combat an account of nothingness as positive. With Martin Heidegger's rejection of onto-theology and God as the ground of being, he located the ground of being in lived, embodied existence, known only against the backdrop of one's own death understood as negation and nothingness. This rejection of previous accounts of the being of God and the being of humanity raised problems for theology, which was dependent on God as the ground of all being and on nothingness as a form of evil rather than as the way in which being is revealed. Heidegger's rejection both of God as the ground of all being, and his recalibration of nothingness as the ground of being led to new formulations of being and nothingness within philosophy, as the thought of Jean-Paul Sartre, Emmanuel Levinas, and Jacques Derrida shows.

Theology thus had to explicitly engage with this recalibration of being and nothingness which begins in Heidegger and is expanded upon by Sartre. Two of them, Karl Barth and Eberhard Jüngel, wish to combat this account of nothingness through Martin Luther's use of the work of 'the left hand of God' and his account of divine hiddenness. Martin Luther, in his attack on reason and what he termed the theology of glory, placed the glory of God in the hiddenness of God. Luther was able to accomplish this by differentiating between the left and right hand of God in the world, by seeing God as working through evil as well as through good. Both Karl Barth and Eberhard Jüngel draw on Luther for an account of the hiddenness of God, but wish to do away with Luther's understanding of God actually working through evil. Instead, they see the work of the left hand of God in how God relates to nothingness, defining evil as nothingness in order to preserve their accounts of the fullness of revelation and of hiddenness merely as human inability to process the overwhelming power of God's glory. Evil, as done by humanity, becomes the self-actualisation in relation to nothingness that Heidegger and Sartre call for, and the proper response to the threat and the negating power of nothingness is to turn to God, and to trust in God, rather than in the self. Having detailed how Barth and Jüngel wish to do theologically and philosophically with nothingness, how they wish to both curb the influence that Heidegger and Sartre had on understandings of nothingness through re-interpreting Luther's account of both the hiddenness of God and the work of God in evil, I shall determine whether this twofold task gives an adequate account of evil, considering these accounts were written post-World War II.

I aim to do this by exploring what relation this recalibration of nothingness as evil has to accounts of being, of human existence in the world. The question of being and nothingness in Heidegger and Sartre is due to a desire to remove God from the equation, to have nothingness and the action of the self be the maker of both the individual and society. It also stems from a desire to move away from metaphysics into the questions of lived, embodied existence. As

nothingness has no essence or substance, it is freed from metaphysics. Barth and Jüngel's use of nothingness as evil also aims to avoid a metaphysical conundrum, in that God cannot create nothingness and thus God is not the cause of evil in the world, although God is the cause of being again. However, considering this return to God as a ground of being, the paper intends to explore the consequences of this account of evil for the being of God. It shall examine what accounts of metaphysics results from this anti-metaphysical endeavour. Finally, it shall evaluate whether this account of evil as self-actualisation apart from God should be seen solely as an attempt to devalue existentialist philosophy and its emphasis on subjectivity, or whether this return to evil as nothingness provide a way of a more coherent way of talking about evil and God in a world that should know all too well the consequences of self-actualisation.

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Keywords: Evil, nothingness, metaphysics and anti-metaphysics, Luther, theology of the cross, theology of glory, Death of God, self-actualisation, theology, continental philosophy, existentialism.

Rectification for the Slave Trade

Göran Collste

The transatlantic slave trade is among the great evils of human history. From the 16th to the 19th Century, around 12 million people were transported over the ocean in overcrowded boats with a death toll of 10-15%. Upon arrival in America, the slaves were sold on slave markets and branded with the initials of their new owners. A slave was a commodity, vulnerable to mistreatment, humiliation and exploitation. A slave had no family life and the children of slaves were sold without any concern for family relations or protection.

The slave trade was not only harmful for the individuals involved but also for the continent of Africa. As part of the triangular trade, European slave traders supplied African kingdoms with weapons, which had devastating consequences for peace in the region. The slave trade also had significant impact on African economies. Large parts of the most productive work force were exiled. Furthermore, during the period of the slave trade, other economic activities than slavery and slave trade were neglected. Africa could have produced goods and raw materials that were produced in America. This fact had far-reaching detrimental effects on the African economy.

Although the slave trade has been illegal for two hundred years, there are good reasons to believe that this tragic period in history still has an impact. The huge export of peoples from Africa have had long-lasting economic consequences. The economic activities were for a long period directed toward slave trade rather than other economic activities. Potential production of raw materials and mining were neglected. The market for manufactured goods was limited and it had demographic consequences still visible.

The institution of slavery implied a disregard of human dignity based on race. In this way, it sides with other evils in human history, for example, the Holocaust and apartheid. This dark period in history should perhaps be commemorated, but does it have any moral implications today? Has it left any morally relevant traces? Does it justify any courses of action, for example public acknowledgment, apologies, memorials or compensation? My paper addresses these questions. I will examine arguments for rectification for the slave trade in some international declarations and proclamation, for example the Abuja Proclamation from 1993, the Gorée initiative, the Durban Declaration from 2001, and the Declaration of the Caribbean states in 2013.

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Resident Evil: The Structural Violence of Neoliberal Urban Redevelopment in the United States

Michael R. Fisher, Jr.

In *Disrupting Homelessness*, Christian social ethicist Laura Stivers examines whether typical Christian responses to the affordable housing and homeless crisis in the United States are empowering for those who are offered assistance. Specifically, she seeks to broaden Christian tactics to homelessness beyond charitable, individualized approaches, emphasizing rather the importance of and the need for systemic and structural analyses to inform the work of faith communities. Stivers admonishes us to move beyond Christian approaches that fail to take seriously structural and institutional forces that cause homelessness. While she provides a thorough overview of the dominant U.S. ideologies connected to homelessness in order to demonstrate the ways in which such ideologies are assimilated within traditional Christian responses, Stivers only briefly addresses the pervasive problem of the criminalization of unhoused persons. This paper extends her analysis of systemic and structural forces that cause and compound homelessness by specifically examining the social, political, and economic processes that (re)criminalize homelessness within the spatial particularly of the neoliberal city.

Scholars in the field of urban studies acknowledge that the language of neoliberalism, defined in this paper as “a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade,” (Harvey, 2005) is fairly common within contemporary social theory (Hackworth, 2007). Indeed, the literature on neoliberalism in the social sciences has exploded over the last two decades. Much scholarship has analyzed the ways in which the process(es) of neoliberalism—generally referred to as “neoliberalization”—is articulated within the urban built environment. The physical construction of cities, in both public and private spaces, makes provocative statements about cities’ institutional capacity for development, malleability to the demands of capital investment, and viability as epicenters for societal flourishing. Because cities have historically performed multiple functions, ranging from military and religious to the commercial and the symbolic, they are often poignant indicators of social, political, and economic (re)organization. In the neoliberal city in particular, the primary goal of urbanization is to mobilize space as the quintessential territory for market-oriented economic growth as well as elite consumption practices (Brenner and Theodore, 2002). The political-economic processes that entail neoliberal urbanization thereby marginalize and exclude persons and groups viewed as beyond the pale of utility for capitalist accumulation, i.e., the unhoused.

The processes that contribute to the criminalization of homelessness, however, precede the relatively recent neoliberal development in urban space. Randall Amster (2008) argues that for at least six centuries, homelessness has been associated with disorder and criminality. In postmodern societies, once notions of private property dominated the cultural and physical landscape, vagrancy was perceived as a threat to capitalism (Miller, 1991). In the United States, undergirded by Max Weber’s “Protestant Work Ethic,” a national mythos emerged in bourgeoisie society that elevated the notion of hard work and personal responsibility as supreme virtues to which all productive, “good” citizens should ascribe.

This ideology led to the identification of “deviant subcultures” and thereby provided a pathway toward regulation, enforcement and criminalization (Amster, 2008).

This paper argues that while the processes of neoliberal urbanization and the criminalization of homelessness are temporally and spatially distinct, in the neoliberal city of the 21st century, they converge and synergize resulting in the increased regulation and (re)criminalization of unhoused persons, especially in the spatial context of gentrifying and gentrified neighborhoods. Surveillance of “deviant subcultures” is heightened in neighborhoods that are targeted for neoliberal urban gentrification. I contend that the (re)criminalization of homelessness in the context of neoliberal urban redevelopment functions as a form of structural violence inflicted on the most vulnerable urban dwellers, and is thus a veiled form of evil. Moreover, drawing from the literature on at the intersection of religion and neoliberalism, this paper contends that the continual (re)criminalization of persons experiencing homelessness is both legitimated and sustained by the religious tenets of prosperity theology. I conclude this essay by asserting that theologians, Christian ethicists, and other people of faith must disrupt the religious (ill)-logics that provide ideational supports for the political-economic practices of neoliberalization in urban space, as well as dominant cultural logics that justify policy initiatives that eliminate the public space for and criminalize an entire group of people simply for experiencing homelessness.

Keywords

criminalization, homelessness, economic growth, gentrification, neoliberalism, neoliberalization, prosperity theology, structural violence, urban redevelopment, urbanization

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Structures of Sin: The Impact of a Theological Ethical Concept on Coping with Evil in Society

Huub Flohr

(0) Introduction

It has been John Paul II to introduce the term 'structures of sin' into papal teaching. Since then, this term appears frequently in the broadened social doctrine of the Roman-Catholic Church. It is worth to search for the impact of the theological meaning of this ethical concept on handling evil in society. How can this concept enlighten social evil in our world (2)? And is this concept useful for finding practical ways to cope with evil in society (3)? Before getting answers to these questions (4), we have to start with describing the *Sitz im Leben*, the original context of this theological-ethical concept (1).

(1) *Sitz im Leben*

The use of the concept of structures of sin has grown in the papal doctrine. In fact the term derives from the theology of liberation rooted in the Latin-American struggle for a just society. It has been actually this theology of liberation to be rejected by papal decrees. Yet the term has been adopted by the magisterial doctrine, which supposes that it might have been changed in understanding. In fact moral evil in society is not limited to a social moral affair as liberty in Christian sense has also a transcending meaning. And though moral evil can be said of social structures, only individual persons can be accused of real sin.

Nevertheless the term structures of sin helps understanding better the reality of evil in society, both in synchronic and diachronic perspective. That might help to cope in realistic expectation with the evil in society.

(2) Concept of Moral Understanding

Starting with the term 'social sin' in his 1984 post-synodal apostolic exhortation 'Reconciliation and penance' John Paul II developed this term into that of 'structures of sin' especially in his social encyclical 'Sollicitudo rei socialis' of 1987. With this term can be explained how circumstances are conditioning evil doing and as such limiting the personal responsibility of moral acting. However they deal with moral evil since they derive from personal moral acting in the past or contemporarily as a culture of moral behavior. This concept enlighten the allover ethical pattern that moral acting never originates from zero but is always rooted in a social structure whether in the sense of a traditional culture of acting or as a common way of doing. Moreover structures of sin do not affect directly the acting itself but the way of acting, the moral behavior. Talking about structures of sin and not only structures of evil, means that, though one cannot speak about a personal responsibility for this kind of social conditions, the personal relation between God and human being remain involved within this social fact.

(3) Concept of Moral Acting

Though structures of sin minimize personal responsibility, this concept is able to keep aware that even mainly socially conditioned moral acting is part of moral responsibility. As personal acting is at the base of the creation of a structural evil, so structures of sin can and therefore also ought to be changed by personal acting into structures of moral goodness. Conditions of moral acting can and ought to be changed, otherwise one would give up the freedom of morality. Thus moral acting is not just a matter of realization of moral good but also contribute to a way of acting by other people. It tends to become structural.

