Tipping Point Of Good And Evil: The Power Of Authentic Love In Moral Discourse

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Why do good people do evil things? Social psychologists often point to social and environmental forces that entice or pressure people to do wrongs. Those forces include desire for group acceptance, social conformity, and obedience to authority. At the same time, in the individualistic culture of contemporary America, people still believe in the power of the individual. A majority of people understand themselves as "good, conscientious, ordinary" citizens. When the news media reports malicious acts, be it financial corruption or crude brutality, people see those evil doers as if they are "monsters" radically different from themselves.

The question, "Why do good people do evil things?" is, however, directed to those "good" citizens. A number of social psychology experiments, for example, Milgram's classic Experiment of Obedience to Authority, reveal startling results: ordinary people can adapt surprisingly fast to certain social conditions and do vicious acts without much difficulty.

Thus, human beings stand on the cusp of good and evil. Each individual is far more morally fragile than he or she believes. In this essay I will examine two forces that tip an individual's behavior towards evil: forces external of the self and forces internal within the self. For the former I will examine two classic experiments of social psychology, the Stanford Prison Experiment and the Milgram Experiment, to see how social, environmental forces affect an individual's moral behavior. For the latter, I will present the narrative of the Legend of the Magic Ring of Gyges, described by Plato in book II of his Republic. The narrative shows how an ordinary person can transform into a murderer having gained the power to conceal his actions. Moral conscience and reason may not be as powerful as we suppose. These internal and external forces can easily tip human beings to evil.

This essay will then attempt to interpret power from the perspective of the Unificationist concept of love. Unificationism views love as the most fundamental concept in moral discourse, human existence, social construction, and even for the interpretation of the biblical narrative of the origin of evil. The concept of love is, however, hardly discussed in moral philosophy and it is one of the least discussed subjects in philosophy. Here the role of family, where authority, power, and love are unified, will be touched upon. Lastly, this essay argues that authentic love gives individuals the power to overcome both external and internal forces leading one to do evil.

Thus, it will be argued that the essential task of moral discourse lies in the transformation of love. The conscience, or moral reasoning, by itself is insufficient to overcome the forces that drive one to do evil. Love must be the motivating force behind moral decision making.

A Commonplace Understanding of Evil

External Forces that Influence Evil Acts

A majority of people understand themselves as "good and conscientious" and are confident about their moral stand. Contrary to their self-confidence and positive self-image, people are surprisingly vulnerable to evil when they are placed under certain social and environmental conditions. I recapitulate two classic social psychology experiments that illustrate that moral reasoning, moral sense, or even conscience by itself is insufficient in most people to overcome the external forces that lead one to do evil.

The Stanford Prison Experiment and the Lucifer Effect

In 1971, Philip Zimbardo, a social psychologist at Stanford, created a mock prison in the basement of psychology department of Stanford University.[1] He gathered 24 undergraduates and randomly assigned half to the role of prison guards and the other half to prisoners. He conducted the experiment to see how environmental forces, particularly systematic power relations, affect human behavior:

> How do ordinary people adapt to such an institutional setting? How do the power differentials between guards and prisoners play out in their daily actions? If you put good people in a bad place, do the people triumph or does the place corrupt them?[2]

Zimbardo planned the experiment to last two weeks. Contrary to his initial prospect, those who were assigned as guards became increasingly brutal and abusive, and prisoner-students became extremely depressed and stressed. He had to terminate the experiment in six days. The experiment raised a number of serious questions. Those students were well educated, morally conscientious, ordinary individuals with no signs of pathological characteristics. How is it possible for ordinary people to engage in sadistic behaviors in a matter of days? Are human beings so vulnerable to their circumstances? What, if any, role

did one's moral conscience or ethical reasoning skills have in these individuals? The experiment raised more questions than it gave answers. It depicted, at least, the power of circumstantial forces.

In 2007, 36 years after the experiment, Zimbardo published his reflections in The Lucifer Effect.[3] He titled the book in reference to a biblical account of the dramatic transformation of the angel Lucifer to Satan, the origin of evil. He noted "it is the story of the cosmic transformation of God's favorite angel, Lucifer, aka "The Morning Star," into Satan, the Devil."[4] Zimbardo is critical of the simplified dispositional account of evil. In the dispositional account, evil is considered to be carried by some people as if it is some kind of terminal disease carried by individuals or groups. This view, he argues, tends to neglect the power of social and environmental forces. Within the framework of dispositional account of evil, the "solution" of the problem of evil is to remove those people or "fix" them. In Lucifer Effect, Zimbardo cites the Inquisition as an example of a dispositionist solution:

