

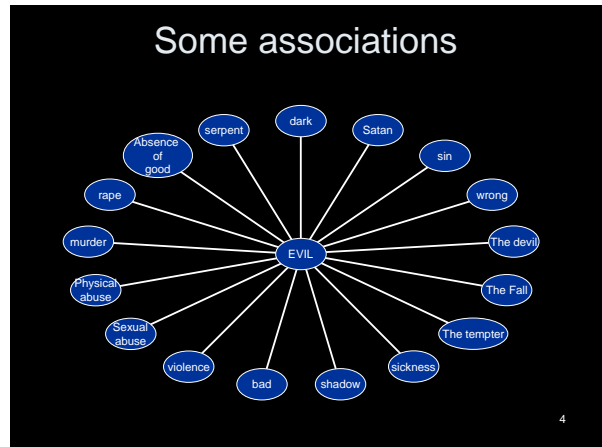


EVIL

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C.G. Jung wrote a great deal about evil. An exploration of Jung's conception of evil with reference to other systems of conceptualization.



- ### Evil Quotes
- It is a man's own mind, not his enemy or foe that lures him to evil ways. (Buddha)
 - No notice is taken of a little evil, but when it increases it strikes the eye. (Aristotle)
 - Ignorance, the root and stem of all evil. (Plato)
 - There is nothing good or evil save in the will. (Epictetus)
 - God judged it better to bring good out of evil than to suffer no evil to exist. (St. Augustine)

- ### More Evil Quotes
- All human evil comes from a single cause, man's inability to sit still in a room. (Blaise Pascal)
 - All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing. (Edmund Burke)
 - Evil is unspectacular and always human, and shares our bed and eats at our own table. (W.H. Auden)
 - Indifference, to me, is the epitome of evil. (Elie Wiesel)
 - Understanding does not cure evil, but it is a definite help, inasmuch as one can cope with a comprehensible darkness. (C. G. Jung)

Etymology

of Indo-European origin with a root meaning of 'transgressing'

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Definition

1. a : morally reprehensible : [sinful](#), [wicked](#) <an evil impulse>
b : arising from actual or imputed bad character or conduct <a person of evil reputation>
- 2 a *archaic* : [inferior](#)
b : causing discomfort or repulsion : [offensive](#) <an evil odor>
c : [disagreeable](#) <woke late and in an evil temper>
- 3 a : causing harm : [pernicious](#) <the evil institution of slavery>
• b : marked by misfortune : [unlucky](#)

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Morality

- concern with the distinction between good and evil or right and wrong; right or good conduct
- motivation based on ideas of right and wrong
- descriptively, refers to a code of conduct put forward by a society or, some other group, such as a religion, or accepted by an individual for her own behavior
- normatively, refers to a code of conduct that, given specified conditions, would be put forward by all rational persons

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Ethics

- the study of the general nature of morals and of the specific moral choices to be made by a person; moral philosophy
- the rules or standards governing the conduct of a person or the members of a profession: *medical ethics*.
- Ethical: conforming to accepted standards of conduct

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Conceptions of Evil: Religious & Philosophic

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- evil is almost universally considered as a 'problem', and so, in the philosophy of religion, evil is always spoken of as 'the problem of evil'
- the problem of evil is a touchstone of any religion. From our direct confrontation with evil results suffering, and thus endless questions about the meaning of life. That is why all religions have to give a proper answer regarding the origin, nature and end of evil.

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Pantheistic Religions

evil is ultimately unreal. Human suffering is a product of spiritual ignorance gathered in previous lives and distributed in the present one according to the dictates of karma.

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Dualistic Religions

good and evil are two eternal and rival principles; neither has created the other one and each acts according to its own nature

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Monotheistic Religions

evil has a personal identity; its source is a being that has fallen from an initial good status as a result of misusing freedom of will

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Evil in Hinduism

In the hymns addressed to Varuna evil is a matter of humans not fulfilling his laws or not performing the ritual properly. Often it has a moral significance, in that people are evil-minded or commit adultery (*Rig Veda* 4,5; 10,10). Those who commit evil deeds must repent before Varuna (*Rig Veda* 5,85) and try to repair their evil deeds through ritual sacrifices.

