

CHAPTER ONE
THE OLD STORY TOLD IN MANY WAYS

“This is hell, nor am I out of it.”
Mephistopheles, in Christopher
Marlowe’s *Faust*

The oldest oral tradition had to somehow incorporate the very beginning of a human nature that could think in terms of good and evil. This book tells that story, passed on from the suppressed and recovered texts of this oral tradition, lost and found in buried jars and stubbornly saved from the fires of orthodox power. It may not be a myth, and it is even reasonable to think it might be the history of a brilliant being who began ethics within the cosmos and within our own human nature. There are current empirical ways of grounding ethical behavior, but the full grandeur of values needs such a being, and a scope beyond the stars to give it real understanding. Ethics needs the metaphysics of science, and metaphysics can be hidden in what seems to be myth. I think we can and should do the scientific reduction, but like E.O. Wilson, who sees the best of science as the best metaphysics, I think we need more than current science platitudes. We need the memory of what Lucifer chose, an “impossible idea,” so the old texts all say, that made good and evil possible.

If I write within my academic world, I can and have said that ethical thinking for a learning and reasoning animal (and “altruistic” behavior for a less-complex animal) are critical to the success of a social species, and the human species is a learning social species. Naturalistic ethics that makes use of the scientific reduction available in sociobiology can provide an integrated modern explanation for the existence of ethical behavior (1,2,3,4). In a social species ethical behavior is genetically selected because its contrary, sociopathic behavior, does not promote required group functioning, but this behavior is primary and not always what human beings have wanted as an ethical standard. However, it generally is fruitful to start at the rudimentary base and work up from there to developing ethical standards.

There may be disillusionment in accurately seeing the programmed ethical behavior of human beings and understanding the reality that not much has changed from those

early basic ethical requirements for a social system. I can remember having lunch with a reporter friend whose wife had been killed in Viet Nam and who served two tours of duty there, along with an Israeli survivor of concentration camps who had been on Schindler's List. The Israeli asked me if I thought human ethical behavior had developed more highly over time. I thought perhaps we had made some progress because we were no longer skinning people alive or walling them into the fortifications of the ancient cities of Babylon or Assyria. My reporter friend shook his head and quietly said that yes, we were still skinning people alive. He had heard it done to a prisoner in the forests of Viet Nam, heard it all night. So we are not talking about saintly behavior when we talk about the primary ethical program for human beings. We are, however, talking about real ethics in a real world.

With that sober warning, I want to consider the primary requirements for the existence of human ethics in the world, and I will need the Lucifer texts as a guide, because those are the stories about real ethics, human nature, and the cosmos. Anyone who has interviewed a true sociopath (not merely someone who has broken the law) will recognize the extreme variance that person represents. A sociopath sees other humans as objects to be used, not as beings like himself or herself. The sociopath is not social, not capable of a genuine relationship with anyone else. The sociopath has emotions or feelings, but these are exclusively concerned with self, and there is no capacity for empathy with others. If the sociopath says he or she feels someone's pain, it is a manipulative ploy to get the other individual to feel attached, be willing to perform something for the sociopath, or be fooled into meeting the sociopath's needs -- which are the only needs that count. Everyone else is merely furniture, a means to the sociopath's ends.

In the forensic psychiatry program, I spent an afternoon each week of the rotation in the county court clinic, listening to interviews conducted by residents in training. Although most of the individuals who were interviewed were in trouble with the law, there were few actual sociopaths. I have seen bewildered young women who have scalded their toddlers to death, fathers who have had incest with daughters, and depressed persons who killed their entire families, yet none of them were actual sociopaths. Now and then, a real sociopath appeared. My reaction to their interviews became a long-

running bit of humor between the psychiatric residents and faculty about diagnosis. If I began to look sleepy and inattentive during the interview of an individual in court clinic, the psychiatrists began to consider the diagnosis of sociopathic personality disorder. Something about such sociopaths generated that reaction in me, and I now suspect I know the reason. My ego refused to accept being considered simply an object and protectively shut down any attempt to connect with that individual. Safely in isolation, I became bored and inattentive, because I was no longer interested in anything the person had to say. That person acted asocially, and I responded by extruding the person from social membership, doing to the sociopath what the sociopath does routinely to all other persons. Only a basic empathy was possible. The sociopath, I could intellectually see, was once a baby with all the wonderful potential of a human child. Something not the ethical responsibility of that baby had happened to block the process of socialization and functional membership in the human community. I could feel some sorrow for this human tragedy, but a very attenuated feeling. I could also see the physical reality of a human body, and would not want unnecessary pain to come to such a person, because on that very basic physical level, this body was part of my species and not completely alien to me. Sadness for a malfunction, and species recognition, were the low-level links possible, but beyond that, there was no linking with an actual sociopath. The only link a sociopath would allow was an exploitative one, allowing the linker to be reduced to an object, to be seen as meaningless and worthless, to lose strength and honor. That was not a link I ever intended to make. Without that full link, the possibility of ethical decisions between myself and a sociopath does not exist. The sociopath does not meet the basic requirements of an ethical being, and ethics cannot exist in his or her world. The Lucifer texts, however, are not about a sociopath, but about an ethical being who had the capacity to make a profoundly ethical choice, who had an impossible wish to have equal respect.