> Making "witches" the despised dispositional category provided a ready solution to the problem of societal evil by simply destroying as many agents of evil as could be identified, tortured, and boiled in oil or burned at the stake.[5]

This dispositional categorization can materialize in any context. People can be categorized as "enemies of people," "enemies of state," even "enemies of humanity." Often perpetrators categorize targeted indivi¬du¬als or groups as a way to dehumanize those people in preparation for genocide. In a variety of contexts, dispositional categories have taken many forms: the Holocaust, Racial Cleansing, cleanup of the corrupt bourgeois, etc. The perpetrators even utilize people's sense of virtue such as loyalty, devotion, self-sacrifice, even their sense of justice, to drive them to eliminate "enemies" or "agents" of evil. Massive evil acts are thus carried out by the loyal and devotional individuals under the name of justice. Zimbardo criticizes the dispositional account of evil, which can result in the acts of categorizing, labeling, and stereotyping certain group of people as "carriers" of evil.

Zimbardo points out how powerful social, environmental forces are. He certainly does not preclude dispositional factors for vicious acts. Yet, he notes that, as the Stanford Prison Experiment indicates, authoritative systemic forces generate an environment where ordinary individuals can start engaging in vicious acts. In the Stanford Experiment, students assigned as guards invented various methods of "punishing" disobedient prisoners. Those guards were prohibited from committing any physical violence. Guards instead invented other methods of "disciplining" such as waking prisoners up at 3 A.M., taking time away from sleeping, toileting, and eating, forcing them to line up, sing, and making them do push-ups repeatedly. Although guards were not instructed to punish, they started becoming sadistic in a matter of days.

Abu Ghraib

Zimbardo found the torture and abuse of Iraqi prisoners in Abu Ghraib military prison in Iraq as a reflection of the principles he observed in the experiment. Both government investigators and the public, however, interpreted the case from a dispositional view of evil and viewed the entire cause of the problem as starting from a few "bad apples."

In January 2004, Joe Darby, a young soldier, provided an agent of the Criminal Investigation Division of the military with a copy of CD contain¬ing hundreds of images and video clips of torture and abuse. Subsequent media exposure and a follow up investigation disclosed acts of torture and abuse at Abu Ghraib to the public. The investigations concluded with guilty verdicts for seven soldiers in military court and the closing of Abu Ghraib prison.

Upon finding similarities between the Stanford Experiment and the situation at Abu Ghraib, Zimbardo joined the defense team for one of the MP prison guards as an expert witness. What he learned through the experiment was that abuses occur through a combination of three forces: dispositional, situational, and systemic. Thus, responsibility rests on individuals as the primary agents, situations created by supervising senior officers and civilian interrogators sent by the Private Military Company (PMC),[6] and high military and government officials who created the system.

The dispositional account of evil was dominant in both the govern-mental investigation and the military court, which mirrors the dispositional account of evil found in an individualistic culture. Reflecting upon his court experiences, Zimbardo noted a total lack of understanding of the situational and systemic forces that cause evil behavior:

> The prosecutor and judge refused to consider any idea that situational forces could influence individual behavior. Theirs was the standard individualism conception that is shared by most people in our culture. It is the idea that the fault was entirely "dispositional," the consequence of Sergeant Chip Frederick's freely chosen rational decision to engage in evil.[7]

A dispositional account of evil leads us to think that all responsibility rests exclusively on a few "bad apples." If we recognize any role played by the systemic and circumstantial forces, those who created, maintained, and supervised them should also be responsible. In the case of Abu Ghraib, the dispositional view enabled high military and government officials to evade from both moral and legal charges and responsibilities.

It is, however, evident that systemic and situational forces are powerful factors that entice and cultivate evil action. The dispositional view tends to portray evil doers as monstrous persons. But, in reality, those who engaged in vicious acts surprisingly appear to be ordinary individuals. For example, contrary to the public image of Adolf Eichmann, a high ranking Nazi officer who was responsible for the logistics in transporting millions of Jews to death camps, up close he appeared not as a pathological monster but as an ordinary man. In her classic work, Eichmann in Jerusalem; A Report on the Banality of Evil, Hannah Arendt described Eichmann in trial at Jerusalem how ordinary he was.[8] All psychiatrists who examined Eichmann reported him as normal. In fact, his banality is far more frightening than his public image as an extraordinary monster. It indicates that ordinary individuals can be engaged in extraordinary vicious acts.