(4) Conclusion: a useful concept?

In many questions nowadays people seem not to feel personally responsible, since it has been done always like this, or everybody is doing quite the same. Furthermore we talk about complex situations with many agents, who individually for the whole reject any personal responsibility. Does exist nonetheless something like a collective conscience or a general responsibility? The concept of structures of sin seem to be useful to fill the gap between an always personal moral conscience and a collective conscience, between an always personal responsibility and a collective responsibility.

Furthermore working with this concept it might be possible to allocate within a theory of moral acting a real change of evil situations into opposite ones. Here time is prior to space, unity prior to conflict, reality prior to ideas, and the whole prior to its parts, as pope Francis in *Evangelii gaudium* formulates the practical steps in moral discernment (*Evangelii gaudium*, 222-237). Talking about structural evil implies a growth on the long range that allows a real change of structures thanks to personals conversions of mind and behavior.

Finally this term which profoundly is a theological one seems to be useful to explain how any moral analysis of social evil presupposes a connection to God, to have an integral vision on what Pope Francis develops as an integral ecology which is able to interconnect the natural with the social world, being both of them conditions and fruits of moral acting of individuals.

Keywords

evil as an ethical category; theology, metaphysics and evil from different religious perspective; plural moral cultures and the question of evil; ethics and structural violence

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Ein Versuch zur Rehabilitierung der normativen Kategorie des Bösen im politischen Diskurs: Zur Phänomenologie des Bösen und ihrer Anwendung auf Donald Trump

Bjorn Freter

1. Die Phänomenologie der Sorge

Wir vermuten, dass im Bösen, zumindest in einer seiner Erscheinungsformen, ein Exzess der Selbstsorge zur Erscheinung kommt. Die Sorge bestimmt sich durch vier Momente: Am Beginn der Sorge steht immer eine Ansprache. Etwas spricht uns an – vielleicht hören wir diese Ansprache ganz zufällig. Diese Ansprache machen wir dann zu unserer Angelegenheit. Wenn uns diese Ansprache angelegen geworden ist, können wir, der Angelegenheit entsprechend, einen Willen, eine Volition entfalten: Wir wollen das, was das Gedeihen dessen, das uns angesprochen hat, dessen, das uns angelegen geworden ist, befördert. Und endlich werden wir in diesem Sinne praktisch. Der Zusammenhang aus Ansprache, Angelegenheit, Volition und Praxis sei als Sorge bezeichnet.

2. Abstrakte Phänomenologie des Bösen

Das Böse finden wir dann, wenn ein Mensch durch nichts mehr angesprochen werden kann als durch sich selbst, wenn ihm außer seiner selbst nichts mehr zur Angelegenheit werden kann, wenn er nur sich will und nur in Folge dieses Selbstwollens praktisch werden kann. Das Böse kommt dann zur Erscheinung, wenn die Selbstsorge exzessiert.

a. Narzissmus

Dem Bösen geht es um sich selbst und um alles andere nur deshalb. Das normative Fundament seiner Wirklichkeit ist sein eigenes Gedeihen: Der Böse ist, wie im engen Anschluss an die psychiatrische Forschung sagen wollen, ein Narzisst (cf. Kernberg/Hartmann 2015).

b. Weltarmut, Unruhe, normative Willkür, der Andere als Zeuge

Der Böse lebt mithin in einer radikal verarmten Wirklichkeit. Diese exzessierende Sorge deformiert die Wirklichkeitshermeneutik eines Menschen im Tiefsten. Der andere Mensch verflacht zum Mittel der Verwirklichung der Zwecke der exzessierenden Selbstsorge: Der andere Mensch als Phänomen sui generis geht ganz verloren. Indes, der andere Mensch ist nicht bedeutungslos. Auf eine spannungsvolle, ja paradoxe Art bleibt der Andere von eminenter Wichtigkeit: Er muss die Suprematie des Bösen bezeugen. Um aber als Zeuge wirken zu können, muss der Böse das Urteil des anderen Menschen im Moment seines Urteils für relevant erklären. Unmittelbar nach der Urteilsbekundung muss der Andere wieder in die Bedeutungslosigkeit zurück gedrängt werden: Es muss verhindert werden, dass der Andere zur relevanten kritischen Autorität erstarkt. Unentwegt muss über Autorisierung und Entautorisierung des Anderen befunden werden. Der böse Mensch lebt in notorischer Unruhe (ein schon mythisches Kennzeichen des Bösen, cf. Colpe 1993).

c. Anti-Aufklärung, Nihilismus

Es geht dem Bösen nicht darum, weshalb der Andere sich für oder gegen ihn ausspricht. Unbedeutend ist, was der Andere denkt, bedeutend ist einzig, welche normative Haltung er letztlich dem Bösen gegenüber einnimmt. Die Verweigerung der intellektuellen Gemeinschaft macht den Bösen zum erklärten Anti-Aufklärer. Dadurch wirkt der Böse letztlich nihilistisch: Andere Werte werden zur Unerheblichkeit annulliert.

3. Konkrete Phänomenologie des Bösen: Donald Trump

Die Phänomenologie des Bösen, wie wir sie abstrakt dargestellt haben – und in unserem Beitrag v.a. aus literarischen, philosophischen (cf. Neiman 2002) und psychiatrischen Texten herleiten werden – lässt sich am gegenwärtigen Präsidenten der USA, Donald Trump, in bestürzender Weise in concreto nachvollziehen. Das gilt durchaus, auch wenn wir dies hier nicht weiter verfolgen, für Erdogan, Putin oder die PEGIDA-Bewegung.

Trump ist vielfach als Narzisst bezeichnet worden, aber nur selten als ein böser Mensch (wichtigste Ausnahme D'Antonio 2015, merkwürdig undeutlich Johnston 2016). Wir finden indes all die Momente des Bösen in seiner bisherigen politischen Tätigkeit wieder, wie wir vor allem anhand der Pressekonferenz vom 16.2.2017 zeigen wollen.

Es erscheint uns von großer Wichtigkeit, dafür zu argumentieren, Trump als bösen Menschen zu begreifen. Trump nimmt gar nicht am politischen Diskurs teil. Er ist nur dann zu verstehen, wenn wir ihn als Gegenüber in einem, dem Politischen zugrundeliegenden, normativen Diskurs begreifen. So ist Trump kein Rassist. Wenn es seiner verengten Wirklichkeitswahrnehmung opportun erscheint, dann bedient er sich des Rassismus, so wie er sich, falls opportun, des Gegenteils bedient. Einem Menschen, der in dieser Weise apolitisch agiert, können wir (außerhalb der Berufspolitik) nicht mehr politisch begegnen. Wir müssen ihn nicht als politischen Gegner, sondern als normativen Nihilisten verstehen. Dann wird das scheinbar Willkürliche seines Handelns plötzlich verständlich.

4. Was können wir gegen das Böse tun?

Um den Bösen in seinem nihilistischen Furor aufzuhalten, müssen wir zunächst dafür Sorge tragen, dass wir und andere durch den Bösen nicht (als Zeugen, als Feinde etc.) funktionalisiert werden können. Wir müssen uns wechselseitig normativ reflektieren, kritisieren und anerkennen.

Sodann müssen wir unseren Unwillen gegen die Funktionalisierung bemerkbar machen. Der Böse muss wissen, dass wir ihm nicht zu willens sind. Wir müssen uns und unseren Nächsten bewegen, sich zu bekennen, wie wir zu diesem Bösen stehen und uns und den Nächsten dazu bewegen, dieses Bekenntnis laut und deutlich mitzuteilen (cf. Emcke 2016). Die entscheidende Aufgabe der (akademischen) Philosophie besteht, wie wir versuchen werden auszuführen, darin, die normative Selbstreflexion und ihre Vermittlung an den Nächsten breitenwirksam zu unterstützen.

Keywords

Phänomenologie, Sorge, das Böse, Narzissmus, Nihilismus, Anti-Aufklärung, der Andere, Donald Trump

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The Monster within Us: Notes on Plato's Moral Psychology

Segalerba Gianlugi

My contribution will be dedicated to the analysis of some aspects of the Evil in Plato. In particular I would like to concentrate my attention on the following subjects:

3. the presence of good and evil desires and pleasures in the soul;
4. the contrast between the rational part and the appetitive part together with the contrast between desires of the rational part and desires of the appetitive part;
5. the presence of the Evil in each person, which is located in the appetitive part of the soul, the menaces and perils that this part represents both for the individual and for every society, and the strategies to put the Evil in us under control;
6. the process of degeneration of a state and the causes of the death of a state;
7. the presence of the Evil in the human history as a meta-historical presence rooted in the very structure of the men, independently of the particular historical age (we are the Evil, therefore the Evil will be always present in the human history).

Men are not born (absolutely) good: they have an evil component in themselves with which they are born. Evil is rooted in men, it does not come from external factors. Good can prevail (and Evil can be eliminated), if Good can really prevail (and if Evil can really be completely eliminated), only after a long process of education and development of (at least some) men. My thesis as regards the possible solutions offered by Plato in order to reach a liberation from the Evil will consist in interpreting the whole process of knowledge described by Plato as a kind of indispensable therapy against the evil component which is present in each of us. I will mainly base my interpretation on passages of the *Republic* (especially from book *IV*, *V*, *VI*, *VII* and *IX* of the *Republic*); references to other works of Plato like the *Gorgias*, *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, *Timaeus* and the *Laws* will however be present in my analysis.

I will begin my analysis with Plato's description of the evil component as a factor which is capable of committing every kind of delict and crime. I will then proceed to the analysis of the desires/emotions that are connected by Plato, respectively, to the appetitive part and to the rational part of the soul. Plato assigns different pleasures, desires and ruling principles to the three parts of the soul (that is, emotions and desires belong not only to the appetitive part; a kind of desires do belong to reason: contrast between reason and appetitive part also means and implies, therefore, a kind of contrast between desires belonging to reason and desires belonging to the appetitive part).

My thesis regarding the structure of the human soul will be that, if we usually ask ourselves how Evil is possible, we, basing ourselves on the descriptions offered by Plato, had better ask whether and how the Good is possible: the description of the soul in *Republic IX* is anything but encouraging¹⁷, since the evil component does not need a particular training in order to be active, whereas reason and emotions/desires belonging to reasons appear to need a long

¹⁷ Therewith I am referring to the possibility of the Good in the human realm and in the human history; I do not put in doubt the existence of the Idea of the Good. I think that Plato maintains a rather pessimistic attitude as to the effective possibility/feasibility of the Good in the human realm, on the one side, and that Plato shows a pessimistic position too as regards the durability of the realized Good in the human history, on the other side. Sooner or later a state will fall prey to the Evil.

education. Moreover, Plato tells us that only a few men does manage to eliminate the evil component¹⁸: the evil component apparently remains alive in the majority of people. Since the structure of the individual soul has immediate effects and immediate impacts for every state and every society, as we can see through the description of the degeneration and the decadence of the constitutions in the books *VIII* and *IX* of the *Republic*, an analysis of the individual soul immediately represents, for Plato, an analysis of the strategies to be followed in order to guarantee the stability of every state.

