

**THE THEOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF  
DR. M. SCOTT PECK'S VIEW OF HUMAN EVIL**

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background and Rationale of the Study

Over the past years, our nation and other countries have undergone numerous atrocities. I began to contemplate why these formidable acts transpired. Many investigations were made, however, they could hardly find the culprit. For instance, the tragedy that struck the powerful nation, America, last September 11, 2001, which led to the sudden collapse of the World Trade Center and the wreckage of Pentagon. The American people and all nations were astonished. It was indeed a tragic event for it caused tremendous trouble and sorrow to thousands of lives. According to the President of the *In Touch Magazine*, Dr. Charles Stanley, in the January 2002 issue (page 6),

The real reason that we have felt such sorrow is because over 5,000 of our citizens were killed. Not only have we lost 5,000 people, but many more families have also been impacted by these events. Husbands, wives, children, cousins, friends, and others were taken in an instant. Remarkably, it is estimated that over 10,000 children lost at least one parent during the New York attacks.

The tragedy had moved the America's military forces to be in a red alert status in order to catch the villains and hold them accountable. However, they failed. They had suspects but the true criminal could not be pinned down.

The following year, war broke out between America and Iraq. It was high time for America to impose her will in waging war against the Iraqi government, which was presumed to be breeders of terrorists. It was reported that more than one hundred of American and Iraqi soldiers were killed. We saw on the television how the center of Iraq was reduced to rubble.

Indeed, America rejoiced over her triumph. But did she really win? Did the war end? How certain was she?

Likewise in our nation, we tend to be immuned with successive bombings in some areas of the country. The most obvious victims of such atrocities are the people of Mindanao and Metro Manila. To quote Pastor Cris Amorsolo V. Sian, *Managing Faith Resources*,

In 1998 alone, a total of 17 battalions of the Armed Forces of the Philippines were deployed by the Estrada administration mainly in Muslim territories in Central Mindanao. The intensified battle displaced 110,000 families. In September 1999, AFP operations in Carmen, South Cotabato adversely affected 1,000 families. The Philippine Daily Inquirer in its May 19 issue (page 4) reports that the conflict affected 353,581 people in 306 barangays and 11 municipalities. The war between the government and the Muslim rebels is one of the “world’s longest-now in its 29<sup>th</sup> year and has claimed more than 120,000 lives. (Bunda et. al., 2003, p. 42).

Will there be an end to such violence? Obviously, it has become a perennial problem. The government could not even capture instigators of these vicious acts. Some were imprisoned, yet, that did not end the conflict.

Another unforgettable crime was the Abu Sayaf kidnappings at Dos Palmas Resort in Palawan last May 27, 2001. Civilians were taken captive. Some were released months later, only after paying millions for their ransom. Yet, others got killed. Eventually, it was shown on television how an American Missionary, Gracia Burnham, one of the captives, had survived the peril. Out of her experience, she had written a book, *In the Presence of Mine Enemies*. There she revealed what they had experienced in the hands of their captors and how they had survived in the midst of the battles. This book had been controversial because it mentioned some details that implied conspiracy between the AFP and the Abu Sayaf as evident in her testimony:

Our food supply at this time was actually quite good for a most unusual reason: The Armed Forces were feeding us! A group of

them met our guys and handed over the quantities of rice, dried fish, coffee and sugar. This happened several times over the course of a few weeks.

Why in the world did President Arroyo's troops provide the Abu Sayaf with their daily bread? We were told that it was because Sabaya was wheeling and dealing with the AFP general of that area over how to split up any ransom that might be paid. Arlyn de la Cruz had warned us about that. "You know, this is going to be a really big deal," she said, "and everybody is going to expect their share."

Sabaya was willing to give the general 20 percent of the action. But the messenger reported back that this wasn't enough. The general wanted 50 percent-when his own government steadfastly condemned the ransom concept all together. (Burnham, 2003, p. 222-223).