My academic thoughts of ethics, then, were two empirical proposals about ethics. One was a scientific reduction that grounds ethics in human nature, evolutionary theory, and the physical sciences. The other was a psychiatric classification (with etiology and life history not well-developed) that points to a severe malfunction when the human organism does not have the capacity for empathy, social bonding, and respect for other members of the species. This book will consider a third proposal that unifies our knowledge about

ethical thinking and behavior in the first two proposals, using the conceptual tool of an ancient, but still transmitted, depiction of good and evil, a method that personifies and reifies ethical concepts. First, we need to connect with our conceptual history and read the very old explanations for the beginning of ethics, whose writers did not think they were writing poetry or fiction, but descriptions of reality.

The old texts, whether Sumerian, Israelite, Akkadian, Gnostic, Catholic, Muslim, or Ethiopian, tell us there was no ethics in the Garden of Eden, and strangely, that ethics came from the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the fruit that the first humans were not supposed to eat. That is a very strange story. It is even stranger that a being who has since been demonized in the majority traditions should have been the one to open up the possibilities for ethics, a fallen angel called Helel ben-shahar, Lucifer, One Who Opposes (Satan), Deceiver, Archfiend, Enemy, and finally Devil. Those names have counterparts in Enki, Ea, Cronus, Prometheus, Saturn, and Iblis, in similar explanations from all the ancient cultures. To understand ethics, we have to understand who Lucifer was and what became of him. To do that, we have to go back to creation stories.

These stories have only three traditional philosophical options. First, a power without any other definition, even a judgment of good and bad, expresses itself by making the cosmos. This power encompasses everything, but without any evaluation, or ethical judgment. All is simply what it is. This expressed cosmos is unending but cannot change, and is a neutral abstraction that allows no basis for ethics except subjective responses relative to the class of beings making the responses. Not even the abstract power or energy responsible for the cosmos functions as an ethical being (5). It was for this reason that I limited the range of ethics in my book on bioethics, and used the rule that “It is a wise species that knows what its self-interest is.” Whether a monotheist or an atheist, this cosmos is very much like the universe described by Bertrand Russell in “A Free Man’s Worship.” It is dark and neutral, without purpose, without development -- it is what it is. It corresponds with the monotheistic description of a god in Jewish and Christian tradition: “I am that I am” (6). In the absence of the possibility of rational ethics, the only force is power, and this is a cosmos based on the creator’s power.

Second, there are stories of a dualism in creation, with two equal powers sometimes working together, sometimes working in conflict. Historically, Manicheism or

Zoroastrianism/Mazdaism have reflected this option (7,8). The two powers become evaluated as good or evil at the very beginning of creation, one judging the creation to be unacceptable and the other finding it pleasing or good. There is a gradual erosion of the power of the evil principle, so that it is determined that the good principle will ultimately triumph over the evil principle and either destroy it or engulf it. As Jeffrey Russell argues (9), monotheistic religions have the constant problem of slipping into a dualism or having to deny the omnipotence or all-goodness of the single god, in philosophy and theology called the Problem of Evil (though it could just as easily be called the Problem of Good and is better understood by calling it the Problem of Good and Evil). Still, as this problem indicates, ethical thinking is possible in such stories, and ethics is a component in some way of the cosmos.

The third option is the story of a monotheistic god who has allowed a lesser power, an evil power, to exist in creation and function contrary to god: one who opposes, one who is the enemy, the accuser, the Mal'ak of god, in a word, a satan (10). This evil power, however, is understood to always be doing the god's work, to be subservient to the god because created by the god, not self-existing. Such stories use the concept of a satan to attempt to resolve the problem of the existence of good and evil in the world, of a dynamic as opposed to a static cosmos, and of freedom. The attempt, as many theologians and philosophers have conceded, generally fails on some point of a traditional definition of the creator god (11,12,13,14). What it does do is allow a full range of ethical thinking and the importance of good and evil in the cosmos. It doesn't solve the problem.

These have been the three philosophic options accepted in traditional philosophy and theology, and limited to the three because monotheism has been assumed to be a stage of higher development in religion (15) or superior in some way. This assumption is such an engrained part of our culture that it is rarely questioned. There is, however, a fourth option that goes far back in ancient history and avoids the problem of good and evil by avoiding the problem of a god-created cosmos, while describing a cosmos filled with "gods" or "heavenly hosts." It has been characterized as primitive or savage, but that characterization does not fit many of its ancient powerful adherents: Egyptians, Sumerians, Indians, Romans, Greeks. The polytheistic option is at least as sophisticated

and may fit a scientific framework better than a monotheistic option. It can be naturalistic, since the gods need not be supernatural, only more advanced than their human counterparts, and not the creators of a cosmos that might be instead infinite and eternal. I want to wait to deal with this option, but for now it needs to be added to the three philosophic options of the creation hypothesis and to this ethical analysis.