In other words, to become a man like Eichmann, one does not have to be pathological. In Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland, Christopher Browning examined Reserve Police Battalion 101, which consisted of ordinary, middle-aged men from Hamburg and described how they turned into executioners.[9] He criticized accounts that ascribe the cause of the Holocaust to specific, social, cultural, and historical conditions and people in Nazi-Germany. He argued instead that the same thing can happen in contemporary society: "If the men of Reserve Police Battalion 101 could become killers under such circumstances, what group of men cannot?"[10]

There is certainly no single cause which can explain why and how ordinary individuals can turn into doers of vicious acts. It is probably a combination of complex factors: individual dispositions and decisions; social, environmental forces; systemic forces; categorization; ideological justification; stereotyping; social, political, and economic interests; historical hatred and conflict; and others. Nevertheless, ordinary men and women can turn into vicious agents of evil.

Obedience to Authority and Genocide: Milgram Experiment

Prior to the Stamford Prison Experiment, Stanley Milgram, a social psychologist at Yale University, conducted another classic experiment known as the Milgram Experiment. Milgram raised the question of how a person like Eichmann can carry out atrocities under the guise of following orders. His experiment, conducted in 1960 and 1963, demonstrated how ordinary people can easily act against their command of conscience and moral reasoning and act under the power of social, situational forces.

The experiment was to see how ordinary people obeyed authority in conflict with their moral conscience. Subjects were informed that they would receive a stipend no matter what happened during the experiment, and that they could quit at any point but still keep the money. The participants were further informed that they would participate in a study of how punishment affects memory. Two rooms were prepared. In one room, the subject sat in front of a panel with electric switches hooked to a shock generator. He or she acted in the role of a teacher, reading pairs of words to a learner (a staff member) seated in the other room. They were separated by a wall so that the teacher-subject could hear the voice of the learner through headphones but could not see the learner. The subject was to test whether the learner could remember the word pairings.[11]

An experimenter sat in the same room as the teacher-subject. He was dressed with a grey technician coat and looked like a professional. Although the subjects believed that they were participating in the memory test of the learner in the next room, in reality, they were the ones being tested. Unbeknownst to the subjects, the real goal of the experiment was to observe how the teacher-subjects obeyed or disobeyed the commands of the experimenter.

If the learner did not answer correctly, the experimenter instructed the subject to administer an electric shock. The shocks started at 45 volts, and each time the learner makes a mistake the subject was instructed to increase the voltage by 15 volts up to 450 volts. The shock levels were indicated as Slight Shock to Severe Shock, and two buttons, 435 and 450, as XXX. Although the learner in the other room did not actually receive any shocks, the subjects believed that they were actually administering these shocks.

Even Milgram himself was surprised by the results, in which 65 percent (26 out of 40) went up to the maximum 450 volts. All participants reached 300 volts. He and other psychologists conducted the experiment with various variations such gender, ethnic and cultural backgrounds and people in other countries, and others. In some variations, the learner gave verbal responses such as "Experimenter. Get me out of here! I won't be in the experiment anymore! I refuse to go on!" at 150 volts, "I can't stand the pain" at 180 volts, "an agonized scream" at 270 volts, and refusal to respond after 300 volts. In this

variation, however, 66 percent of subjects went up to 450 volts. The experiment across all variations had almost the same result.[12]

Unlike Nazi soldiers whose disobedience was subject to severe consequences, the subjects were not under any threat of negative consequences even if they quit. There was no incentive to continue since they were paid even if they quit. Certainly, teacher-subjects did show increasing agony and struggle at higher voltages. Nevertheless, they pressed the button. In the epilogue of his Obedient to Authority: An Experimental View, reflecting upon the "disturbing" results, Milgram posed the serious question whether people in an American democracy are truly immune to brutal and inhumane treatment at the direction of authority:

> The results, as seen and felt in the laboratory, are to this author disturbing. They raise the possibility that human nature, or—more specifically—the kind of character produced in American democratic society, cannot be counted on to insulate its citizens from brutality and inhumane treatment at the direction of malevolent authority. A substantial proportion of people do what they are told to do, irrespective of the content of the act and without limitations of conscience, so long as they perceive that the command comes from a legitimate authority.[13]

The experiment is thought provoking and it can be analyzed from various perspectives. It at least shows that we should not underestimate the power of systemic or social environmental forces and overestimate the power of individual moral conscience and moral reasoning. In the experi¬ment, the subjects certainly experienced struggles and conflicts in their conscience as indicated in their verbal complaints and agony throughout the process of testing. The subjects nevertheless followed orders.