Only the long process of knowledge can free some individuals¹⁹ from the evil component that every individual has in himself; the knowledge of the realm of being opens up and makes accessible to the individual a new reality dimension: only this dimension can develop the potentialities of the rational part and can strengthen the desires of the rational part; only this kind of development enables the individual to effectively contrast desires and passions of the appetitive part. Accordingly, as regards the structure of every society, only a class of individuals having had access to the alternative reality dimension is able to safeguard the structure of the state against the presence, in the majority of people, of an evil factor. In spite of every process of education, however, Plato does not seem to consider the Evil in us as something that can be totally defeated: the Evil is, at least in human politics and in human history, not eliminable; men (the majority of men) are constitutively (also) evil. Every political constitution, every society will be therefore always exposed to the menace of a degeneration; the Evil will always appear in the human history (this independently of the particular historical moment), since the Evil is rooted in the very structure of the men.

Keywords

Evil, Plato, Republic, Soul, tripartition of the soul, rational part, appetitive part, desires, pleasures, society, education, moral psychology.

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¹⁸ The presence of an evil factor in men's soul is attested, for instance, in the following passages: *Republic IX*, 571b3-572b9, 588b1-589b7.

¹⁹ That is, knowledge of the realm of being can free only the individuals that have interest and desire for achieving knowledge. Knowledge of being and change through this knowledge presupposes that the individual has a kind of intellectual desire and interest for the dimension of the being.

Vlastos, G., Socrates *contra* Socrates in Plato, in: Socrates. Ironist and Moral Philosopher, pp. 45-80.

The Many Faces of Evil

Zachary Goldberg

There is an abundance of compelling philosophical theories outlining the necessary and sufficient conditions of moral evil and distinguishing it from mere wrongdoing. The fact that these various theories are each persuasive and yet do not concur with one another might lead us to adopt one of two conclusions: a) we ought to adopt a position of conceptual pluralism toward the concept of evil; b) we ought to abandon the attempt at defining evil.²⁰ The advantage of the first option is that it allows us to recognize different essential features of the concept. The disadvantage is that our understanding of evil remains ambiguous. The disadvantage of the second conclusion is that we have no conception of moral evil at all. The advantage, however, is that we can turn our focus to the significance of evil for our understanding of human agency and moral responsibility. In this paper, I will survey the most compelling contemporary philosophical theories of evil and discuss how a plurality of persuasive theories might lead us away from definitions and towards the normative significance of recognizing evil as ineradicable feature of human interaction without naming its essential features. Although this recognition has normative value, it is also morally problematic in that it allows us to identify evil only after it has occurred.

We can divide the philosophical theories of evil into those that identify as an essential feature an element of harm and those that identify as essential a specific psychological hallmark of the perpetrator.²¹ Of the first variety, we can divide theories between Naïve Harm Accounts and Nuanced Harm Accounts. Nuanced Harm Accounts hold that some egregious kind of harm necessarily characterizes an evil act, and that this harm must be produced culpably by a human agent.²² Nuanced Harm Accounts stand in contrast with Naïve Harm Accounts, which define evil only as immense suffering. Naïve Harm Accounts fail for three reasons: non-moral occurrences like natural disasters cause immense suffering but are not evil in the moral sense; it is difficult to know precisely when suffering becomes immense; it is conceivable that human actions may produce immense suffering and nevertheless be justified. Nuanced Harm Accounts, in comparison, define evil by a certain kind, not simply degree of harm, caused by a culpable human agent.

Other philosophers argue that evil is distinguished from mere wrongdoing by either the presence or absence of some specific psychological feature of the perpetrator. Of the first variety, some theorists claim that sadism or defiance of morality for its own sake exclusively motivate a person to perform evil.²³ Of the second variety, it is not the presence of a certain motivation, but an absence of moral considerations or that the choice of action is not inhibited by moral barriers against harming or humiliating others.²⁴

Each of these theories has compelling features and each offers essential insights into the nature of moral evil. At the same time, for each definition, we can think of a real life

²⁰ One might also conclude that the disagreement concerning evil's essential features is evidence that evil is not an ethical concept, but one that belongs to literary or religious discourse. I do not believe that this position is defensible, but do not engage with it in the present analysis.

²¹ Luke Russell (2014) labels these two categories psychologically thin and psychologically thick conceptions, respectively. Paul Formosa (2008) calls them harm accounts and perpetrator accounts of evil.

²² See Card (2002); Formosa (2008); Calder (2013); Russell (2014).

²³ For sadism, see Steiner (2002). For defiance of morality, see Perrett (2002), Singer (2004).

²⁴ See Garrard (2002); Morton (2004).

occurrence of evil that challenges each theory's claim to comprehensiveness. This plurality of coherent and valuable conceptions of evil leaves us with two options: either we accept conceptual pluralism regarding moral evil, or we abandon the possibility of identifying evil's essential features in favor of focusing on its significance to human agency and moral responsibility.²⁵

Accepting a position of conceptual pluralism is attractive due to its conceptual openness, but conceptual breadth can easily lead to conceptual murkiness. In response, one might argue that we should abandon the search for evil's essential properties and focus on evil's significance to human lives.²⁶ The significance of evil is that it threatens our trust in the world and our need to orient ourselves in it.²⁷ Innocent people suffer, often in tremendous fashion, and morally despicable people flourish. Evil shows that things are not as they should be, and this great divide between is and ought is insurmountable. It is not possible to define evil because it has so many faces, and this multitude of faces also indicates that it is an enduring condition of human interaction.

Recognizing the gap between is and ought, and acknowledging the many faces of evil has normative value. These insights can play a crucial role in accepting evil as an ineradicable feature of human agency and in our ability to respond to evil in an appropriate manner. For lacking awareness of the facts and intricacies of moral interaction undoubtedly leads to unsuitable or disproportionate reactions to situations of normative significance.

Despite the normative value of this position, it is morally problematic. By forsaking the attempt to define evil's essence, we acquiesce that we can identify evil only when we see it. By doing so, we arrive at the site of evil always a moment too late, after its dire consequences have already transpired.

Keywords

evil; naïve harm accounts; nuanced harm accounts; perpetrator accounts; moral response

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²⁵ For conceptual pluralism regarding evil, see Russell (2014). For abandoning the search for evil's essential features, see Neiman (2002).

²⁶ Most notably, Susan Neiman defends this position.

²⁷ Neiman (2002): 8-9.

Ursprung oder Extrem? Gegenseitigkeit oder wirkliche Achtung? Was Aussagen von Arendt, Aristoteles, Platon, Fromm und Piaget über „Böses“ zu erklären helfen

Andrea Gunter

An Hannah Arendts Urteil, Eichmann sei ein Hanswurst, hat mir intuitiv sofort eingeleuchtet, dass aufgrund der Metaphysikkritik der Philosophie der Neuzeit nach neuen Erklärungsweisen des Bösen gesucht werden muss. Gerade Arendts moraltheoretische Schlussfolgerung, das Böse habe keine Wurzel (radix), also keinen Ursprung und sei nicht der

Effekt einer determinierenden „Substanz“ sensibilisiert für alternative Erklärungen von Wirkungszusammenhängen, die „Böses“ hervorbringen.

Inzwischen bin ich immer wieder auf einzelne Aussagen unterschiedlicher Denker gestoßen, die solche alternativen Erklärungsmuster ins Spiel bringen, wenn sie versuchen, Phänomene des Zwischenmenschlichen wie „Gerechtigkeit“, „Achtung“, „Autorität“ oder Politik zu definieren. „Böses“ kann als Effekt von unzureichenden menschlichen Verarbeitungsweisen verstanden werden, etwa von Widersprüchen und Gegensätzen, von Idealen und Abhängigkeiten oder aber von einseitigen Wertekulturen und politischen Verfassungen. Solche Zusammenhänge lassen die geistigen, logischen Dimensionen des Bösen fassen. Die geistig logische Dimension kann neben dem Ursprungstheorem auch von psychischseelischen

Erklärungsansätzen unterschieden werden, die „Böses“ als Motivation von menschlichem Handeln thematisieren, z.B. als Wille, anderen aus Gründen von Wut, Rache, Ehrverteidigung, Triebbefriedigung etc. zu schaden. Vermutlich stellt diese Dimension eine Ergänzung oder eine Art übergeordneter Gesichtspunkt zu den etablierten Erklärungsweisen dar.

Um diesen Faden zu entwickeln, werde ich Aussagen von Aristoteles, Platon, Jean Piaget und Erich Fromm über „das Böse“ vorstellen, die Aspekte, die dabei zur Sprache kommen sortieren und ihre Zusammenhänge zu entwickeln versuchen.

1. Aristoteles

Um den Effekt „Böses“ zu erklären, führt Arendt selbst als Alternative zum Erklärungsmuster

„Wurzel“ das „Extrem“ ein. Böses ist der Effekt eines Extremen. Diese Einschätzung impliziert, dass böses Tun keinen eigenständigen Tätigkeitsbereich darstellt und mit bestimmten Taten und ihren Motivationen identifizieren werden muss (Substanz der Tat), sondern vielmehr über das Wie entsteht: darüber, wie etwas aufgeführt wird, nämlich extrem. In der Folge kann eine jede Tätigkeit und eine jede sogar gut gemeinte Motivation zu Bösem führen.

Vielleicht hat Arendt diese Entdeckung gemacht, als sie an Aristoteles Ausführungen über Gerechtigkeit in der Nikomachischen Ethik nachdachte. Denn Aristoteles definiert als Aufgabe der Gerechtigkeit, nicht in Extremes zu verfallen, es zu verhindern, wenn man Gegensätze (Unterschiede zwischen Personen und Dingen, Unrecht zwischen Personen) zu

verarbeiten hat. Hierfür muss Gerechtigkeit als eine spezifische Weise, das Mittlere zu finden, verstanden werden. Das Nicht-Extreme wird derart zum Maßstab der Tugendhaftigkeit, das Nicht-Böse zum Anlass der Tugendethik.

2. Platon

Schon Platon brachte in seiner Politeia die Idee ein, dass Gerechtigkeit nötig sei, um Extreme zu verhindern. Er bezog das Extrem dabei allerdings nicht auf Gegensätze zwischen Dingen oder zwischen Personen, sondern auf Werte und den Umgang mit diesen. Böses, so lässt sich seinen Ausführungen zufolge schlussfolgern, ist der Effekt von einseitigen, darum instabilen und zu Gewalt neigenden politischen Verhältnissen. Diese wiederum sind Folge von einseitigen Wertepraktiken. So beruht eine Tyrannei auf dem Wert „Wille des Einzelnen“. Gilt dieser als einziger, gilt er absolut. Der Kampf aller gegen alle ist zu befürchten. Darum muss er von einem passgenauen sozialen Wert ergänzt werden: der Reziprozität.

3. Piaget

Achtung ist neben Verantwortung und Gerechtigkeit das zentrale moralische Phänomen, dem Piaget in seiner Untersuchung „Das moralische Urteil beim Kinde“ nachgeht. Entlang der kindlichen Entwicklungsstadien unterscheidet er die Konzepte der einseitigen und gegenseitigen Achtung. Überraschenderweise problematisiert er dabei das Konzept der gegenseitigen Achtung, indem er Erscheinungsweisen von Gegenseitigkeit unterscheidet. Zwei Ich könnten ein gegenseitiges Übereinkommen treffen, das sie befähigt, „im Guten wie im Bösen zusammenzugehen“, konstatiert er (Piaget 1983, 119) Diese Weise der Gegenseitigkeit sei das Konstrukt eines idealistisch-rationalistischen moralischen Ichs. Diesem setzt er die „wirkliche Achtung“ entgegen, die Unterordnungsprozesse unter Regeln und Abhängigkeiten von anderen als Leistung zu würdigen weiß, sofern sie deren moralische Qualität im Blick hat.