The old stories of Lucifer are either the second or third traditional options and generally the latter, but may also be the fourth alternative. A new reading of his story could involve the first or fourth options. In the Genesis version, the creator god is pleased or self-satisfied with what he has expressed as the cosmos and the planet Earth. There is no other evaluation possible except his power and will. He places Adam in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and to guard it, giving this first human being a definite servant status or even a slave status. He also lays down a strict rule to maintain that status: “You may eat the fruit of any tree in the garden except the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad. You must not eat the fruit of that tree; if you do, you will die the same day.” It is quite clear that human beings are not to be ethical beings, trying to determine what is the right thing to do, trying to understand what is good and evil. There is to be no ethics (knowledge of good and bad) in the Garden of Eden. Genesis tells about the snake in the garden that tempted Eve, but the story is incomplete because the snake is undefined, remaining a symbol for something or some being, and it is only in the Pseudepigrapha, the First Book of Adam and Eve, that the missing material is available (16). The Genesis story only related that the snake told Eve it was not true she would die if she ate the fruit, and that furthermore God frightened her with that because he knew if she ate it, she would “be like God and know what is good and what is bad.” Humans could develop further, that development contains ethical capacity, and the Genesis God does not want that to happen. Eve eats the fruit, gives some to Adam, the deed is discovered by God, and they are both expelled from the Garden, with God saying “these human beings have become like one of us and have knowledge of what is good and what is bad. They must not be allowed to take fruit from the tree that gives life, eat it, and live forever.” The tree of life was protected by a flaming sword turning in all directions to keep anyone from coming near the tree that gives life. There is no mention of Lucifer here, although there is in the First Book of Adam and Eve.

But there is now a problem. Lucifer's fall with his order, as told in the Slavonic and Ethiopian Book of Enoch, occurred before the Garden of Eden scene in Genesis, but Genesis also tells of immortals who are "heavenly beings/bene ha-Elohim/ sons of gods/Watchers" who mated with the progeny of Adam and Eve, made Yahweh angry, and brought on the flood. "When people had spread all over the world, and daughters were being born, some of the heavenly beings saw that these young women were beautiful, so they took the ones they liked. Then the Lord said, 'I will not allow people to live forever; they are mortal. From now on they will live no longer than 120 years.' In those days, and even later, there were giants on the earth who were descendants of human women and the heavenly beings. They were the great heroes and famous men of long ago." The flood destroyed the humans that God had decided were wicked, but apparently not all the offspring of the heavenly beings or those beings themselves. Watchers is the name Enoch gives these beings, and they appear in the official Old Testament in the Book of Daniel. Russell also mentions their appearance in the Book of Jubilees, as having descended to Earth to "instruct the children of men, and that they should do judgment and uprightness on the earth" (17). The Gnostic Christian texts mention them as Archons (18,19).

Despite good intentions, these beings yield to an unspecified sin and they are bound in the depths of the earth. Their offspring fight each other and destroy themselves, but one of the leaders of the Watchers, Mastema, arises and negotiates a truce of sorts, in order that Mastema can remain in charge of men. Some of the offspring (one in ten) remain free while the rest are bound in the darkness. This is very similar to the Greek and other Indo-European histories of battles between god-giants, titans, who ruled the planet and the new gods, Olympians, Aesirs, Anunnaki (20). Russell mentions another apocryphal work, the Testament of Reuben, which blames the women rather than the heavenly beings. And then five hundred years after the writing of Genesis, there is Psalms 82, which gives the biblical version:

"God presides in the heavenly council;

in the assembly of the gods he gives his decision:

"You must stop judging unjustly;

you must no longer be partial to the wicked!

Defend the rights of the poor and the orphans;
be fair to the needy and the helpless.

Rescue them from the power of evil people.

“How ignorant you are! How stupid!

You are completely corrupt,
and justice has disappeared from the world.

“You are the gods,” I said;

“all of you are children of the Most High.”

But you will die like mortals;
your life will end like that of any prince.”

Finally, there is the Old Testament description of the fall, from Isaiah, in one version:

“How you have fallen from heaven, bright morning star,
felled to the earth, sprawling helpless across the nations!

You thought in your own mind,

I will scale the heavens;

I will set my throne high above the stars of God,

I will sit on the mountain where the gods meet
in the far recesses of the north.

I will rise high above the cloud-banks
and make myself like the Most High.

Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol,
to the depths of the abyss.”

In another version:

“How did you come to fall from the heavens, Daystar, son of Dawn?”

It seems there are older and vanished texts which tell a full story of an early event, mixed in time as Russell suggests with the flood myth, and sometimes assigned to the few seconds after creation for theological purposes (21). The Book of Enoch fills in more of the Lucifer/Satanael/Mastema story. The Book of Enoch was written at some time before the Christian Era and exists in Slavonic and Ethiopian texts. There is even good research suggesting ‘Enoch’ is a version of the name ‘Enki,’ one of the most important of the Sumerian gods (22). These texts tells a creation story that includes the creation of the

angels, an incorporeal ten troops made from fire, with fiery weapons and clothing of burning flame: “And one from out the order of angels, having turned away with the order that was under him, conceived an impossible thought, to place his throne higher than the clouds above the earth, that he might become equal in rank to my power. And I threw him out from the height with his angels, and he was flying in the air continuously above the bottomless” (23).