The experiment implies that a systemic social force, organized by power and authority, has a strong power to engulf individual's resistance in conscience. Contrary to popular image, people who support a brutal power system or an exploitative system may not be pathological "monsters" but ordinary individuals. The experiment poses three questions. First, if a social system is the cause or the origin of evil, do people remain good if they become free from any authoritative power, constraint, or pressure? Second, why do ordinary people follow authority against their moral reasoning and conscience? Third, is there a way for an ordinary person to break free from social forces? I will answer the first question in the next section, and the second and the third question later in the section of Unificationism.

Internal Forces that Influence Evil Acts: the Magic Ring of Gyges

In his Republic, Plato posed another thought provoking question through a simple narrative: the legend of the magic ring of Gyges. In this case, the question is not if and how one conforms to external forces, but whether one can act viciously in the absence of external forces.

In Book 2 of Republic (2.359a–2.360d), Plato recounts the legend of the magic ring of Gyges. There was a shepherd named Gyges in Lydia. After an earthquake, Gyges went to a field and saw that a cave had opened near the mountainside. He was curious and went inside and found the tomb of a late king. In that tomb, he found a corpse wearing a golden ring. Gyges took the ring and discovered that when he wore it and turned it one way, he would become invisible; turn the ring the other way, and he was visible again. Gyges went on to use this power to take over the country by seducing the queen and conspiring with her to kill the king.

In The Republic, the character Glaucon argues that no one, if he or she had such power, could withstand the temptation inside of the self. Both just and unjust persons would commit the same vicious acts.

> If now there should be two such rings, and the just man should put on one and the unjust the other, no one could be found, it would seem, of such adamantine temper as to persevere in justice and endure to refrain his hands from the possessions of others and not touch them.[14]

Through the mouth of Gloucon, Plato thus posits: "No one is just of his own will but only from constraint."[15] In contemporary literature, J. R. R. Tolkien alluded to a ring that conferred the power of invisibility in The Hobbit (1937), and as a more powerful force of evil in the The Lord of the Rings (1954-55).

The Legend of Gyges' Ring poses a troubling question. In social psychology experiments, subjects conform to external forces. In the Milgram Experiment, the experimenter sternly insisted that subjects follow procedure. Although the subjects obeyed the experimenter's commands, they still struggled to do so. In the Stanford Experiment, the identification of their role as a guard seems to have shaped the subjects' behavior. A leading guard initiated various "punishments" and others followed. One person's initiative and social dynamics both influenced their behaviors. In Gyges' Ring, although no social conformity, no obedience, and no social dynamics are present, an ordinary shepherd begins to commit vicious acts.

The dispositional view of evil and the social-environmental view of evil offer different accounts. The former argues that it is the individual who generates evil. The shepherd had a hidden evil character or disposition which led him to actions when he had an opportunity. The latter posits that it is the situation that transforms the individual. Even a shepherd or anyone else will do the same. The social condition of immunity from punishment can trigger an individual to do evil acts.

Both perspectives would agree that an ordinary individual can commit violent, evil acts given the power to conceal his or her identity and become immune from punishment. If an ordinary person can easily engage violence under such conditions, then our society is, in reality, quite an unstable place that is barely holding onto a balance between good and evil. If forces are constantly coming either from inside of the self or outside of the self to tip the scales of good and evil in favor of evil, then is there any way to overcome them? Is there a way to tip the scales in favor of good?

External and Internal Forces in Action

Dehumanization and Depersonalization

The legend of Gyges' Ring depicts one important factor found in genocide: depersonalization of the self and concealment of personal identity. As I wrote earlier, genocide is not possible without the participation of thousands of ordinary people. Typical to genocides are the dehumanization of the targeted group and the concealment of the doer. To dehumanize the objects of genocide, we use such conceptual tools as stereotyping, labeling, and classifying the targeted people. By doing so, doers can detach the targeted people from themselves. At the same time, the perpetrators also conceal their identities. For example, obedience to authority functions as a way to conceal the self by making oneself as a part of systematic power mechanism. In this schema, both the perpetrators and victims lose their sense of self.

Social, cultural, and even religious ideas can be used to form ideologies to justify vicious acts. In The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and Other Group Violence, Ervin Staub describes psychological, cultural, and social mechanisms that lead people to commit genocide and mass murders. He analyses how social-psychological mechanisms are integrated into a political ideology to generate the power mechanism evident in various mass murders and genocides.[16] The concealment of the doers' identity and the dehumanization of the objects are extensive. By participation in a social, economic, political system, individuals can hide their identity or at least make them invisible to the public. Lack of transparency in a power system has the same effect as making those who hold power in the system invisible. It is an invitation to corruption and abuse of power.