4. Fromm

In sittlichen Fragen wiederum ein Gewissen zu entwickeln, verbindet Fromm damit, den genealogischen Kleiner-Größer-Gegensatz in den menschlichen Beziehungen nicht in das autoritäre Extrem zu verlängern, so dass Menschen andere Menschen beherrschen und Wirksamkeitsunterschiede in eine „irrationale Autorität“ hinein vertiefen. Die führt letztlich zu dem Naturzustand, für den Hobbes klassifiziert hat, dass der Mensch dem anderen ein Wolf werde, und den Hitler Fromm zufolge als das Unbeherrschbare verabsolutiert hat, um die Herrschaft von Menschen über Menschen zu idealisieren.

Die vorgestellten Erklärungen für Böses können dazu beitragen, das Scharnier für die strukturelle Dimension des Bösen bzw. für Böses erzeugende Strukturen und dem Handeln von Individuen zu erklären. Sie führen auf jeden Fall dazu, die Schnittstelle zwischen Individualethik und Sozialethik genauer zu erfassen, so dass die Praktiken, die diese Schnittstelle füllen, daraufhin ausgerichtet werden können, Böses zu verhindern, indem Extremes verhindert wird.

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Vulnerable Agency and the Problem of Evil

Hille Haker

In his book “Torture and Dignity”, Jay Bernstein introduces a historical and constructive account of the relationship between the critique of torture and the emergence of modern law in the 18th century. Referring to Jean Améry’s *At the Mind’s Limit*, 1966, a memoir of his imprisonment and torture by the Gestapo in Nazi Germany, and Susan Brison’s *Aftermath: Violence and the Remaking of the Self*, 2002, Bernstein argues that it is not just bodily injury but *moral* injury that damages a person forever.

I will analyze Bernstein’s argument that trust is the condition for practical reason, “because the stance of trust is what first allows others to appear as persons to whom one responds in person-appropriate terms.” “Trust ... is the social presupposition, the basic structure of mutual recognition, on the basis of which moral and legal rules can arise and be socially effective.” (Bernstein, 241) Damaged, injured, or destroyed trust, this means, results in the inability to respond to others and recognize others. It threatens the sense of ‘being at home in the world’ (Améry), but it also threatens the moral foundation of society.

I will bring Bernstein in conversation with two other authors: Paul Ricœur’s work on evil (*The Fallible Man*, 1965; *The Symbolism of Evil*, 1967) and Erich Fromm’s notion of human ‘destructiveness’ (*Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, 1973). Both authors seem to support Bernstein’s thesis but also give it more depth. Ricœur emphasizes the psychic and mythical structures of ‘evil’, and Fromm is of special interest for me because of the connection between human destructiveness and social patterns, or habitual traces in the ‘social character’ theory.

My question will be: how can ‘evil’ be conceived when it is not the exceptional act of torture or rape that morally injures a person but a social *structure* that denies some groups their agency, recognition, and social participation? What does the concept of trust (and lack thereof) mean for a social ethics that attends to recognition as the foundational concept of any ethics?

I will propose the concept of ‘vulnerable agency’ in its ontological, moral, and social dimension and argue that it can serve as a lens to understand the dialectic of openness to the world through trust and receptivity on the one hand, and susceptibility to harm both on a personal and social/structural level on the other.

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The Problem of Evil in Islam

Shiva Hemati

Issues related to God's justice and mercy have been the central point of the Muslim theologians' debates for centuries. The Islamic controversial theological debates focus on the problem of evil, God's just, and the question of free will and predestination. The problem of evil is often formulated in two forms of the logical and evidential. The logical form of the argument tries to show a logical impossibility in the coexistence of God and evil, while the evidential form tries to show that given the evil in the world, it is improbable that there is an omnipotent, omniscient, and wholly good God. An argument from evil attempts to show that the co-existence of evil and a just God is unlikely or impossible. Attempts to show the contrary have traditionally been discussed under the heading of [theodicy](#). This study is an attempt to address Islamic theologian views on theodicy and the problem of evil and the occurrence of pain and suffering under the authority of a just God. This leads to the question of why so much evil exists if there is divine justice. This study refers to the problem of evil and the question of how to reconcile the existence of [evil](#) with an [omnibenevolent](#), [omniscient](#), and [omnipotent God](#). Several issues will be argued in this study through Qur'anic narrative of evil (sharr) as deviating from the human perception of evil in this world to challenge Islamic theologian's views on human perception of evil and free choice and to offer the possible solutions to theodicy and the problem of evil.

Keywords

Theodicy, The Problem of Evil, Islamic Theologians' view, Qur'an verses, Divine Justice, Existence, Free Will

Political Decay and Political Arcadianism

Ronnie Hjorth

Classical political theorists portray political decay as a process of moral and political degeneration. The scary vision of the horrid mutilated remains of what once was a vibrant body politic has inspired political theorists to integrate a dystopic vision into their work. The most well-known example of this is probably the image of the slippery slope found in Plato's *Republic* showing the degeneration of forms of government from Timarchy to Oligarchy to Democracy and finally to Tyranny. For Plato political decay involves both communities and individual persons. Perhaps Plato wanted to underline that we should not entertain too high a belief in government because states and peoples, like persons, are bound to die. However, the dystopic image also conveys a more optimistic message: that wherever we find ourselves along the slippery slope there is always the opportunity to prevent decay, at least for the time being. Theorising political decay, then, is a way to understand the precious and vulnerable nature of the political relationship. Moreover, on the personal level, political decay at least for Plato is the consequence of lack of control, giving way for temptations such as honour, wealth, excessive freedom or power.

Thomas Hobbes's familiar account of the state of nature as *bellum omnium contra omnes* conveys another dystopic message, a warning against resisting public order. Hobbes clearly viewed political decay as a moral vice and as something that would follow when one acts in a way detrimental to one's interest as a citizen. With Hobbes, individual persons are again in the foreground portrayed as lonely and frightened subjects having to take their destiny in their own hands. Just like Hannah Arendt, Hobbes viewed the political condition in terms of an established relationship founded on the relative equality of its members.

Francis Fukuyama has recently dealt with political decay in a slightly different way. He argues that political change for the better sometimes flows from political decay. Hence, political decay is not necessarily dystopic. Looking back on the events of history it is possible to discern how political unrest, war and revolutions have indeed brought about change for the better. Nevertheless, this is not comforting when confronted with the violence and human suffering associated with such processes as they go on.

A well-known enemy of the political relationship is the temptation to avoid taking responsibility for the world we live in while focusing instead on utopian goals for possible worlds brighter than the present. The utopian temperament involves a belief in political perfection. Conservative political thinkers have sought to resist this adopting a skeptical posture. While political modernity seems always to involve the utopian temptation, postmodernism and anti-modernism renders intellectual support to various reactions against it. In the reaction looms another temptation and one that is much harder to resist for conservatives. This is the inclination to turn around and view as a political ideal the shimmering past. This I have labelled political arcadianism. Arcadianism usually refers to a somewhat idyllic narrative about the rural life in culture, life-style and literally fiction. The term is present in the political literature too, for instance in early modern political thought as a political morality alternative to utopianism and in the ecological political movement. Moreover, it is central to the wartime poetry of W.H. Auden and T.S. Eliot. Auden thinks of

an arcadian temperament as a perfectly natural and harmless sentiment, for example when looking back on a happy and innocent childhood. The theological aspect of this, which is emphasised by Auden, is the human inclination to look back on the perfect condition of humanity before the fall, expressing a futile desire to re-enter the Garden of Eden. However, when expressed in political life arcadianism may shape reactionary political forces attempting or at least pretending to return to a condition of a glorified past while presenting seemingly easy ways out of contemporary political challenges. It is in that sense arcadianism is an element of some current political trends, such as nationalism, the extreme right, racist or radical religious political ideologies. The tragedy is that the path suggested by arcadianism is not possible because there is no turning back.

The arguments of this paper are the following: (1) Political decay remains a perennial problem to political theory and practice. (2) The crisis of political modernity, public distrust in government, and nostalgic longing to an idealised past risks causing political decay, turning the attention from the present to the perceived past. (3) It therefore is vital to resist political arcadianism. This is not to suggest that the past is unimportant but that political reflection has to take account of the political relationship. This is one way to recognise the responsibility shared by all of us to care for the political condition among us.

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Body Image, Identity, & Embodiments of Evil

Ysabel Johnston

Death, disease, malady, and other threats to bodily integrity have long been conceptualized in the Christian tradition as results of the fall.^{28 29} Evil can manifest physically, and is not merely confined to a disembodied spiritual realm. This insight does the work of comforting those who experience physical suffering by affirming their sense that something really is deeply *wrong* with their cancer, their tuberculosis, or their heart disease. In addition to this, the possibility of evil becoming materialized in a body also creates difficulties for identification with one's physical self.

I argue that the process of developing a coherent body image can, and often does, involve wrestling with this question of the relationship between evil and physicality. The question can be posed like this: am I to understand a particular physical experience of mine as a neutral or positive instance of bodily diversity, or as something 'wrong' which was not meant to occur?

I offer a few examples to clarify the kind of issues at stake. Transgender persons sometimes, but not always, describe their experience of gender dysphoria as the sense that their bodily configuration is not their own, but is the result of an external malady that happened *to* them.³⁰ Some theologians and disability theorists argue that disability is not an affect of the fall, but an instance of diversity.³¹ Even more commonly experienced phenomena, like acne, weight gain, hair loss, and wrinkles, can raise normative considerations.

The delineation of bodily phenomena as instantiations of good or evil can come to be a tool for bodily identity. 'Evil', understood as 'not meant to be', can be easily translated to 'not truly me' or 'not belonging to me'. This is not surprising, as the Christian tradition teaches that one's true identity, found in Christ, is tied to goodness. Thus, evil can be understood as a thwarting of one's true identification.

I follow Gail Weiss's account of body images, whereby body images are affective, invested conceptualizations of the physical self which are not merely visual, but multi-sensory.³² One's body image gives them a sense of the possible ways they might operate in their world, both socially and practically. Importantly, body images carry a sense of identification with them, a sense that 'this is me' or 'this is mine'.

²⁸ Augustine. "The City of God," in P. Schaff (ed.), *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, First Series, Vol. II, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, pp. 1-511. 1983.

²⁹ Amundsen, D. W., and Ferngren, G. "The Early Christian Tradition," in R. L. Numbers and D. W. Amundsen (eds.), *Caring and Curing: Health and Medicine in the Western Religious Traditions*, Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, pp. 40-64. 1986.

³⁰ Billingsley, Amy. 2015. "Technology and Narratives of Continuity in Transgender Experiences." *Feminist Philosophy Quarterly* 1, (1). Article 6. <http://ir.lib.uwo.ca/fpq/vol1/iss1/6>

³¹ Creamer, Deborah Beth. *Disability and Christian theology: embodied limits and constructive possibilities*. n.p.: Oxford ; New York : Oxford University Press, 2009.

³² Weiss, Gail. *Body images: embodiment as intercorporeality*. n.p.: New York : Routledge, 1999.

One way body images are formed is through abjection. Julia Kristeva and other feminist theorists describe this as the process whereby one sets the physical boundaries of their own body.³³ My hands are my body, but my nail clippings are not. My skin is my body, but the clothes I wear as added layers of protection are not. Setting these boundaries is complicated by the fact that human bodies are constantly cycling through matter—we take in and expel food and water, we shed our skin and our hair. We continuously abject aspects of our physicality from our concept of our physical self, thus giving clear boundaries to that concept. Kristeva argues that abjection allows for the possibility of a coherent body image by setting such boundaries.