Enoch learns these things after being taken at night by two large beings with faces shining like the sun and eyes of burning light. They have been sent to take him to the levels of heavens, but they want him to tell his sons that he is going with them and not to look for him until he returns to them. At the level of the second heaven, there was a darkness greater than earth’s darkness, and there he saw prisoners hanging waiting for judgment. These heavenly beings were dark, and were constantly weeping. Enoch asked why these beings were being incessantly tortured, and his guides tell him: “These are God’s apostates, who obeyed not God’s commands, but took counsel with their own will, and turned away with their prince, who also is fastened on the fifth heaven.” This first act of will, free will, can be seen as the first ethical choice, the first evaluation of a static created order -- the choice between blind obedience and ethical thinking. But the consequences of becoming ethical beings are awful, another indication that the god of the Testaments did not want ethical *thinking* in the world. It is the *knowledge* in the knowledge of good and evil that is the problem. Free ethical reasoning will be punished. But free reasoning is essential to ethics (24).

Enoch, being a decent man, feels pity for the tortured prisoners and they ask him to pray for them. He asks: “Who am I, a mortal man, that I should pray for angels?” But he later does try to intercede for them. He arrives at the fifth heaven where he sees many giant soldiers with withered faces and silent mouths. His guides tell him: “These are the Grigori, who with their prince Satanael rejected the Lord of Light, and after them are those who are held in great darkness on the second heaven, and three of them went down onto earth from the Lord’s throne to the place Ermon, and broke through their vows on the shoulder of the hill Ermon and saw the daughters of men how good they are, and took to themselves wives, and befouled the earth with their deeds, who in all times of their age made lawlessness and mixing, and giants are born and marvelous big men and great

enmity.” Enoch talks the Grigori into singing pleas to God, submitting, and continues to the tenth heaven, where the archangel Michael takes him into the presence of God, with Michael being suitably subservient (25).

Finally, there is the version from the Book of Adam and Eve, with parts of that book also appearing in the Talmud and Qur’an. In Chapter 4, I will describe the Garden event in more detail from this apocrypha, but for now it will be used to add to the story of Lucifer’s fall. After the expulsion, the first humans interact with Lucifer in his disguises. There it is stated that the serpent was one of Lucifer’s guises. Another guise was an angel of light, but God’s angel stripped Lucifer of his disguise and “brought him in his own hideous form to Adam and Eve” telling them “This hideous form has been his ever since God made him fall from heaven. He could not have come near you in it; therefore did he transform himself into an angel of light.” Lucifer tries to start a fire in front of Adam and Eve’s cave to kill them, and the Lord’s angel cannot stop him: “yet he could not curse Satan, nor injure him by word, because he had no authority over him...”. An angry God tells Lucifer: “Were it not for My mercy I would have destroyed thee and thy hosts from off the earth. But I have had patience with thee, unto the end of the world.”

Lucifer’s motivation for the enmity toward humans is also expressed in Enoch: “Whereas God has promised salvation to Adam by covenant, and that He would deliver him out of all the hardships that have befallen him -- but has not promised me by covenant, and will not deliver me out of my hardships, nay, since He has promised him that He should make him and his seed dwell in the kingdom in which I once was -- I will kill Adam. The earth shall be rid of him; and shall be left to me alone; so that when he is dead he may not have any seed left to inherit the kingdom that shall remain my own realm; God will then be in want of me, and He will restore me to it with my hosts.” The struggle continues, with God again binding Lucifer and humiliating him in front of the human: “Where, then, is the beauty that was on him? Where is his divinity? Where is his light? Where is the glory that rested on him? Now his figure is hideous; he is become abominable among angels; and he has come to be called Satan ... I bound him until you came and saw him and beheld his weakness, that no power is left with him.”

Lucifer does not give up, however, and continues to attempt to destroy Adam and Eve. He threatens to continue to multiply war and murder until humans are destroyed: “This is

our will and our good pleasure, that we may not leave one of the sons of men to inherit our orders in heaven.” Finally, his description of the world he imagines and describes to Adam’s son, Seth, is most interesting: “For in our world we have no God; but we all are gods; we all are of the light, heavenly, powerful, strong and glorious.”

Russell and Bernard McGinn agree that the Jewish tradition attempted strongly to maintain a pure monotheism, willing to sacrifice the definition of Yahweh as all-good in order to do it. In Deuteronomy, Yahweh defines himself as alone dealing death and life, and in Second Isaiah the absence of ethics is apparent: “I am Yahweh, and there is no other. I form light, and I create darkness; I produce well-being and I create evil; I Yahweh do all these things” (26). In the Book of Job, it is the same. Yahweh does not really answer Job’s ethical questions to him, except by the argument from power. Job does not have the power or understanding of Yahweh, in fact is ridiculed by Yahweh for his lack of both, and therefore is prevented from asking such ethical questions, as Lucifer was punished for asking ethical questions.

There is an angelic messenger, accuser and opposer (a satan) who does do the dirty work of God, however, and this “Mal’ak” of God is in the heavenly court and also walks the Earth. He is as much God’s servant as Michael or Gabriel are, doing God’s will (27,28). This Mal’ak must be changed from submissive servant of God to rebel against parts of God’s will if real ethics is to exist. Over time, the Mal’ak is inconsistently seen as both, and the rebellion/fall theme becomes crucial. It is only that act that can generate ethics, although it also generates a dualism. As the Jewish attempt to maintain strict monotheism shows, ethics requires Lucifer to act independently.