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In other hymns, as those addressed to Indra, the god of storms, evil is personified by demons. Thus the fight against evil is a perpetual combat between personalized good and evil forces.

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For example the [Rakshasa](#) is a race of flesh-eating demons from Hindu mythology. The most famous Rakshasa of them all was the fearsome Ravana, King of Lanka and arch-villain of the epic *Ramayana*. He has ten heads and twenty arms.

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- The Upanishads (inner or mystic teaching), the core teachings of the Vedanta (spiritual wisdom based on the Vedas), ground a pantheistic perspective on Ultimate Reality and introduce karma as the explanation of evil in the world.
- Ignorance launches karma into action and karma brings suffering.
- As the manifestations and dissolutions of the world have no beginning and no end, so is karma, meaning that suffering is a part of the eternal cosmic cycle.

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- Suffering in the present life is the natural consequence of past lives' ignorance and it has to be endured without questioning.
- Karma: the concept of "action" or "deed", understood as that which causes the entire cycle of [cause and effect](#) (i.e., the cycle called [samsāra](#)) originating in [ancient India](#) and treated in [Hindu](#), [Jain](#), [Sikh](#) and [Buddhist](#) philosophies.

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- The writings of Hindu theism (more of an emphasis on a 'first principle' or 'supreme self') adopt a middle way in explaining evil, between the dictates of karma and the responsibility of the gods in producing it as sovereign agents in the universe.
- The character of the gods becomes quite ambiguous in the [Epics](#) and the [Puranas](#). They are responsible for producing both good and evil.
- Brahma, the creator god, is often accused of being creator of both good and evil.

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Evil in Buddhism

- Evil is the perpetuation of illusion by the factors that fuel the chain of dependent origination (*paticca-samuppada*).
- Ignorance in perceiving that the world is impermanent, devoid of a self and in constant becoming leads to suffering.
- The Buddha proclaimed that in fact the whole of existence is suffering

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- three fundamental defilements of the mind combine and interact leading to suffering: greed (*raga*), aversion (*dvesha*) and ignorance (*avidya*).
- their origin is the desire to experience existence in personal form; the illusion of personal existence produces suffering, so its extreme solution must be the abolition of personhood. There is no suffering if there is no person left to experience it.

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Evil in Taoism

- Since any aspect of the world is a manifestation of the Tao, corresponding to a different participation of the Yin and Yang principles, nothing can be considered to be essentially evil in the world
- Every positive factor involves its negative or opposing one

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- What is usually called evil, as physical and mental manifestation, is the result of a lack of balance between the two opposing principles and corresponds to a bigger participation of the Yin principle.
- Evil belongs to the nature of the world, so humans have to subscribe to the universal harmony and respect the equilibrium of the two polarities. Tao is eternal and so are the two principles Yang and Yin, so that good and evil must be eternal, as necessary elements of our world

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Evil in dualistic religions

- According to the dualistic religions there are two antagonist and coeternal deities involved in creation and in governing the destiny of humans

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Zoroastrianism

- Ahura Mazda (the sky god, *the Wise Lord* or *Lord Wisdom*, and god of order, depicted as a bearded man on a winged disk, the principal god of the ancient Zoroastrians) and Angra Mainyu (the Dark Soul or the Dark Divinity) are the two coeternal gods responsible for the existence of good and evil in the world.
- The *Yasna* (liturgical texts of the Zoroastrian scriptures) states: "There are two fundamental spirits, twins which are renowned to be in conflict. In thought and in word, in action, they are two: the good and the bad" (30,3)