Determinism and Moral Autonomy

In reference to the magic ring, Zimbardo argued that "The lure of acceptance into a desired social group is more powerful than that of the mythical golden ring in Lord of the Rings." Although the relative force of each is debatable, the power of social and group conformity is undeniably strong. One can act wrongly simply out of a desire for group acceptance. The question is, if social and environmental forces are deterministic principles that constrain the individual, does the individual have the freedom to act out of his or her own will? If the social principle is deterministic, it undermines the moral autonomy of the individual, which is one of the most fundamental elements in ethical discourse. If moral autonomy is absent, we cannot argue for moral responsibility. Moral autonomy, that a moral agent has a freedom to make a decision and choose an action, is a presupposition for moral responsibility. If one does not have a freedom to think and decide an action by lack of ability or the presence of strong coercive force, then one is not responsible. One's moral responsibility is measured by the degree and the extent one has a freedom of choice and action.

Social forces are, in principle, not deterministic. Although acting against social, environmental forces is difficult in reality, it is not impossible in principle. On this ground, Zimbardo acknowledges those individuals who acted against social powers. He called them "heroes" and "heroines" and lists individuals such as Jesus, Socrates, Lincoln, Mohandas Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Nelson Mandela, and Rev. Desmond Tutu.[17] What factors affect an individual's response to social, environmental forces is a perennial question and a legitimate subject for social psychology. Those historical figures have some common characteristics. Among many reasons and factors, I highlight three of the most salient.

First, they held a value perspective that transcended death. When one lives with mundane concerns and interests, one can hardly act beyond the boundary of self-preservation. But, if one lives at the edge of or beyond the boundary of life and death, one can act from a perspective beyond the desire for social conformity, social acceptance, and the temptations of material wealth and power. Social, environmental forces and mundane temptations are powerless against those who commit to good at the risk of their life. Thus, such heroes and heroines not only resisted social, environmental forces, but also fought against them. In fact, some of them were killed because they refused to subjugate themselves to illegitimate authority and power. They exemplify what human beings can do, and how a person can live and die beyond mundane values and concerns. They did not necessarily hold a belief in God or afterlife, but they

held, acted, and lived by a solid value perspective that surpasses mundane self-interests and desires for self-preservation.

Second, they acted out of a heart or altruistic love for humanity. Their lives and actions were grounded in a profound thought built upon altruistic love for humanity. Although some of them served for specific group of people, they did so upon the ground of ideas and ideals rooted in a compassionate love for humanity.

A Unificationist Perspective on Power and Love

In this section, I will explain the Unificationist perspective concerning the centrality of love. In Unificationism, love is the central element both of human nature and the meaning of life and death. Unification theology also views the misuse of love as the cause of transformation of Lucifer, a God-created angel, into Satan in the biblical narrative.[18]

In what follows, I will explain the Unificationist perspective on the relationship between power and love based on the distinction between authentic and inauthentic love. Then I will attempt to define goodness as the power driven by authentic love and evil as the power driven by inauthentic love. Although there is a question of how rationality works when we distinguish authentic from inauthentic love, I will not discuss that issue in this essay. I will focus on an interpretation of power and evil from the perspective of love.

In Unificationism, the purpose of life is to cultivate and expand the world of love. This purpose is conceptualized into three components, known as the Three Great Blessings: individual perfection, formation of an ideal family and society, and the creative development of nature.[19] If we view the Three Great Blessings from the perspective of love, we can interpret them as three basic ways to realize love. The perfection of individual is defined as the embodiment of love. The formation of family and society is in essence a necessary step to multiply and expand diverse realms of love. Similarly, we can interpret the development of nature, science, technology, and the arts as ways to substantiate the world of love.

Thus, we can interpret power, such as physical, social, political, psychological, intellectual, and economic, as a means to substantiate a world of love. We can even interpret the human body and bodily desires as the basis to manifest and materialize love.[20] In his autobiography, As a Peace-Loving Global Citizen, Rev. Moon notes in reference to the ultimate meaning of life and death, that all human activities are performed for the purpose of realizing love:

> Because we were born in love and lived our lives in love, love is also the only thing that remains with us when we are in our graves. We receive our lives in love, live by sharing love, and return into the midst of love. It is important that we live in a way that we can leave a legacy of love behind us.[21]

If love is central to all human actions and deeds, the question of power can be reframed from the perspective of love: "What kind of love drives power?" From this question, I want to explain the Unificationist distinction of love as authentic and inauthentic.