Russell describes the Qur’an’s tale of the fall, which adds another important part to the ancient story (29). The Qur’an emphasizes that Lucifer’s sin was rebellion against God because of pride, the requirement to bow before Adam. Here, Lucifer is named Iblis, a spirit of fire who had contempt for beings made of clay and would not grovel before a being so much lower than he was. This story is repeated seven times in the Qur’an. God calls the angels to prostrate themselves before Adam: “So the angels prostrated themselves all of them together; not so Iblis: he refused to be among those who prostrated themselves.” Lucifer/Shaytan is accursed, rejected, and punished by stoning as a rebel against God. Iblis pleads to be given respite until the last day and God agrees, setting off

the struggle between them for humans, with God's permission, because he does not require Iblis to leave heaven immediately. Some Muslim theologians explain Iblis' refusal to bow not only because Adam was his inferior or out pride, but because such honor should ethically be refused to any but God. This reinforces that Lucifer's refusal could be, in fact, the first ethical act in the cosmos. A being has thought about the situation rather than unthinkingly following orders. This thinking was sophisticated and knowledgeable, and led to Lucifer/Iblis' expulsion from the heavens, as it also led to Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden of Paradise.

Russell also discusses fourteenth-century Syrian myths that Iblis helped God create Adam, similar to some Shiite myths and to the Nag Hammadi Gnostic texts buried around 400 A.D. and rediscovered in 1946 (30). And the mystical tradition of the Sufis tells a more poignant interpretation. Iblis refused to bow before Adam because he knew only God should be worshipped, argued Al-Hallaj (31): "God cast him into the sea with his hands tied and said to him: beware lest you get wet." He believed that in all the world only Muhammad had as much respect for God as Iblis did. God had ordered Iblis to do what God had ordered him not to do, bend his knees to Adam, commanded by God to whom alone a being should bow. In this mystical tradition, Iblis became the perfect lover who chose to separate himself from God and God's will, rather than choose to be with God against God's will. The mystics felt the ethics of loyalty and devotion were symbolized by Iblis, another indication that Lucifer is actually the beginning of ethics, the creator of knowledge of good and evil. Al-Hallaj, close to Gnosticism as a Muslim mystic-theologian, met a tragic end for teaching he was Truth, hence equivalent to God and suggesting that man and god could become equal. He was dismembered, crucified, and burned to death. The repression of Gnostic ideas by monotheists could be brutal, even in a relatively tolerant religion like Islam.

This Muslim view is in sharp contrast to the early and medieval Christian tradition that gained authority, although there were early Gnostic texts (suppressed as heresies) that told a different version of the relationship between Lucifer and the Lord (32,33) The most interesting later heresy is the Paulician/Bogomil/Cathar heresy because of its connection to Gnosticism, the military religious orders, the Bassarab dynasty and the Order of the Dragon, and the claim that Lucifer was worshipped by its adherents. The

Paulicians were powerful in Scythia from the seventh century on. The heresy in the kingdom of Bulgaria was inspired by a man called Bogomil (Beloved of God) in 950, spread to the Byzantine Empire, and then to Western Europe, Serbia, and Russia. One wing of the belief, the Dragovitsa, was a complete dualism which postulated a god of darkness and evil and a god of light and goodness, both equal. This belief followed the first philosophic option in its creation myth, postulating an abstract energy not closely linked with our material universe. This force had two sons, the elder Satanael/Lucifer and the younger Jesus Christ. Lucifer was the greatest in merit and at the right hand of God, responsible for the universe. Then the biblical story re-emerges. Lucifer was dissatisfied and wished to be as high as God, setting his throne as an equal. In many of the alternative texts (some recently discovered after 1600 years in the desert sands), the same phrase is used to describe this wish: he conceived *an impossible thought, an impossible idea, an impossible wish*. Because of respect for him and loyalty, a third of the angelic beings joined his rebellion. The rebellion was lost and the rebels were thrown from heaven into the void. Lucifer then constructed a new universe: “Since God made heaven and earth, I will now make a second heaven like a second God” (34). Lucifer also tried to create humans on his own, but in some versions of this belief, needed the help of his Father, who agreed because the ranks of the heavenly beings had been so depleted by the rebellion. Lucifer also has help creating Eve, and then mates with her to produce Cain, who is not the son of Adam, but of Lucifer. Cain marries his twin sister, in agreement with the Book of Adam and Eve, and problems arise with human beings. God then judges that Lucifer has done an evil thing and deprives him of his divine form and power to create, leaving him dark and ugly. He does not, however, destroy him or take away his dominion over the material universe, as Russell describes it (35).

Some Bogomil versions insist this material universe is badly made and evil, that human minds are trapped in corrupt bodies, that matter is to be despised. In this material form, humans cannot refill the vacancies left in the troops of angels. The belief was that the Father and the eldest son, Lucifer, were now engaged in a struggle for control over the universe and human beings, but that Christ/Michael would win the battle, take Lucifer’s place at the Father’s right hand, and for the final time cast Lucifer, deprived of

his title of “lord,” out of heaven. Still, some Bogomils believed it was necessary to work for a reconciliation between Lucifer and Jesus.