By rendering a body part or bodily experience ‘evil’ or ‘sinful’, it is more likely that it will be abjected. It will not be incorporated into one’s body image, and thus one’s bodily identification. Of course, this process of bodily identification is not only personal, but is influenced by social institutions, movements, and traditions. The institution of medicine offers its own account of evil in the language of health and the diagnostic categories of disease.³⁴ Sex-positive movements offer another account which closely aligns sexuality, identity, and goodness.³⁵ The Pauline distinction between flesh and spirit tends toward a characterization of bodies as sinful, and thus many protestant traditions situate the disembodied soul as the self.

Accounts of evil have implications for bodily identification. Theodicies not only pave a way to understand God’s actions and character, but also provide ways to understand embodiment. I conclude with the suggestion that the causal relationship here might also be reversed—bodily identity can come to shape accounts of evil. Perhaps the stronger claim should be entertained—the phenomenology of bodily identification should be the epistemic starting-point for an account of physical manifestations of evil. Perhaps the ways in which people identify with their bodies can illuminate the metaphysics of good and evil.

³³ Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Translated by Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press. 1982. Originally published as *Pouvoirs de l’horreur: Essai sur l’abjection* (Paris: Editions de Seuil, 1980).

³⁴ Engelhardt, H. Tristram Jr. "The Disease of Masturbation: Values and the Concept of Disease." *Bulletin Of The History Of Medicine* 48, no. 2 (Summer 1974 1974): 234-248. *America: History & Life*.

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Radical Evil and Weakness of Will

Kevin Jung

Immanuel Kant contends that there is a propensity to evil in us, i.e., the perversity of the heart, which is inexplicable in its origin and inextirpable by human powers. He calls this *radical evil* because it corrupts the ground of all maxims. Unlike a physical propensity that is grounded in sensuous impulses from which the will is not free, a propensity to evil can only spring from a free will. In explaining that we are not only physical but also moral beings with a capacity for evil, he distinguishes three different degrees of the capacity for evil. The purpose of this paper is to explore a possible link between his first and his third, that is, between weakness of will and radical evil.

Though many thinkers tend to consider the problem of moral evil and weakness of will separately – understandably, not all cases of weak-willed actions are concerned with morality –, I will argue that there is, nonetheless, an important connection between the two in terms of the effects that weakness of will can have on the propensity to moral evil with respect to both the deformation of a heart and the reformation of the perverted heart. The idea is that if weak-willed actions could lead to the adoption of morally evil maxims, a part of the solution for what Kant calls the change of heart or a revolution in our disposition would also require careful attention to why we often “freely” and “intentionally” fail to act contrary to our better judgment.

According to the conventional wisdom expressed by some ancient thinkers such as Aristotle, weakness of will (*akrasia*) and self-control (*enkrateia*) are contrary features of human action. The akaratic person is understood as someone who, as a matter of habit, succumbs to temptation from bodily appetites and other passions contrary to reason, the higher principle of the soul. In the contemporary philosophical literature on weakness of will, there have also been a similar tendency to view weakness of will as a problem associated with lack of rationality (Donald Davidson), lack of sincerity (R. M. Hare), inconsistency of intention (Richard Holton), or lack of freedom (Gary Watson). But I take a different view. In my view, weak-willed actions do not necessarily involve any of these deficiencies. On the contrary, I consider at least some weak-willed actions as free, intentional, and rational actions along the lines of the argument developed by Alfred Mele. According to Mele, these actions are free in the sense that they are not compelled to perform against the agent’s volition, remaining largely neutral on the debate between libertarians and (semi-)compatibilists on free will; they are intentional in the sense that weak-willed actions are *teleological* in nature (I do not support the causal theory of intentional action at least as it pertains to weakness of will); they are rational in the sense that the agent makes *evaluative* commitment to her considered better judgment, even though the agent may lack *executive* commitment. On this view, weak-willed actions are a result of mismatches between the motivational strength of desires and our evaluations of the objects of our desires.

While Kant tends to view the problem of weakness of will only through the fragility of human nature, I contend that weakness of will and radical evil need to be considered together without being equated with each other. Certainly, one who adopts evil maxims is similar in *some* respects to another who performs weak-willed immoral actions in that both exhibit the

character of the agent who prefers incentives from her sensuous inclinations than from those coming from the moral law, despite her better judgment that she ought to obey the moral law.

If Kant is right in claiming that overcoming radical evil cannot be done by a mere change in the habitual practice of virtues but by a “revolution,” a change to the highest ground of all of one’s maxims, I argue that overcoming weakness of will also requires an acquisition of a volition, i.e., a change of heart, before trying to strengthen the motivational power of certain desires. But how can such a revolution take place, given our propensity to evil and weakness of will? I make a modest suggestion. Just as the single decision to reverse the highest ground of one’s maxims, which is necessary for resetting the course of our propensity, must always be preceded by an accurate self-appraisal, any attempts to properly align the motivational strength of desires and our evaluative commitment would have to begin with an *accurate* and *vigilant* self-appraisal of the state of one’s disposition. This may be one place among others that religion could be a powerful resource for such *self*-appraisal without ever claiming itself to be a determining ground of freedom and character.

Keywords

radical evil, weakness of will, akrasia, intentional action, moral motivation, Kant

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Collective evil, evil collective?: Challenged Categories of Evil in the Finnish Contemporary Refugee Debate

Taina Kalliokoski and Marianna Saartio-Itkonen

On March 8 2017, a refugee tried to commit a suicide by hanging himself in Rautatientori, a square in the center of Helsinki, where the refugees and refugee defenders had demonstrated against the deportation policies of the Finnish government for weeks. The refugee's attempt was unsuccessful: others acted and climbed the tree to rescue the man. The immigration critics, who had set up their counter demonstration on the other side of the square with the slogan "Finland First", did not miss the happening. The suicide attempt was filmed by an anonymous person and the video was posted in the Internet in the same evening.

Discussions that followed in the online forums of the immigration critics and the refugee defenders were altogether rich with both explicit and implicit "evil rhetoric". The comment field of the video flooded with laughter and pejorative comments towards the refugee and those who tried to help him. The responses of the refugee defenders to the mocking comments were verbally fierce: humanity was declared dead and an age of darkness was seen to have fallen over Finland. Where the slandering attitudes of the immigration critics may not seem so surprising, the similarities in the evil rhetoric and strategies used by the refugee defenders, a group which claims to uphold tolerance, human dignity and human rights, may be considered striking. Both collectives dehumanized the other by announcing them as animals or non-human.

The case is an example of the contemporary debate on refugees and refugee policies in Finland. The above mentioned hate speech has increased in power after the immigration to Europe and nationalistic movements have strengthened. Although the classical moral philosophical categories of natural, moral and metaphysical evil have been questioned and the concept of evil partly rejected in the modern and contemporary philosophical discussion, in this societal and political context evil is once more in usage.

This paper analyzes the escalated online discussion after the suicide attempt from the perspective of collective evil by applying moral philosophical and moral psychological tools. What are the applied categories of evil in the debate and the reasons and potential consequences of using them?

The material of the analysis is collected from the comments to two posts on two online forums. The first one is the video posted in the alternative media MV-magazine, which is a popular forum among the immigration critics. The second one is the posted blog text on a Facebook page of a Finnish blogger "Uuninpankkopoika Saku Timonen", which is popular among the refugee defenders.

The analyzed comments point out the similar group processes among two opposing collectives: in the forum of like-minded people the group's interest is to maintain a coherent collective self-conception as a morally righteous group. This tendency easily leads to demonizing the out-group. By so doing both groups affirm their we-attitude and common ethos.

In that kind of process, the concepts used to slander the other party may hold unpredictable power: e.g. the social psychologist Philip Zimbardo argues that dehumanization "facilitates

abusive and destructive actions towards those so objectified" (2007, 223). If we want to hinder the escalation of the polarized political climate in Europe, we need to understand and acknowledge the dangers that lay within these collective processes. The concepts used in labeling the other form our social reality, and as such have potential of violence.

Keywords

collective evil, categories of evil, collectivity, refugees, dehumanization, Finland

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Communist Revolution in Slovenia as Crime Against Humanity

Urska Lampret

My PhD thesis is focused on ideational divergence and conflict between Christianity and Communism in the period of the Communist revolution in Slovenia (1941-1945). As part of an ongoing research project on the notion of sacrifice and its theological and philosophical context I have been testing the possibility of applying Rene Girard's mimetic theory and his theoretical elaboration of the scapegoat mechanism in societies to the Communist revolution in Slovenia during WWII. Girard's scapegoat theory offers an interesting explanation of Communist revolution. One of the main hypotheses of my work is that the Catholic Church and Christians were compelled to act in opposition to the Communist revolution in Slovenia due to its disregard for human dignity and human life. I have presented this hypothesis at a previous *Societas Ethica* Conference in Bad Boll. My original thesis was that Communism and its adherents at the time of revolution targeted their scapegoating at those who opposed Communist revolution and ideology in any way, particularly at the Church and influential people who might have affected the development of or resistance to communism. According to Girard mimetic crisis and persecutions are or at least should in principle be followed by a process of reconciliation, but in the case of Slovenia such processes are still an open challenge in many respects, due primarily to the persistent refusal of recognizing innocent victims as innocent. Reconciliation is not possible if neither the persecutor nor the scapegoat are capable of accepting the truth of the history of their nation.

On the basis of this thesis I research the Communist revolution in Slovenia as a crime against humanity. The European Parliament Resolution on European Conscience and Totalitarianism of 2 April 2009 declared all totalitarianisms as crimes against humanity. Slovenia has not yet ratified this resolution, which shows that in Slovenia Girard's scapegoat mechanism has not reached its closure in the form of reconciliation. This has led me to investigate the effects of the Communist revolution and the subsequent Communist regime on the current situation in Slovenia. The Catholic Church as a social institution has had a massive impact on politics. I am intrigued by the effects of the historical events during the Communist revolution in Slovenia on the relationship between different political viewpoints and groups in the present, especially the "left" and the "right" (the latter is usually equated with religious underpinning). This polarization manifests itself at annual commemorations of historically important events, such as the Day of the Liberation Front and remembrance commemorations at mass graves. The most important news of that day is not that a commemoration took place but pointing out who from the "left" attended the commemoration of the "right" political viewpoint and if there were any clerics and vice versa. I stipulate that this antagonism stems from historical divisions at the time of the revolution and the role of the Church at that time. My research focuses on the theoretical grounds of this state of affairs by examining collective memory, transitional justice (specifically the truth-seeking processes into human rights violations by non-judicial bodies) and influence of those violations on the current situation.

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Truth Commission as a Facilitator of Ethical Transition

Alexandra Lebedeva

Truth commissions deal with the context of mass atrocities, where the abuse of human rights is not a sporadic or isolated phenomenon, but it is exercised systematically. Another important feature of the context is that the violations are often a part of the abusive exercise of state power through its institutions. Truth commissions deal with crimes against humanity, including genocide, extrajudicial punishments, forced disappearance, kidnappings etc. According to Hannah Arendt, crimes against humanity are unforgivable acts since the whole of humanity is affected, perhaps not physically, but morally. These crimes attack the human condition of plurality and human diversity. Consequently, I will argue that, in order to provide a sufficient moral response, the above-mentioned contexts should be taken into consideration.