Authentic Love and Inauthentic Love

Unificationism distinguishes between authentic love and inauthentic love. Authentic love is defined as altruistic, forgiving, and selfless. Inauthentic love is defined as egoistic, hateful, and selfish. Here, altruism does not mean a negation of the self for the sake of the whole, a kind of totalitarian tenet. It rather means harmony between the wellbeing of the individual and that of the whole. Unificationism holds that we can realize harmony in the wellbeing of the self and the whole only when we substantiate authentic love.[22] According to Unificationism, human beings have the potential from birth for both authentic and inauthentic love. Thus, we can view human life as a process of overcoming inauthentic love and cultivating authentic love. Individuals and societies strive to overcome inauthentic love such as greed and hatred, and seek to attain authentic love, which is harmonious and balanced between the self and the whole.

Based upon this distinction, we can distinguish power: the power to realize inauthentic love versus the power to realize authentic love. Thus, we can define good as the power to realize authentic love and evil as the power to realize inauthentic love. Love lies at the root of motive and directs reasoning. In this context, we can view moral conscience and moral reasoning as the intellectual capacity to evaluate love. Intellectual scrutiny secures genuineness or truthfulness of authentic love. Love empowers moral conscience and moral reasoning. Without this empowerment, intellectual capacity can remain but a weak voice that cannot cope with internal and external illicit forces.

Authentic Love in Relation to External and Internal Forces

Authentic love has the power to overcome both internal and external forces. Authentic love and inauthentic love have different temporal characteristics. A human being is a temporal being, a being whose existence is limited by death. This temporal limit divides love into two types: love beyond life and death and love for material or physical life. Authentic love is love that is rooted in the realm beyond life and death. From this starting point, authentic love can encompass love for material or bodily life. Inauthentic love is a kind of love that lacks rootedness in the realm beyond life and death. In other words, inauthentic love is love solely based on materiality or physical reality.

The motive of surrendering the self to external social forces or internal illicit desires is the desire for self-preservation, material prosperity, and bodily pleasures. Individuals desire to secure their physical life. As long as they remain within this temporal perspective, they can easily conform to authority and social power even though illegitimate and wrong. To overcome those forces, an individual must have a perspective that breaks down this entire framework.

In the end, death is the event that shatters the temporal framework of one's existence. Thus, because authentic love is rooted in the realm beyond life and death, one can subjugate the desire for self-preservation by focusing on authentic love. Schematically speaking, death breaks down all mundane forces and desires. Hence, only authentic love empowers the self to overcome death. Heroic individuals such as Jesus, Buddha, and others, whom Zimbardo listed as heroes and heroines, centered their existence on authentic love by living a life beyond life and death.

Absence of Authentic Love and the Pleasure Principle

This section will analyze the consequences of living a life based on inauthentic love. First, it will begin with a general analysis of the relationship between power and pleasure. Next, it will examine the role of inauthentic love in fueling the power to commit evil.

Inauthentic love is strong because it produces, directly or indirectly, pleasure. Bodily desires have their own semi-independent mechanism. It is semi-independent because psychological states can affect bodily physiological functions. Nevertheless, it is the function of sensation to detect hot as hot and cold as cold. One feels pleasure when bodily desires are satisfied. When one is thirsty, drinking water satisfies its need and gives a sensation of pleasure. The quest for pleasure and avoidance of pain is thus one of the most fundamental principles of human behavior.[23] Yet the question arises: if one experiences pleasure at the expense of others, is it genuine pleasure or not?

Authentic love can reverse this mechanism of pleasure-seeking behavior. Parents can set aside their hunger and offer their food for the sake of children. Love causes people to take the burdens of others and to live for the wellbeing of their beloved. However, in the absence of authentic love, the pleasure principle dominates human behavior.

Pleasure can be experienced in a variety of ways. Even the sheer exercise of power, the experience of domination or increase of power, can produce pleasure, albeit inauthentic. In case of the Stanford Prison Experiment, we can see sadistic acts of "punishment" or "disciplining" by guards over powerless prisoners as driven by the pleasure principle. Guards experienced "pleasure" by using their authoritative power over prisoners. Be it financial power or social political power in organization, gaining more power and exercising it produces a kind of pleasure. The absence of authentic love is an invitation for the pleasure principle of domination. The raw exercise of power is but one instance of how human beings tend to submit themselves to material, bodily pleasure principle.