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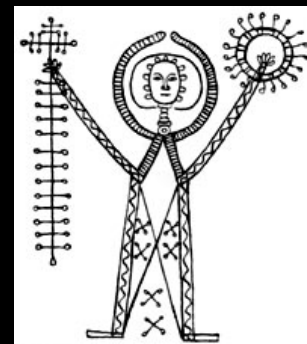
Marcionism, Gnosticism, Manicheism, and Catharism

- acknowledge the God of the Old Testament as creator, but take him as a minor deity among higher spiritual deities (the Aeons).
- He created the physical world out of his ignorance. It is therefore hazardous and generates nothing but problems.
- These religions see humans as superior to their creator because they are endowed with a higher spiritual essence by the Aeons.
- However, the physical body keeps them bound to a miserable condition, which perpetuates through reincarnation. The only way of escaping from this condition is the attainment of true knowledge (*gnosis*).

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- In Gnosticism the name of the creator god is Ialdabaoth (Gr. "architect"). He ignores the higher deities whose descendent he is and creates this world out of pre-existing matter. Then he boasts of being the only god. However, humans are superior to him, having received the spirit of life from a higher Aeon (Sophia, the mother of Ialdabaoth). Satan and Jesus are the enemies of Ialdabaoth and teach humans how to attain true knowledge that may save them from ignorance.

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- A similar stand was adopted by *Manicheism*, a religion that appeared in Persia in the 3rd century AD.
- Matter and the physical body are considered intrinsically evil as they derive from the bodies of the dead forces of evil (the Archons). As a result of captivity in the bodily prison, the soul is overwhelmed by ignorance and forgets his true origin. Reincarnation occurs until the soul is released from its earthly sufferings.

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- In *Catharism* the god of the Old Testament is considered to be the ultimate representative of evil. He created the physical bodies of humans and locked angels inside them.
- According to *radical Catharism*, human souls are angels who served the good God but were tempted by Satan to experience earthly pleasures which they could not resist. The original bodies and spirits of these angels remained in heaven, but their souls fell into physical bodies. Reincarnation works until humans recognize their heavenly origin and purify themselves by the use of asceticism. Once cleansed of impurities they are accepted back in the heavenly world.

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Evil in Christianity

- God created all things, but this doesn't make him the creator of evil.
- the origin of evil is to be found in the angels, whom God created as personal and immaterial beings endowed with free will.
- Evil appeared in the world of angels when Lucifer, one of God's cherubs, rebelled against God.

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This angel, who became Satan ("adversary") out of Lucifer ("angel of light"), was expelled from heaven together with all the others who joined him in his act of rebellion.

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- Although Satan is the initiator of evil, humans are responsible for spreading it into our world through sin. Thus we are not innocent victims lacking any responsibility. By misusing the freedom of choice that God has granted us, we became the perpetrators of evil in our world.

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Jung on Evil

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“We need more understanding of human nature, because the only real danger that exists is man himself. He is the great danger, and we are pitifully unaware of it. We know nothing of man, far too little. His psyche should be studied, because we are the origin of all coming evil.”
(Jung 1977: 436)

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- Is the unconscious evil?
- What is the source of evil?
- What is the relation between good and evil?
- How should human beings deal with evil?

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Is the unconscious good or evil?

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- The unconscious is more than the shadow, more than repression and sublimation.
- The unconscious is more than what is contrary to the ego's ideals and finer aspirations.
- The unconscious psyche may be "duplicitous and dangerous", but in and of itself, it is not essentially destructive, evil.

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- Mercurius, the spirit who controlled the work of the alchemical transformation showed signs of destructive potential; he was also duplicitous and deceptive, sexually active and even promiscuous.
- But, he wasn't to be identified with the Christian devil, i.e., evil personified.
- Jung realized that the unconscious, in its manifestations, can be 'mercurial', i.e., tricky, slippery, liable to upset the apple cart of the conscious person's intentions and wishes, and at times even volative and extremely difficult to contain, it wasn't essentially evil.

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- Jung saw it as compensatory to the conscious personality.
- For Jung, if Christ is the archetypal dominant of collective consciousness in the Christian West, then Mercurius is the shadow brother of Christ; so, compensatory rather than absolute opposite.