In this paper, I seek to explore questions about the potential functions of truth commissions and their appropriateness for dealing with the past and, particularly, crimes against humanity. Truth commissions are recognized as tools for dealing with past atrocities. According to the UN General Assembly, truth-seeking and truth-telling are the components of a transitional justice policy, along with criminal justice, reparations and vetting procedures. The main aim of truth commissions is to strengthen justice and reconciliation by finding and stating the truth about the atrocities. However, it often turns to be problematic to establish the truth, firstly, due to the lack of facts about exact circumstances of the crimes, and secondly, because of the difficulty to identify those responsible for the crimes.

Hence, even though revealing the truth is an essential characteristic of truth commissions, they do not completely fulfill the function and, perhaps, they cannot do it either. How then can truth commissions achieve justice and reconciliation? In this paper, I seek to argue that a truth commission may serve two functions: acknowledgment and restoration of morality in a community.

Firstly, truth-telling serves a function of acknowledgment. The witnesses and victims are acknowledged to have experienced injustices and suffered from the mass abuses. The acknowledgement of evil has a performative function, in Judith Butler's term, giving an account of oneself, where the self, being inherently relational, emerges through addressing to others. Thus, by speaking publicly and telling the truth, victims and perpetrators exhibit the logos by which they live, that is a moral practice and a way of life. Not only victims and perpetrators, but also their respective "truth" and shared history must be acknowledged. Truth commissions establish a truth regime by defining what can be said in the hearings in terms of content. This may differ depending on what groups may attain hearings, whether amnesties are promised for the perpetrators and what is actually allowed to be said. In line with Michel Foucault's argument about truth and power, "a mode of rationality" emerges and frames the truth and the act of truth-telling.

Secondly, the crimes are committed in communities that have an atrophied feeling for what is right and wrong, where a perpetrator can also be a victim or lack a sense of responsibility for participating in evil. Therefore, apart from acknowledgement function, truth commissions

have a significant role in restoration of morality in these communities. They assist with the identification of evil and help perpetrators to acknowledge their accountability for their wrong-doing of the past.

Both victims and perpetrators need a message that what happened was wrong and cannot be silenced. In that sense, the affected communities go through not only a political transition, but an ethical transition as well. Thus, the second aim that truth commissions may pursue is an establishment of a shared “moral landscape”. As Maria Ericson suggests, a shared moral landscape may entail diverse experiences of human rights violations, diverse or even opposite views of the conflict, its history and causes, views of oneself and of “the other”, norms and values. An interactive dialogue in the hearings of truth commissions may contribute to the restoration of a common understanding of the past and as a result a common view of the future. Truth commissions work in communities that have experienced violence, both through committing violence and being exposed to violence. The communities are supposed to take “care of themselves” (I call this an ethical transition).

This paper’s intention is to present an ethical reflection regarding truth commissions’ functions. I want to address this question through the lens of Arendt’s account on crimes against humanity. I will argue that in order to respond adequately to the legacy of large-scale human rights violations, truth commissions have a role to play, mainly by assisting ethical transition. In turn, I suggest that this kind of transition may be achieved by the act of truth-telling, following the logic of Foucault and Butler.

Keywords

acknowledgement, Arendt, Butler, crimes against humanity, ethical transition, Foucault, restoration of morality, shared moral landscape, truth commission

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The Loss of Moral Control: A Socio-Theological Approach to the Evil of Violence

Zorica Maros

When we abandon the idea that good people can do evil, and when we think about instrumentalization of the past and its associated phenomenon of victimization, the impact of prejudice and grouping around ethnic identity, the politicization of religion, and the influence of the media in the dissemination of all the aforementioned to a wider population, then we can reasonably wonder, not why there is so much evil in the world, but rather why there is not much more! However, if we accept the theory of the omnipotence of the social impact on violence, we can still ask ourselves how someone comes to wish to kill. The aim of this paper is to offer psychological-theological insight, or some sort of theoretical framework to seek an answer to the aforementioned question.

This paper is divided into four parts. The first part, entitled “The Evil of Violence as a Social Construct,” is based on social psychology research which shows that the social context can “force” people to do what they, in ordinary circumstances, would never do. This research is particularly reliant on the two world-famous experiments that were done by Stanly Milgram and Philip G. Zimbardo. These experiments highlight that regular people, or people with quite solid moral principles, might become hyper-evil and brutal if there is an authority that compels them to do so (Milgram), and if a condition is suitable thereof (Zimbardo). American psychiatrist Roy Baumeister in his study of evil included elements of previous experiments in order to show what is evil from the perspective of the perpetrators. Baumeister’s theory is that many of the aggressive man’s impulses are suppressed with his inner forces; the underlying cause of evil is therefore a loss of self-control.

The second part, entitled “The Bible: Evil as an Abuse of Freedom,” talks about this loss of self-control in theological vocabulary. The Bible speaks of evil using different images, which still do not provide a definitive explanation nor formulate a precise definition. In the Bible, the original sin – as the original perversion of freedom – is the underlying cause of evil, and it is also the paradigm of all the other perversions of freedom that began to spread into the world as some intangible force and unstoppable power. Giving attention to the voice that urged them to doubt God's faithfulness, the first human couple fell into a state of sin, causing the spread of sinfulness in the world. Immediately after describing the transgression in Eden, the Bible continues with the second story, the story of the first fratricide. Taken together, both stories show that humans are vulnerable, and that there will always be someone or something who will take advantage of their weakness. Moreover, the story of Cain and Abel, which bears the character of a universal human experience, shows that Cain kills because he became a victim of what he failed to control.

The third section of this paper, entitled: “The Scandal of Evil: the Perpetrators as Victims and the Victims as Perpetrators,” concludes the biblical view, analyzing the psychological phenomenon of the imitation of an aggressor from a theological perspective. Thus, Cain did not only murder his brother, but he was also the victim of evil. This is the mysterious confusion that evil creates by interfering and mixing the reciprocal identities of the victims

and the perpetrators. Because of its relational structures, the evil committed by one finds its replica in the evil suffered by the other. In this dialectic structure stands the most visible effect of evil. In other words, evil forces the victim to imitate the perpetrators.

Finally, the last part of this paper offers a way out of this vicious circle of imitation and repetition of evil. Titled "A Christian Response to the Evil of Violence," this part shows the possibility of liberation from evil. Why is Jesus so radical in His request not to answer evil with evil? Every fight against evil is a transition to its side, its ground. The evil always wins if it forces others to get involved in its own logic. Evil thus, receives benefits from any surrender and any opposition by the same means. Despite this, there is an answer that destroys evil's violence in a different and definitive way, because it destroys it from its inside: love one's enemies, forgive one's perpetrators, and pray for them. Therefore, the Christian response to evil is neither Cain or Abel, but rather Jesus, the embodiment of God. He triumphs over evil, redeems humanity from it, and reconciles all people.

Keywords

evil of violence, self-control, Cain, Abel, victims, perpetrators

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Social evil Threatens the Integral Development of the Human Person and of Human Society

Silvija Migles

Among the various types of evil, social evil will be discussed in this paper. Although there “has been little extended theological reflection on the nature and origins of evil as a social phenomenon” (Vaney, pg. 366), the social doctrine of the Catholic Church still offers much space for theological reflection on social evil. It is about socio-ethical perspective within which we want to reflect on the reality of evil and its manifestations in the human society.

The first part discusses the phenomenon of social evil and the designation of its essence and it is placed in the context of deprivation and threatening the integral human development in society.

The second part points out the specific forms of social evil in the present day that threaten human dignity and prevent "full development of the whole man and of all men" (*Sollicitudo rei socialis*, n. 38; *Populorum progressio*, n. 42). Certain forms of social evil are increasingly multiplying and becoming a serious obstacle to the integral development of man and society.

Finally, the question of human freedom arises that reaches its full realization in the choice of good, which confirms the quality of existence. As true human existence cannot be thought of without its "spiritual" dimension that opens towards the Absolut (cf. *Populorum progressio*, n. 42), the path towards the full development of the whole person, of each person and of human society depends on the urgent need of value orientations.

Keywords

social evil, social teaching of the Catholic Church, integral human development, human society, human freedom, values

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The Refugee Crisis as an Indicator of the Institutional Deficiencies of the European Union

Pavle Mijovic

Keywords: the refugee crisis – institutional deficiencies - European Agenda on Migration – anthropology – Giorgio Agamben – Hannah Arendt – human rights

The aim of this paper is to jump into the controversy that involves debating the unprecedented refugee crisis in Europe. The ongoing challenges affronted by the European Union such as the Brexit, politics of austerity, economic, humanitarian and refugee crisis can be seen as a sort of the institutional deficiencies of the European political paradigm. The correlation between the institutional deficiencies found in actual political paradigm and the emerging antysystemness is directly proportional: as one increases, the quantity of the other increases proportionally at the same rate.

In the first part of this paper our aim is to provide a conceptual framework seeking to provide a solid theoretical structure for considering the refugee crisis. In order to do so, Hannah Arendt's and Giorgio Agamben's concept of the refugee will be analyzed. Historically, Hannah Arendt in 1943 published a famous essay entitled *We Refugees* which was later advanced by the contemporary Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben. Both authors agree that the refugees are the category of human persons that have no protection from their own state and have more or less limited protection from other countries or other international actors. Arendt affirmed that the European model of the nation state is structurally dependent upon the construction of stateless and displaced persons. Agamben, on the other hand, asserted that the refugees are a "disquieting element in the order of the modern nation-state" because they break "continuity between man and citizen, nativity and nationality" (Agamben, 2000: 21). Italian philosopher goes even more by asserting that the refugees can be theorized as that of "non-citizens" (Agamben, 2000: 23). The modern political institutions seem quite impotent in guaranteeing their fundamental human rights. There is an increasing tendency in our post-truth epoch for the phenomena in which human rights *de iure* exists, but, *de facto*, no. It is possible to extract a set of weighty inferences on every institutional framework. The fundamental issue that encapsulates the problem of the refugees, is an abyssal difference between theory and praxis, between the institution conferred with the responsibility to broadly protect, monitor and promote their human rights and the effective protection of civic and human rights.

The refugee crisis shows that the political paradigm underlying the European Union is incomplete. The second part of this paper deals with issues of "institutional deficiencies" according to which the European political systems are overloaded with participants and demands, and they have increasing difficulty in mastering the very complexity in which they are rooted (Michel Crozier). According to Michael Crozier, every institutional organization, intended as a formal system, often can generate a sort of the overlapping vicious circles that can eventually block the entire organization, entire formal system. It is bureaucracy that weakens the governability of Western democracies (Crozier et al., 1975: 16-18). Crozier finds the comparative superiority of democracies into their basic openness, but at the same

time he is aware that European democracies have been only partially and sometimes theoretically open. The French sociologist wants to challenge all forms of democratic closure. In order to evidence the underlying problem, Crozier continues that “when one such (institutional) system is exposed to an extremely high amount of participants and demands, or various inputs, it either stops or encounters increasing difficulty in mastering the complexity” (Crozier et al., 1975: 12-13).

The refugee crisis is a sad example of the institutional inability to cope with the flux of migrants. The institutional answer is articulated in the European Agenda on Migration. The aim of the Agenda is to develop structural actions and answers that would correct the institutional deficiencies of the EU in matter of migration. It is built upon four pillars, 1. Reducing the incentives for irregular migration; 2. Saving lives and securing the external borders; 3. Strengthening the common asylum policy; 4. Developing a new policy on legal migration.

In the third part of the work the institutional answer to the refugee crisis and the (im)possibility to offer a practical solution for the ongoing crisis and to ground theoretically the notion of efficient human rights protection will be problematized.