The Evil of Dehumanization and the Absence of Authentic Love

As I discussed earlier, abuses of power are often accompanied by dehumanization and depersonalization of both the perpetrators and the targeted population. How can we interpret these phenomena from the perspective of love?

Authentic love humanizes each individual and validates his or her existence in the greater whole. Love is personal and particular. Even the most general love for humanity or a group of people is an open invitation to embrace particular individuals. Love is by its nature the most intimate relationship in which the self is deeply involved. In loving relationships, existence is shared. In loving relationships, although individuals are physically separated, they reside in each others' hearts. Existential sharing occurs at the deepest level.

A beloved person's wellbeing becomes more important than the self's wellbeing. It means a reversal of power relationship. Between parents and their babies, for example, although parents have power and babies are powerless, it is babies' wellbeing that moves parents' heart and actions. Thus, babies become subjects and parents become objects. This exchange or shared existence occurs at the most personal, intimate level. Even the most general and broadest love such as God's love is not some abstract, general

concept but an aggregate of each particular, personal, and intimate relationship with another being. God relates to each person as a specific, unique individual.

By contrast, inauthentic love dehumanizes the individual by turning him or her into a material object, a "thing," or a mere "number." Prisoners are usually identified by number and guards' names are also concealed. This was also the case in the mock prison in the Stanford Prison Experiment. In the Milgram Experiment, the teacher-subjects were isolated from the learners in a separate room.

Thus, in the absence of authentic love, power dehumanizes others into tools or objects. The situation is just the opposite of Kant's Categorical Imperative:

> Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never merely as a means to an end, but always at the same time as an end.[24]

Respect for each person's humanity is a demand for self-respect and respect for others. This kind of respect prohibits treating humans as mere objects. This prohibition not only applies to one's relationship to others, but also prohibits one from turning into a mindless tool that mindlessly carries out commands.

As I discussed in previous sections, ordinary individuals who were obedient to authority cooperated and participated in genocides. The absence of authentic love created an environment in which they could objectify themselves and others as tools of power. Authentic love, on the contrary, highlights individuals, both the self and others, as unique, irreplaceable persons.

Unity of Authority, Power, and Love: Creating Positive Social, Environmental Forces

Every human is born as a powerless being whose life or death is in the hands of others. No one can survive without the help and care of a parent or guardian. Just as God is the absolute being, parents hold the absolute power to determine the life or death of a baby.

When children are still immature, parents have the authority to control their children. Immature children can avoid danger and maintain their wellbeing by being obedient to parental authority. A parent's authority is legitimized not by the possession of power but by their caring and altruistic love. Authentic, altruistic love legitimizes the authority of parents and the exercise of power. Thus, parental love represents a unity of power, authority, and authentic love.

The unity of power, authentic love, and authority can be applied to organizations, institutions, communities, cultures, and traditions. As discussed in previous sections, the absence of authentic love is an invitation to authoritarian rule by power, dehumanization of people, and the dominance of the pleasure principle. As Plato's legend of Gyges' Ring illustrates, human beings are morally fragile. By subjugating him or herself to power, an individual has the potential to develop an authoritarian character, which leads to participation in totalitarian institutions, organizations, and cultures. I believe it is imperative to create genuine, value-driven social, cultural, and organizational environments and systems where authentic love can be nurtured and cultivated.

The family is a mysterious institution, where one's origin, identity, and destiny are determined by parental love, which is closest to authentic love. If it is essential to empower moral reasoning with authentic love in society, then there is nothing more important than establishing healthy, stable families. From a Unificationist perspective, God substantiates His love through concrete, intimate, and personal love relationships in the family that one is born into and from which one leaves at death.

Concluding Remark: Why Love Is Crucial for Ethical Discourse

Every human being is standing at the tipping point of good and evil. Although the majority of people consider themselves to be "good" citizens, they may be far more fragile and vulnerable to temptation and social, environmental forces. After a series of experiments in obedience to authority in reference to the Holocaust, Stanley Milgram noted the danger in a democratic America: "Some dismiss the Nazi example because we live in a democracy and not an authoritarian state. But, in reality, this does not eliminate the problem."[25] The real danger is that people slip into evil or are already living in that state without awareness. The seeds of evil exist both inside of the self and in social life which we take as "normal."