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What is the source of evil?

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"With no human consciousness to reflect themselves in, good and evil simply happen, or rather, there is no good and evil, but only a sequence of neutral events, or what the Buddhists call the Nidhanachain, the uninterrupted causal concatenation leading to suffering, old age, sickness, and death." (Jung 1975: 311)

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- For Jung, evil is primarily a category of conscious thought, a judgement of the ego.
- This means that it's dependent on its existence on consciousness

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- For Jung, evil definitely exists, it is real; it is not, as Roman Catholic theology proposed, an 'absence of evil', the 'privatio boni' over which Jung and Fr. Victor White's relationship floundered.
- Jung's emphasis during his debate with White was to treat evil as real, as a genuine force to be reckoned with.
- Jung felt that the 'privatio boni' underestimated the problem of evil

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- The shadow arises from this conception of evil as dependent on consciousness, as being a judgement of the will, a function of consciousness.
- The shadow is a natural aspect of the whole self that the ego calls bad, or evil, undesirable, judgements linked to shame, social pressure, familial and societal attitudes, etc.

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- For Jung, it is essential for shadow-aspects of oneself to be recognized.
- We must become more and more aware of our shadow projections so that we can be assured of a greater validity to our judgements.

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What of the source of evil?

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- Jung observed a collective psychosis taking hold of Germany in the 1920s and 1930s, a psychic possession.
- Wotan, an archetypal image of war from ancient Germanic myth and religion, was stirring again in the German soul.
- Psyche releases behaviour that is primitive, irrationally driven, and highly charged with emotion.

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The constellation of the Wotan archetype could be seen as a compensation for the collective humiliation and loss of self-worth of Germany following WWI, and the political and economic turmoil of the 1920s

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- In Jungian psychodynamics, the regression of psychic energy to primitive levels of the collective unconscious constellates a compensatory archetypal symbol, which galvanizes the will and brings about a new flow of energy into the system, along with a strong sense of meaning and purpose.
- But, often it's accompanied by ego inflation and identification with the archetypal symbol or image = "mana personality"

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- A strong influx of archetypal energy and content from the unconscious shades the light of ego consciousness and interferes with a person's ability to make moral distinctions. = *abaissement du niveau mental*
- This is how evil is unleashed on a mass scale.

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So, for Jung, the source of what we perceive as evil is a mixture of psychological content (the shadow) and psychological dynamics that allow for, encourage, or require shadow enactments.

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What is the relation between good and evil?

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- For Jung, good and evil must be united.
- Jung proposes that good and evil both derive from one source: God.
- One = right hand of God; the other = left hand of God
- It's in the Book of Job that Jung found confirmation of his views.
- In *Answer to Job* Jung sees Satan as God's dark suspicious thought about Job.

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- For Jung, in the New Testament, good and evil become too polarized in the images of Christ and AntiChrist.
- Jung would always refer Satan and AntiChrist back to Lucifer, the light-bringer and the elder brother of Christ, because both were sons of God.
- For Jung, then, evil is rooted in the very nature of God, in the nature of reality itself.

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- For Jung, just as with any pair of opposites, so too with good and evil.
- It is the tension within the polarity that brings about dynamic movement, in other words, it is consciousness of the polarity, and struggling within the polarity, which brings about transformation, an expansion of the conscious personality.
- So, for Jung, both good and evil are necessary complements to one another.

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How should human beings deal with evil?

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- To become as conscious as possible
- Which means, becoming conscious as much as possible of one's own shadow

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- Projection of shadow usually brings about strong moral indignation, including attacks on others, control of behaviour, wars
- Jung felt that facing one's shadow aspects required great courage, great moral strength
- A requirement is the ego's ability to make moral discriminations, to see the difference between good and bad

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- After becoming conscious of shadow aspects, integration must follow
- Integration = owning as my own
- Once the individual work is done, the work can continue at the social and political level.

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