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Cosmopolitanism, Sovereignty, and Human rights: In Defense of Critical Universalism

Elena Namli

The aim of this paper is to make a contribution to the discussion of the relationship between the protection of human rights, on the one hand, and respect for national sovereignty, on the other. The most important presumption in the analysis is the recognition of injustices in the global order of today. These injustices are material and structural, but they also include important normative components, such as the tendency of the Global North to monopolize interpretations of human rights and democracy. There are a sufficient number of global voices that doubt or even reject “universal solutions” offered by the strong global players. It is rightly claimed that values such as human rights, democracy, and modernization are used as instruments of domination rather than liberation.³⁶

This paper enters the discussion on human rights and sovereignty by utilizing the distinction between political cosmopolitanism and moral cosmopolitanism. Proponents of political cosmopolitanism argue that some form of global citizenship is needed in order to protect human rights globally.³⁷ Critics of this position have demonstrated that it overlooks the importance of self-governance and state sovereignty as fundamental to political freedom, which demands that subjects of the law should also be its authors.³⁸ However, the rejection of political cosmopolitanism can be combined with the embracement of moral cosmopolitanism, asserting the existence of a global moral community where respect for human dignity, and, therefore, the recognition of the human rights of each individual, is not limited by national citizenship and borders.

Moral cosmopolitanism is in many respects a reasonable position, especially if we take into consideration the challenge of establishing the rights of refugees and migrants. It is also valuable as a critique of national identity politics when it tends to reduce sovereignty to the preservation of conventional norms and institutions. The main weakness of moral cosmopolitanism, however, is the fact that even this position can be constructed as a legitimization strategy for the unjust dominance of the Global North.³⁹

In this paper, I argue that in order to construct a justified, non-violent form of moral cosmopolitanism, we need to scrutinize the moral universalism that is a crucial part of any

³⁶ See, for example, Rajagopal, Balakrishnan: *International Law from Below. Development, Social Movements and Third World Resistance*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2003.

³⁷ One example of the human rights-related defense of political cosmopolitanism is the position of Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im as presented in his monograph *Muslims and Global Justice*. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia 2011.

³⁸ This critique is developed by theorists such as Seyla Benhabib, Rainer Forst, and Martha Nussbaum. For an analysis of the critique of political cosmopolitanism, see Grenholm, Carl-Henric: *Refugee Rights and Global Justice in Religious Ethics*. Uppsala 2015. Available at <http://www.ep.liu.se/ecp/097/010/ecp12097010.pdf>

³⁹ One example of such legitimization is David Hollenbach's defense of the extensive interpretation of the responsibility to protect. In the name of the universal protection of human rights, this interpretation justifies the violation of national sovereignty. Hollenbach, David: *Refugee Rights. Ethics, Advocacy, and Africa*. Georgetown University Press, Washington 2008, pp. 185 f.

reasonable cosmopolitan position. Utilizing the discussion on human rights universalism, I distinguish between descriptive and epistemological universalism on the one hand, and normative universalism on the other. It is argued that descriptive and strong epistemological universalism must be rejected as aggressive forms of universalism that legitimize domination. Critical universalism, which is a form of open, normative universalism, is defended as justified in that it has a powerful potential to inspire political liberation within different traditions without legitimizing the cultural monopolism and violence of the Global North.

Health Disasters in Syria and beyond: Humanitarian and Negotiated Responses on the Outskirts of Evil

Ville Päävänsalo

Physicians for Human Rights (PHR 2016) reported no less than 122 attacks on hospitals in the Syrian conflict merely in 2015. During this conflict overall, from 2011 up to April 2017, PHR (2017) has counted 464 attacks on health facilities—most frequently (307 times) by Syrian Government forces but also by Russian forces (16), by Russian or Syrian forces (89), by non-state armed groups (29), Coalition forces (1), and unknown forces (12). In the midst of the Siege of Aleppo on 4 May 2016, Muskilda Zancada, the Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) head of mission, could only say that “Aleppo is under fire, with people reportedly having no choice but to stay and die.” (MSF 2016). Already in February 2016, Hamza, a young doctor in an Aleppo hospital, told about bombings of “only civilians.” (*Der Spiegel* 2016) Talking about such disasters as horrific and evil cannot really be regarded as exaggeration.

Those doctors, nurses, and other relief workers who have helped the attacked Syrian civilians on site have shown extraordinary altruism in practice. For the rest of us, the means of responding to the disaster in question are bound to be less immediate, involving perhaps aid agencies and political procedures in between, or helping refugees who have already left the conflict zone. The victims of the atrocities in Syria must also compete for our attention, as well as for the attention of relief agencies and politicians of good will, with other vulnerable groups such as refugees from other unstable regions. It has accordingly become a practical challenge for European countries to introduce some sort of rationing procedures that would channel relatively scarce financial and human resources to the most vulnerable groups—ideally speaking. Perhaps the most controversial of such instruments has been the EU-Turkey Refugee Deal, which says essentially that “one Syrian refugee on the Greek islands will be returned to Turkey and, in exchange, a Syrian asylum seeker in Turkey will be found a home in Europe.” (Kingsley and Rankin 2016; The Council of Europe 2016)

The present paper is about the ethics of humanitarian and negotiated responses to health and safety disasters on the outskirts of the Syrian conflict. In particular, it addresses the question: Does the EU-Turkey Refugee Deal assume a completely different type of ethics than that of humanitarian relief or can they be regarded as complementary responses to the same challenge? The primary source material of the paper consists of *A Blueprint for Despair*—an Amnesty International (2017) position paper against the EU-Turkey Deal—and the relevant reports by PHR and the MSF—organizations that have worked both in Syria and among the Syrian refugees. The focus of the analysis will be on health issues when looked at against the background of the truly evil circumstances in Syria as well as the highly challenging health and safety conditions of the Syrian refugees in Turkey and Greece.

On the one hand, it seems clear that humanitarian responses tend to involve a higher level of ethical commitment than negotiated deals that are partly meant to set limits to the use of aid resources. This is particularly true of relief workers in the conflict zone but the assumption seems to apply to many volunteering refugee workers in the neighboring countries of Syria and probably often also farther away. On the other hand, assisting any migrants who have arrived in Europe can hardly be a priority when compared to assisting the most vulnerable refugees from Syria. Hence it would be hard to refute the ethical legitimacy of the EU-

Turkey Refugee Deal altogether. But is the crux of the problem simply the lack of altruism and solidarity, the lack of willingness to help the migrants aiming at Europe without sending any of these people back? Or is the very logics of the deal perhaps ethically rotten, or rather a form of sustainable pragmatism?

The aim of comparing the logics of humanitarian and negotiated responses to this health disaster does not imply a necessity of taking a stance between these two approaches. Indeed, in the present paper, both humanitarian and negotiated responses are introduced as *prima facie* ethical responses. It will then be a matter of analysis to identify, if possible, particular facts or assumptions that could transform the logics of negotiated responses seriously unethical. Yet finding a common language here must be an acute challenge for any people of good will. Otherwise it is hard to see how coordinated efforts, maybe of some other type, could be found to help the vulnerable both directly and through macro-level policies.

Keywords

Syria, refugee crisis, humanitarian action, the EU-Turkey Deal, health rights, safety policies

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Exclusive Human Rights?: The Insider/Outsider Paradox

Madelene Persson

When it comes to human rights, 2015 has been a year of endurance for Europe. It has been a year that has put moral self-righteousness regarding human rights to the test. Refugees at closed European borders tells us that in many ways Europe has failed this test and that the system of human rights was not capable of even being a lower threshold when most needed.

It is not the first time, and probably not the last, when the capacity of highly valued moral ideals is challenged by political and legal realities. Challenges that forces us to question what we really mean by human dignity and the equal worth of all human beings - values that are to be expressed through human rights. As an ethicist I believe it is my task to critically evaluate the shortcomings, flaws and grey areas of reality towards a moral ideal. Therefore, the overarching question for me in this paper, as well as in my dissertation project in which I scrutinize human rights capability to combat and protect against contemporary racism, is how well human rights, or rather the implementation and different understandings of human rights, correspond to the ideal that is promised through them?

In this paper my point of departure will be a widely debated dilemma, articulated first and foremost by Hanna Arendt, about the right to have rights. The question of who has the right to have rights, I will argue, uncover an intrinsic tension existing within present human rights discourse - that the moral, legal and political dimensions of human rights answer that question differently.

By using case studies from South Africa and Sweden where migrants have been targets of racism I will address the connection between citizenship and human rights, and its role in forming a desirable and undesirable Other. Drawing on the work of Michel Foucault, Frantz Fanon and Michael Neocosmos among others, I will discuss and scrutinize the role of citizenship and national identity in relation to human rights from three theoretical angles. First, I will briefly discuss the role of citizenship as a requisite for human rights. Thereafter I will, secondly, analyze the conception of the authentic national subject in a society built upon human rights and democracy in relation to migration control. And finally I will, thirdly, address human rights as the source for exclusionary processes and racialization.

Keywords

Human rights, racism, migration, citizenship, nationalism

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Is Evil a Purely Moral Concept?

Olli Pitkänen

After almost complete silence in the 20th century excessive philosophical discussions on evil have taken place during last two decades. Evil is no longer seen "as a holdover from a mythical, Christian worldview whose time was already past", as Lars Svendsen (2010, 9) puts it. Despite their many fundamental disputes contemporary philosophers of evil usually agree that evil is best understood as a purely secular moral and political concept. While it was just few decades ago generally taken for granted that the idea of evil is tied to Christianity, it is currently assumed that there is a purely moral concept of evil that can be understood without any theological or metaphysical connotation. One of the few that take seriously the idea of evil but question its independency from metaphysics and theology is Peter Dews. According to him: "In general, it is far from clear that the concept of evil can be entirely naturalized and secularized. On the contrary, the revival of interest in this concept may ultimately bring metaphysical and theological questions which were once assumed to be outdated back onto the philosophical agenda" (Dews 2001, 52.)

In this spirit I present three arguments which suggest that a purely moral understanding of evil might not be enough for an adequate picture of what evil is:

- (1) The first argument is based on Susan Neiman's reflections on the development of the concept of evil during the modern period. Even though we don't today conceive earthquakes in terms of evil, according to Neiman, the reactions of people after the fatal earthquake in Lisbon in 1755 and after the atrocities of the World War II bear crucial similarities in the usage of the idea of evil which are more important than the differences. They both have marked "the collapse of all that gives us trust in the world, the grounds that make civilization possible" (Neiman 2001, 27). In Neiman's view evil is first and foremost something that precedes all philosophical theories – the theory of evil as a purely moral concept included – and forces us to re-assess philosophical assumptions that might have already been long taken for granted.
- (2) The second argument takes up the same idea, the primordial and non-conceptual nature of evil, from a more experiential perspective. Psychologist Fred Alford conducted a study where he attempted to find out how people actually experience. Based on his material from tens of depth interviews he concluded that people most often understood evil as "an experience of inchoate dread" (Alford 1997, 17) that precedes the duality of subject and object. If Alford's findings are taken seriously, evil cannot be reduced to a moral category, but rather, according to Alford (1997, 9) moral evil is a self-deceptive attempt to escape the formless dread by inflicting dread to others.
- (3) The third argument has been famously presented by Friedrich Nietzsche. It concerns the absolute judgment implicit in the idea of evil. However evil is understood, it is deemed as something that absolutely ought not be. But given that the world forms a holistic whole, this kind of absolute denial becomes "life-denying"; it is completely different to judge something by one's own values than to judge that something absolutely should not exist. This critique is obviously a critique of any notion of evil, but I will show that it is particularly devastating for purely moral theories of evil.