Unificationism views love as the core element in all relationships: between God and human beings, among individuals, among social, racial and ethnic groups, among people in different traditions, histories, and generations, and between humans and nature. Love is, however, the least-discussed subject in philosophy, including moral philosophy. Reason or rationality has occupied the central position in both ethical and general philosophical discourse. Ethical reasoning by itself, however, is not effective in resolving real conflicts. Human beings are born into social, cultural, religious environments, which carry historical conflicts, hatred, and resentments. Because emotional attachments often carry negative factors, we often seek a path of reason in order to reach universal ground. Ethical discourse thus faces a dilemma:

although the rational approach has quite limited effect in reality, there appears to be no alternative to reach universality.

Unificationism argues that it is authentic love that has a universality which can resolve existing conflicts and resentments. The real question is not reason vs. emotion, but how reason (truth), emotion (love), and will (faith) are fused as synthetic discourse in ethical discourse. With this synthetic discourse, we can integrate bodily pleasures into the context of authentic love. In other words, we can stand on moral ground by integrating temporal, bodily desires and forces into authentic love that is rooted in eternity. Metaphorically speaking, evil is temporality (bodily desires and powers) without eternity (authentic love) and good is temporality (bodily desires and powers) within eternity (authentic love).

The neglect of love in the Western intellectual tradition is reflected in the neglect of the role of family in social ethics. We generally see a society or a community as the aggregate of individuals, while the family is relegated to the category of "private" life. If love is central to ethical discourse, however, then the family becomes central to social ethics and social construction, be it domestic or global.

From a Unificationist perspective, the vindication of authentic love is the essential task for creating a sound society and cultivating an individual's capacity for moral goodness.

Notes

[1] For a simulated prison experiment at Stanford University in 1971, see the dedicated site, the Stanford Prison Experiment, http://www.prisonexp.org. The site provides the background, settings, and process with texts and slides. Accessed January 5, 2012.

[2] Philip George Zimbardo, The Lucifer Effect (New York: Random House, 2007), p. 20.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Although he did not elaborate theological discussion for the cause of the Fall of Lucifer, he referred to "twin sins of Disobedience to God and Pride." Ibid. p. vii.

[5] Ibid. p. 9.

[6] Military Private Company (MPC) has been actively involved in the US military operations. In 2007, Los Angles Times reported the number of MPC personnel (180,000) exceeded the number of the US military personnel (160,000) in Iraq. (T. Christian Miller, "Contractors outnumber troops in Iraq," July 4, 2007. http://articles.latimes.com/2007/jul/04/nation/na-private4. Accessed February 22, 2012) MPC agents are not military personnel. They are not subject to the military law and the government is also not responsible for their actions, death, and injuries. Their death is not counted as casualties of the military. Because of their preclusion from military codes prescribed by such rules as the Geneva Conventions, MPC agents were hired as interrogators. In Abu Ghraib, civilian interrogators were immune to military law.

[7] Zimbardo, The Lucifer Effect, p. x.

[8] Hannah Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil (New York: Viking Press, 1963).

[9] Christopher R. Browning, Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland (New York: HarperCollins, 1992).

[10] Ibid. p. 189.

[11] Stanley Milgram, "Behavioral Study of Obedience." In Moral Psychology: Historical and Contemporary Readings, edited by Thomas Nadelhoffer et al (Thomas, Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 179-186. Milgram gives more detailed description and analysis in his book, Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View (New York: Harper & Row, 1974).

[12] Milgram, "Behavioral Study of Obedience," p. 186

[13] Milgram, Obedience to Authority, p. 189.

[14] Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, trans., The Collected Dialogues of Plato, Including the Letters (New York: Pantheon, 1961), pp. 607-08.

[15] Ibid. p. 608.

[16] Ervin Staub, The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and Other Group Violence (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[17] Zimbardo, The Lucifer Effect, pp. 468-69.

[18] Sun Myung Moon, Exposition of the Divine Principle (New York: Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, 1996), pp. 53-78.

[19] Genesis 1:28. Exposition., pp. 32-33.

[20] In Unificationism, meaning of life on earth is explained as the basis to cultivate love which lasts eternally even in the afterlife. See Exposition, pp. 45-51.

[21] Sun Myung Moon, As a Peace-Loving Global Citizen (Washington, D.C.: Washington Times Foundation, 2010), p. 231.

[22] The precise definition of authentic or inauthentic love in Unificationism requires the explication of the whole Unification principles. Authenticity and inauthenticity are defined as alignment with or deviation from those principles.

[23] Jeremy Bentham established Utilitarianism based upon the pleasure principle. He viewed it as indisputable most fundamental principle of human action.

[24] Immanuel Kant, Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals; with On a Supposed Right to Lie Because of Philanthropic Concerns, translated by James W. Ellington (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993), p. 30.

[25] Milgram, Obedience to Authority, p. 179.