On some things, according to Russell, most Bogomils agreed: despising matter, rejecting the sacraments, rejecting the cross, viewing the Temple of Jerusalem as the home of Lucifer until it was moved to Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, seeing the priesthood as worthless and miracles as works of Lucifer and his order (36). Earlier versions of this worldview can be found in Gnostic texts from Nag Hammadi: *The Hypostasis of the Archons*, *A Valentinian Exposition*, *The Sacred Treatise of the Great Seth*, *the Paraphrase of Shem*, *The Gospel of the Egyptians*, *On the Origin of the World*, *The Apocalypse of John*, *The Tripartite Tractate*, and especially *The Testimony of Truth*, where kings David and Solomon are in league with daemons/archons who help build the Temple of Jerusalem (37). Nevertheless, there were accusations that Bogomil beliefs actually considered Lucifer as their leader. Adherents of this heresy were also accused of the usual vices of heretics: orgies, homosexuality, killing babies, the familiar atrocities rolled out by the process of demonization of those who disagree. An interesting aside is that the elimination of the Templars may indeed reflect the presence of Bogomil traditions in their fighting order, and while Malcolm Barber dismisses the confessions obtained from Templars, that may not be accurate. He argues that the worship of Baphomet was not the worship of Satan/Lucifer, because the name was most likely an Old French corruption of Muhammed (38). This may be correct, but Muhammed is also one of the names for Lucifer, and the Templar confessions may have told the truth, that Lucifer was being worshipped. The Templars were also accused of rejecting and defiling the cross, and that too could be attributed to a group within the order that followed the Bogomil belief. Barber also places too much on the Templars calling the being they worshipped “the enemy.” In fact, they would be quite correct to use this terminology to describe their loyalty to Lucifer, since one of the meanings of “satan” is “the enemy” and one of the traditional names for Lucifer is also “the enemy.” The Templars may not have lied.

This connection makes more sense when considering that the Order of the Dragon/Dragovitsa reconstructed by Sigismund, king of Hungary, was closely affiliated with the Teutonic Knights during the Bassarab reign, with Vlad II being both a member

of the Teutonic Knights and the Order of the Dragon (Dracul). The Teutonic Knights were an offshoot of the Knights Templar, and both the Templars and Knights Hospitallers resisted the move to make the Teutonic Knights independent. The military orders in Jerusalem were interconnected. The connection with Lucifer and the Dragon is also important and takes us back to the old combat myths of Sumerian texts, for example, where Tiamat, the Dragon of Chaos, is slain, but where Enki is also known as a dragon. But also, in a Gnostic Christian text (On the Origin of the World), the Seraphim of the seventh heaven are shaped like dragons, and Lucifer was a Seraph in the Christian tradition. I will have more to say about Chaos and Lucifer as these mythic concepts relate to systems theory and ethics, in Chapters 8 and 9. For now, the Paulician/Bogomil/Cathar Dragovitsa (Order of the Dragon) and the fighting Order of the Dragon affiliated with the Teutonic Knights and the Bassarabs appear connected to Lucifer in many ways, and probably appropriately.

There is, of course, Umberto Eco's objection that one can determine whether the person presenting a hypothesis or interpretation is psychotic by being alert for the inevitable reference to the Knights Templar, because sooner or later, the Templars always come up (39). This is a pseudoargument that fails to understand the requirement of both analytic taking-apart and synthetic connecting. History is a record of interconnections, and the connections are fairly well-documented between the Gnostic and biblical sources of the early myth of Lucifer, the variations in the myth found in early Christianity, the military orders and their history including trial documentation, and the hypothesis of a Dragovitsa connection. The similarity between the Gnostic Bogomil beliefs and the trial evidence of the Templars is strong, and the historical organizational connection with the Teutonic Knights through Vlad II is also strong. The meaning of the Lucifer myth develops within this interconnected context.

The gradual demonization of Lucifer accelerated in the Christian Church during the Medieval period, as documented in sad detail by a number of authors (40,41,42). Most of the stories were crude, as was the characterization of Lucifer. Christians seemed intent on outdoing one another in the hideousness and grossness with which Lucifer was portrayed. The scatological content alone is disgusting and prevailing. The ugliness portrays something about the demonizers' minds which is quite dark and frightening.

Sadomasochism was rampant, and all the medieval instruments of torture were well-displayed. Literature during this period swung between the depiction of monstrosities and the degrading of Lucifer into a fool and buffoon. Only a few texts still captured the grandeur and tragedy of the old myths, and then only incompletely. Dr. Faustus came close to retaining some dignity for Lucifer, unlike Dante's dreadful imagery of him. The hardness of heart of some of the greatest minds of these periods is softened only slightly by some humanity in considering Lucifer. Dante allows him tears, but no sympathy. Aquinas insists he cannot be saved. Unlike the more sophisticated Hindu view of the struggle between static existence and change, or the at least inspiring interpretation of Ahriman's resistance to Ohrmazd, Lucifer is reduced to wallowing in feces, blood, fire, torn-apart human bodies, tortures of humanly-fiendish invention, bestiality, and teratogenic forms. Unlike the grander focus of Sumerian, Hittite, Ugaritic, Egyptian, and Indo-European histories of creation, Lucifer is instead dragged through lurid descriptions of hell, of bodily functions like farting, of monastic lust, of scapegoating. While Jesus becomes the Passover lamb of sacrificial purity, Lucifer becomes the goat loaded with all humanity's defects and defecations sent into the desert for Azazel.