However, even if evil is best understood not as a purely moral concept, I argue that instead of traditional Christian theology evil could be most constructively understood in pantheistic framework like the one offered by Friedrich Schelling in his middle period work known as the Freedom Essay. Schelling's theory of evil is based on his peculiar conception of the "ground of God". According to Schelling, even an infinite understanding can never cover the productivity of nature without remainder. God as the manifested whole of nature represents his actual existence, but his existence is necessarily based on a chaotic ground, which is in the state of becoming. This ground is active in all beings as their self-will that differentiates them from each other. The ground is not evil as such but evil consists in subordinating the actual universal structures of the existing order to its unruly ground.

My argument in general is that unlike purely moral theories of evil Schelling's metaphysical theory of evil can take into account the pre-conceptual nature of evil taken up in arguments (1)-(2) and it is also in a better position to answer Nietzsche's critique of the life-denying character of moral realism than purely moral theories of evil.

Keywords

metaphysics, theology, Susan Neiman, Fred Alford, Friedrich Nietzsche, Friedrich Schelling

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Intrinsic Evil Today: Revisiting a(n) (Ir)Relevant Concept?

Nenad Polgar

Conceptualising evil within particular disciplines and traditions presupposes the development of methodological tools and concepts. The reliability of these tools and concepts depends on how well they are able to bridge the gap between fundamental insights of these disciplines/traditions and contemporary challenges and issues related to giving an account of evil. Every tradition has developed such tools and concepts, but as the topic of this conference suggests, religious traditions have largely failed in providing *credible* accounts of evil and, therefore, the public focus has shifted away from theological explanations towards humanities in search of more reliable accounts of evil. Understanding why this happened is the first step for religious traditions in regaining their credibility when it comes to giving an account of evil; not because there is a need to compete with humanities in this regard, but because valuable insights will be lost if religious traditions become irrelevant for this discourse. When it comes to Catholic theological ethics a recent publication (Selling, 2016, p. 200) has suggested that the inability of this discipline (and Catholic tradition that supports it) to *overcome* an act-oriented approach to ethical thinking in favour of developing a credible ethical vision (that necessarily has to include an account of evil), as a part of a goal-oriented approach, might depend on the willingness to eliminate or rethink the notion of intrinsic evil.

This paper will, thus, explore the theological significance of the concept of intrinsic evil (i.e. acts that are always morally wrong no matter the intention or circumstances of the agent) as a foundational methodological tool of theological-ethical account of moral evil. By focusing on the historical roots of this concept, the paper aims at sketching and then comparing the context in which the concept emerged with the contemporary context, in order to pose the question whether the concept is still relevant for the development of a credible account of moral evil. More precisely, the historical exploration of the concept of intrinsic evil will present the view of Francisco Suarez as one of the earliest theologians who discussed the problem of intrinsically evil actions explicitly and systematically within his novel theory of natural law, as well as his sources. The paper will argue that the main criterion of the concept's (ir)relevancy today is precisely how well (or if at all) it can bridge the gap between the central insights of Catholic theological ethics and contemporary challenges and issues of giving an account of moral evil.

Keywords

intrinsic evil, moral evil, Catholic theological ethics, Francisco Suarez, natural law, contemporary challenges.

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Prospects for an Ethic of Principled Moral Outrage

Entoni Seperic

The concept of evil is, beyond doubt, one of the most thoroughly secularized concepts in our moral vocabulary. The pressures of practical morality demand that we make evil intelligible. But understanding of evil is not a neutral task. To embark upon a study of evil is to allow indignation, and even anger, to interfere with our rational judgement. I argue that the lack of moral outrage, which came to be the feature of almost all our post-Holocaust or post-Milgram analysis of evil, corresponds to our enculturated tolerance of evil per silence, and marks a deeper crisis in our understanding of human evildoing.

In this short meditation on our contemporary notion of evil, I venture to explore what sort of intersubjectivity is structured by the systemic incentive to toleration of evil per silence. I argue that this deep-seated and enculturated preference to silence about the victims and their suffering is deliberately structured as to introduce a form of intersubjectivity that is impermeable to the fact of human suffering. The ethics of principled moral outrage demands that we effectively reject this systemic offer, as well as to work against the spiraling victimization and manipulation of the fear of the other, which appears to be the lead tenor of our contemporary politics.

Cain's Sober Coldness: Levinas' Approach to the Problem of Evil

Elis Simson

In "Evil and The Temptation of Theodicy," Richard J. Bernstein claims that the primary motive of Levinas' entire philosophical project should be understood as an ethical response to the evil of the 20th century, of which Auschwitz is the paradigm. In this sense, Levinas can be named as one of the most prominent thinkers who devoted his philosophical enterprise to confront the evil of the Shoah. This confrontation has certainly lead Levinas to search for a new conception of ethics for the post-Holocaust world. I agree with Bernstein in his claim that Levinas should be best understood in the context of his response to the evil of the Shoah; however I hesitate to characterize Levinas solely as a thinker of the problem of evil. Following Robert Bernasconi, I am more inclined to call Levinas as the thinker of transcendence. The ethical, the encounter with the other, and even the problem of evil have all emerged as themes while Levinas was thinking about transcendence; all of these themes are the new horizons opened up for him while he was searching for a way to transcend the traditional understanding of being to find an "otherwise than being" (or to be otherwise). I maintain the view that his central problem was the traditional way Western philosophy had grasped being, namely the ontological tradition. He perceived a certain kind of violence inherent in the Western ontological tradition. This philosophical conception of being kept reproducing a certain violence, which eventually paved the way for the unique totalitarian regimes of the 20th century, the gulags, Hiroshima and Auschwitz. The horror of evil of these catastrophes was that they were all rooted in a specific philosophical tradition and a specific subjectivity that had been produced by this tradition. I believe that the problem of evil has become a topic of interest for Levinas as he was pursuing his inquiry and criticism on the traditional ontology. In other words, evil as a philosophical problem has entered into Levinas' philosophy towards the end of the 1970's.

Levinas' most important essay "Useless Suffering," which tackles with evil as an ethical category and as a philosophical problem is written in 1982. In this essay Levinas integrates all his philosophical questions with the problem of evil. In order to understand how he does that, first we need to discuss how he criticizes the Western philosophical understanding of being. We will then look into his account of the emergence of the subject out of being which is revealed as a suffocating experience of horror, with no exit. The subject with an unquestioned spontaneous freedom is construed in terms of solitude by Levinas, which is a crucial term to shed light on the subject's solitary effort of existing and claiming its own existence. In this sense, the subjectivization of the subject consists in its struggle to exist and to maintain its own existing. The question of transcendence is raised in the context of finding a way out of this subjectivity: what can break the solitary existing of the subject, and his preoccupation with itself? At this stage, we will examine how the encounter with the other and the ethical play the crucial role in transforming such understanding of subjectivity. In *Totality and Infinity*, the subjectivity is defined very radically as responsibility. The subject is no longer purely preoccupied with itself; it is responsibility, namely the ability to respond to the other. The traditional understanding of the subject as a solitary man, only responsible for the things he consciously chooses is portrayed in the person of Cain. Levinas defines Cain by his indifference to humanity of the other. Later in "Useless Suffering," evil is characterized as indifference to the suffering of the other or refusal of the responsibility for the other, a

definition, which is already hinted several times in his essays in which Cain has showed up. In other words, we will trace the clues in Levinas' writings which lead him to give a clear definition of evil in 1982, and we will see how Cain provides a prototype of the subjectivity Levinas is determined to criticize. Finally, we will discuss how his ethical response to the problem of evil serves for the post-Holocaust world, and whether his account of evil as indifference to the suffering of the other can still resonate in today's world.

Keywords

Evil, Holocaust, responsibility, Cain, solitude, being, the other, suffering

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Evil as a Distortion of Communication

Martin Stickler

A conception of evil depends greatly on what one takes to be the paradigmatic case of evil. In my paper, I explore a peculiar paradigm of evil that differs notably from other paradigms, such as Satan, the Earthquake of Lisbon or Hitler. Hegel's paradigm of evil is a man named Friedrich Schlegel. Though Schlegel's novel *Lucinde* was considered frivolous and scandalous at the time, it hardly warrants characterizing its author as evil. What made Schlegel a paradigm of evil in Hegel's eyes was not what he personally did, but that he was one of the most prominent advocates of Romanticism and of romantic irony. For Hegel, Romanticism is an extreme form of subjectivism. In my paper, I will discuss why this form of subjectivism could be called "evil". Hegel's conception of evil draws on a very different paradigm than the current philosophical and theological discourse on evil and can therefore potentially challenge assumptions and afford fresh impulses.

In a first section, I present Hegel's conception of evil through a close reading of the, *prima facie*, obscure claim from the *Jenaer Realphilosophie* (1805/06) that evil is the "internal actual [ii], absolute certainty of itself [iii], the pure night [iv] of being for itself [i]." Once we understand this dense characterization of evil, we will see that Hegel discusses evil because he worries about how Romanticism undermines the possibility of communication between individuals. For Hegel:

- [i] evil is a property of self-conscious agents ("being for itself"). An agent with a fully developed self-consciousness
- [ii] takes her subjectivity (the "internal") to be a source of justification or reasons (to be "actual"). Subjectivity as a source of justification and reasons is a constitutive aspect of modernity and not *per se* evil. However, an agent is evil if:
 - 1 "innerliche Wirkliche, absolute Gewißheit seiner selbst, die reine Nacht des Fürsichseins".
- [iii] she takes her subjectivity to be a source of justification beyond doubt ("absolute certainty"). Everything that is subjectively evident to her (feels right, convincing, etc.), she believes without second-guessing;
- [iv] and if she does not take anything else to be a source of justification (her self-consciousness is in a state of "pure night", i.e., blind to everything external or it does not treat other sources than her subjectivity as reason-giving).

Following these characteristics, I develop a Hegelian theory of evil as a distortion of subjectivity and of communication between subjects.

In a second section, I discuss the strengths of my Hegelian account: Firstly, it gives us a neat distinction between evil and mere moral badness. For Hegel, moral badness is primarily a property of actions or intentions. Evil is primarily a property of the self-consciousness of agents or an attribute of her character. Morally bad and evil agents deliberate in very different ways. The morally bad agent attaches undue weight to his claims, the evil agent attaches no weight at all to other claims. Secondly, my account can explain why evil is deficient. Evil

undermines its own foundation in the relation to other agents, because it disrupts communication between subjects and communication is a precondition for self-consciousness. In contrast to moral badness, which can be prevailing in a society, evil can always only be the exception, since self-conscious agency, and therefore evil, would be impossible without communication.

In a third section, I close with discussion of the two main problems of my Hegelian account: Firstly, it seems that, for me, the evil agent is completely caught up in her own system of beliefs and unable to communicate with others and be corrected by them. The medical term for such an agent would be insane. This is a problem for me since insane people are considered to be unaccountable for their deeds. It would be odd if evil gets agents, morally and legally, of the hook. I reply that on my account there is a difference between an evil and an insane agent. Evil agents are still agents. They can be set right by internal criticism, i.e., if we agree to their premisses and show that they are incoherent. Insane agents are not even susceptible to internal criticism.

Secondly, a conception of evil that is centred around the notion of subjectivism as the paradigm of evil seems unable to account for a very central element of what we consider to be evil: That it can be collective or institutional. In response, I explain how on my communicative account subjectivism can be a collective phenomenon and how groups and even societies can be evil.

Keywords

Evil, Hegel, Communication, Subjectivism, Romanticism

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