Thus, out of this testimony, who can now identify the real evil? Who is the true adversary?

Indeed, many crimes had occurred. But I believe that the most common, obvious and destructive crime committed today is terrorism. We seem to be helpless in identifying the "true killer." We can pinpoint the culprits but we can hardly solve the case because we are truly ignorant of the true face of the evildoer. According to the media, our government officials are doing their best to solve the crime. But I doubt. Perhaps, the evil resides inside the administration itself. As one sees and hears the issues inside the palace, and as the government officials throw accusations to each other, confusions continue to rise. As such, one can no longer identify who is the "Beauty" and the "Beast". Both parties claim that they are the "beauties" but can never ever admit the "beasts" within them. Naturally, it is indeed easy to announce our self-defined goodness yet it is hard for us to show- off our baby demons. This amazes me so much. At this juncture, I still do not have the answer for all I see is their beautiful charming masks. Who can identify the real evil?

One of the columnists in the *Philippine Star* in its August 12 issue (page 11), Alejandro

R. Roces states,

The problem then was the terrorists; now it's military revolt. There were two big disasters last month. One was Al-Ghozi's escape from detention in Camp Crame. The other was the July 27 coup attempt right in Makati's financial district. Both cases do not speak well of the military. To date, there has been no plausible account just to how Al-Ghozi could have escaped from a tight-security prison right in Camp Crame....

....When you deal with the terrorists, you are dealing with unreasonable people. But members of our armed forces are supposed to be highly disciplined men. And they are supposed to obey their officers not civilians. The arms used in the July uprising were not standard army equipment. They were furnished from the outside. What is happening to our armed forces? It is a fact that our armed forces have never been the same since martial law, the army reigned supreme.

What is truly wrong with our armed forces? Are they truly aiming to capture the evil ones or are they one with them in spirit?

Aside from the international and national issues that reveal the evil around us, even within the school institution where I am in, there are areas of concern that led me to ponder deeper into the subject of evil. The most recent case is the conflict between the students and the teacher. After listening to both sides, it seems that both are in a position to defend the truth they stand for. Nonetheless, I have witnessed how devastating the effects of throwing accusations to one another. I can hear terms such as "insinuations," "manipulations", "inconsistencies" and "lies" but nobody seems to accept that. Some of them are honest to express their sentiments to the point of being labeled as notorious and rebellious. On the other hand, some show godliness, but, perhaps, its phoniness seems subtle that I can hardly tell which is which. But on whose side

is evil? Is it with the students, the teacher, or is it just sitting on the administrative seats. I suppose that identifying the real evil is truly a difficult task to undertake.

Furthermore, I have never come to grasp the reality of the evil until I realized that I have become its victim. This new awareness that I, too, have been a captive surrounded by the so-called human evils, compelled me to write this paper. I have come to understand these things as I began to read and internalize the book *“People of the Lie: The Hope for Healing Human Evil”* of Scott Peck. I have recognized that a serious study on the subject of human evil is essential. There is a need to understand the nature of human evil for my soul’s sake to be liberated from its thrall, for my own healing and for the healing of human evil itself. It is my desire, then, that others, too, may have a deeper look into the nature of human evil. Many are not aware that they are victims. They are too weak to escape. The perpetrators are strong enough to control others, never realizing that they, too, are victims of their own evil.

For so long I have never been myself. I have struggled to find the real me, my true identity. Not knowing who I am was one of the worst things that ever happened to me. I wanted to be me but I was powerless because I was trapped in someone else’s willfulness. I wanted my freedom; freedom to act on my choices. I wanted to do what I desire to do for I knew it was for my good but my choices were not their choices. My boundaries were crossed many times, intruding into my personhood. Since childhood, I had been taught to obey, by all means, for this is the true expression of love. As far as I can remember, I have never been appreciated nor encouraged as a child to develop my talents and interests, nor allowed to decide things for myself. In the name of love and righteousness, I was compelled to give up my own choices. Yet, soon, I felt everything was a lie. There was no interest in my growth spiritually and emotionally. The experiences I had with that person made me feel that I am worthless.