But a huge question remains unanswered. What was the awful sin or deed that would justify such treatment of a being, any being? What had Lucifer done to deserve this treatment, first by God, then by humanity? Like Job, does Lucifer have a legitimate, strong ethical question that has only been falsely answered by force, the brutal argument from force? (The most brutal of those arguments from force may be the Babylonian story of the Anunna-god Kingu allying with Tiamat against the other Anunna-gods. Defeated Kingu is bound and his blood vessels opened up so that man may be created from his blood and death.) There are three main rational answers to the first question: 1. The Scholastics, Russell argues, developed a Lucifer story that had the highest angel sin moments after his creation, by wishing to achieve natural happiness through his own efforts and free thought, and not through accepting God's grace and achieving supernatural happiness (43). Such supernatural bliss could only be obtained by accepting the static order of the cosmos as God had made it, and God's total rule over Lucifer's being and spirit. In a sense, Lucifer had to accept God's will as his will completely, and had to find the cosmos as it was to be completely satisfying. He had to renounce freedom,

independence, and ethical evaluation of the cosmos. Instead, *he conceived an impossible thought*. 2. The sin may have been the mating of heavenly beings with human beings, or the making of human beings, which created a new being that changed the order of the cosmos as it was created, and again acting independently of a god that was totalitarian. Like the myth of Prometheus, who stole fire to save humanity against the murderous Olympians and was condemned to torture for it, Lucifer's tenth order changed the future of humanity to something dynamic and evolving. *He conceived an impossible wish*. 3. The sin may have been "pride," the accurate awareness of one's capabilities and worth, and the refusal to dishonor them by submitting to an order that could be seen as questionable. This pride was the belief that each thinking being could have equal worth in terms of ethical decisions and relationships, being "like the gods." It does not seem to be such a sin when described in this accurate way, but it was a threat to the static order of the cosmos and to the absolute control of the force that created the cosmos. *He conceived an impossible idea*. Any of the three definitions of the "sin" leaves us puzzled because of the enormity of the punishment and the question why any of the acts were seen as unethical, when they seem most ethical, and not impossible.

It finally takes John Milton to break the spell, since even Goethe's Faust was not up to it. That Milton does partly rehabilitate Lucifer seems established, although Paul Carus tries to denigrate the heroic rebel for freedom created by Milton, and Jeffery Russell insists on wanting some personification of evil to remain (44). Even Milton cannot keep himself from falsely prejudicing the outcome, but the description he creates for Lucifer is so strong, so grand, so ultimately ethical that his conflicted internal attempts to destroy it cannot succeed. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton has returned to the dignity and philosophy of the Lucifer myth as it appeared in the attempts by early cultures to explain change, freedom, and ethics (45).

Milton confronts the true ethical nature of Lucifer implicitly in the very beginning. Having done the obligatory deference to the Christian misinterpretation of Lucifer by opening the poem with Lucifer chained to the fiery lake, helpless and defeated, hideous in form where once beautiful, and confusedly talking of revenge, he actually has him state the problem of good and evil quite forcefully and devastatingly: "Be it so, since hee Who now is Sovran can dispose and bid What shall be right: farthest from him is best

Whom reason hath equall'd, force hath made supreme Above his equals. Farewell happy Fields Where Joy for ever dwells: Hail horrors, hail Infernal world, and thou profoundest Hell Receive thy new Possessor: One who brings a mind not to be chang'd by Place or Time. The mind is its own place, and in itself Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n."

The latter part of this speech is often quoted, but it is the first part that is so devastating. The only difference between Lucifer and God is *force*, power; and the victor because of power can determine what is right and wrong. The god's final basis for right and wrong is force, not reason or ethics, as Job also learned at a high price. This is the ancient argument between Thrasymachus and Socrates, but even Thrasymachus was more ethical than this concept of a god. Thrasymachus did hold the standards of reason, and did believe there was a justice, was a right, even though he argued that in this world ethics was merely the interests of the strongest imposed on the weaker (46). Here, the god only has force with which to ground his interests of right and wrong, and Lucifer is correct in describing the situation as it is. He is also correct in maintaining that force alone has made this god supreme among equals, either the power of creating the cosmos, or the power of defeating the order of angels that rebelled against this control. Lucifer is at least as good a philosopher as Thrasymachus, and cannot help but view reality in terms of ethics. He is first and foremost an ethical being.

He also holds onto the standard of reason, even in the face of a terrible defeat, physical destruction, and punishment. He knows the value of a free mind, knows that the mind is its own place or ought to be its own place. He is confident that a strong enough mind can, as the Stoics of ethical theory would have argued, make of a place what it wills. He also recognizes the connection between reason, ethics and freedom: "What matter where, if I be still the same, And what I should be, all but less than hee Whom Thunder hath made greater? Here at least We shall be free; th'Almighty hath not built Here for his envy, will not drive us hence: Here we may reign secure, and in my choice To reign is worth ambition though in Hell: Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heav'n." Lucifer recognizes the importance of self-worth, self-love, dignity and integrity. If he is still what he should be, a very ethical statement, equal except for the power or weapon that made God more powerful, then he has not lost his spirit nor been destroyed. He has

remained true to himself and that self is neither better nor worse than the victor, except that Lucifer has lost and God has won through greater power. It is an open ethical question, then, who is the more ethical being, and in terms of sensitivity to the ethical questions and concepts, Lucifer is far ahead of the creator.