That person had wonderful dreams for me, that is, to be able to go to a land flowing with milk and honey; where the good life is, as they say. However, since it had not been realized, frustration and misery had ruled over that person's mind, believing that everything was a failure. That person would do anything for me even to the point of bribery and threats of disownment just so I would follow that dream. For almost twenty years, I have been living to please that person and would feel guilty when that person was disappointed. I have come to the point when I asked myself how long will this control last. I really have longed to escape the inconsistencies, lies and bribes. The constant verbal abuse has made me sick. The pain had been enormous. I could no longer stand the presence of that person. Yet, in spite of everything, I still do believe that we can never rule out our love for each other; only, we cannot stand each other's presence.

Could this be evil? How come I am always provoked to anger and hostility? Will I remain captive even though I know it is like living in hell? Will I be forever subservient to the will of another person and not able to act on my own choice? Is it right to obey though it negates my joy, peace, and strength and even my totality? Will I remain in the presence of someone who is killing my identity and will? Will I be healthy in the presence of such person? I have never been treated as an adult, but as a child who always needs assistance. But I am no longer a child. I want to be fully human and fully alive.

With this experience, I have reached the point of hopelessness that there is no remedy for this kind of disease. It is hard to trace its etiology because until now, the symptoms are recurring and no medicine is ever available over the counter. I am still looking for the cure. I need to have a stronger resistance otherwise, it will destroy my immunity. May God give me an antidote for this.

I believe, based on what I have experienced, that an encounter with human evil kills someone's life. It destroys human growth. It leads others to become evil as well. I do not want to be labeled as such for I do not want others to experience what I have gone through. Thus, I am interested in writing about human evil for it is my desire that many will be aware about this so that they will know how to deal with it and be healed from the pain it brings; and that they may have a change of perspective of this so called "evil" from the fairy tale view to a realistic.

## **B. Objectives of the Study**

This special paper on the book *People of the Lie* aims to:

- a. arouse the awareness of the readers on the reality of the existence of human evil.
- b. impart knowledge on the nature, the source and the healing of human evil.
- c. encourage the readers to undergo the process of introspection and find healing for themselves.
- d. provide a re-orientation of the readers' perspective on the integration of Science and Religion in the arena of healing.

## **C. Significance of the Study**

The author's content analysis will benefit those who are victims of human evil, in the hope that they too can name their own experience and find healing as they delve into this subject. It will contribute to the realization of theology and medical students to bring to light the value of integrating Science and Religion in the healing process as the issue of human evil is discussed openly in the classroom. Furthermore, the analysis of this study can propel them to embark on an intense research related to the issue of human evil and contribute to public awareness. Likewise,

it will educate church persons so that they will not remain in their fairy tale view of evil but will comprehend evil's true nature.

#### **D. Scope of the Study**

This study focuses only on what Dr. Peck calls human evil. The writer of this special paper will deal on the subject psychologically and theologically.

This paper proposes to explore the following questions: a) who are the people of the lie? b) where did its devilry come from? c) who are their victims? d) is their nature a kind of illness? e) do they suffer? f) is there healing for its evil?

The second chapter will set the stage for unveiling Dr. Peck's definition of human evil and its characteristics. It will deal with a) its genesis and effects on its victims; b) the methods of Peck on how to deal, heal, and exorcize it; c) and his recommendations for further studies over the subject matter.

The third chapter focuses on the writer's analysis. It explores some truths upon gathered opinion from different authors that deal with the issue of evil as well as other relevant issues. It also conveys her theological reflection concerning the integration of Science and Religion as well as the issue of human evil in the realm of politics.

In the last chapter, the writer of this paper discusses her concluding thoughts toward the study, as well as her own recommendations.