Milton then goes into an excess of maligning the classic gods as devils and describing Lucifer's order assembling. He retains the medieval need to degrade and make hideous the loser of this celestial war, despite his insight just quoted. But Milton is too honest not to be in conflict with himself. At the same time as he describes the ruined Archangel, he cannot keep from giving him the dignity Lucifer's actions and self require: "Darken'd so, yet shone Above them all th'Arch Angel: but his face Deep scars of Thunder had intrencht, and care Sat on his faded cheek, but under Brows Of dauntless courage, and considerate Pride Waiting revenge: cruel his eye, but cast Signs of remorse and passion to behold The fellows of his crime ... Tears such as Angels weep, burst forth..." This is a leader and doer who feels the ethical responsibility of his choices and who assumes the accountability for the suffering of his order. Lucifer also understands that the Monarch he rebelled against was maintained on his throne not only by "old repute, consent or custom," but by sheer power, and that Lucifer's forces cannot again attempt a traditional method of battle. Again, the static or stagnant order of the cosmos is rejected for the wish of a more dynamic and growing one, and this ethical judgment reinforces the need for the rebellion if the cosmos is to be a developing one. There is a cosmic value judgment implicit here.

Trapped on the outer edges of the universe, Lucifer and his order see constant struggle against the power that defeated them to be the only future. Suddenly, humans are caught in this civil war as well, because Lucifer sees them as part of his future domain and will attempt to resist their taking his place in the heavenly court, following the old texts quite accurately. Lucifer volunteers to go to Earth, and Milton again shows more compassion than the earlier medieval literature: "Nor fail'd they to express how much they prais'd, That for the general safety he despis'd His own: for neither do the Spirits damn'd Lose all their virtue..."

Milton does have to resort to the earlier monster tales, giving Lucifer a daughter sprung from his head like Athena from Zeus, Sin. The incest taboo is invoked to mock

Lucifer's pride in his true capabilities, and Sin gives birth to his son, Death. But as awful as Milton tries to make these images, as gory and gruesome, Sin has love for Lucifer and for her abusing son, a love that transcends the medieval orgy of blood and guts and ugliness. Sin prevents father and son from destroying each other for the amusement of the ruler of heaven, and she warns her father not to fall into Death's arms and be destroyed. Here in the human imaginings of hell, ethics is most alive and strong in genuine care and compassion. Milton cannot help himself, because the story cannot help itself. Ethics permeates the life of Lucifer.

Important for the argument of this book, Lucifer survives in Chaos and Eternal Night, a good physical description of chaos theory and the cosmos. Milton intuitively linked him with the environment most feared and yet most essential to a dynamic cosmic system. Lucifer is the explorer, the scientist, the one who might understand chaos systems, who goes out into the void or space while the heavenly court sits and contemplates the equivalent of a human sacrifice, God's son, in order to save the world. The contrast of the two is remarkable. Lucifer is a function of complex systems and a good symbol of the current complex systems of physics. The heavenly court remains static in the time of absolute rulers and human sacrifices for imagined wrongs.

Lucifer encounters humans, and true to his ethical nature, he feels sadness and regret for the loss of the battle and the fate of his order, and for the future suffering he will now cause humans. Lucifer has an ethical conscience, not a will of absolute power. Yet he suffers uncertainty about his inability to be submissive despite the good that was given to him; he knows the rule of Hell is an illusion. He also feels feigned submission and vows made in pain are worthless, and he gives up hope of reconciliation: "For never can true reconcilment grow Where wounds of deadly hate have pierc'd so deep... All Good to me is lost; Evil be thou my Good..." Yet these words betray a profoundly ethical being still, one concerned with self-awareness and honesty, and one who must have a good to exist, even if others would judge it the opposite.

I want to wait until Chapter 4 before going into detail about how Milton treats the Garden of Eden story which comprises most of the rest of the poem. There is one section, however, devoted to the heavenly battle which again portrays Lucifer as a brave, independent leader, but cloaks his virtues in unseemly pride and ambition. The motif of

these stories for ethics is generally the same: one should keep in one's place, one should not aim too high, one should deny self-development or striving for the better. Milton makes one exception when Adam sums up what he has learned from the encounter with Lucifer and from what the archangel Michael has foretold of redemption and salvation: "O goodness infinite, goodness immense! That all this good of evil shall produce, And evil turn to good; more wonderful Than that which by creation first brought forth Light out of darkness!" Reading this carefully produces a strange conclusion, although it would not be strange to Gnostic Christians or philosophers of systems theory. The creation of the static cosmos, light from darkness but without the complexity of chaos theory or systems theory, is nowhere near as wonderful as what Lucifer's rebellion has initiated. Because it is Lucifer's rebellion that makes all of what Adam is thrilled with possible or needed. Lucifer's act produces good in the cosmos, allows it to develop in interconnection with evil, nurtures the dynamic, in fact creates the dynamic. Lucifer is indispensable for ethics, and there is a profound philosophical reason why the old stories have Lucifer giving the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. Did Milton realize what he was really saying? I'm not sure. He struggles back and forth, needing to degrade and demonize Lucifer, yet somehow realizing how important a symbol he actually is. The demonization, of which I will say much more in Chapter 3, gets in the way of reason and ethics in the Christian and Jewish traditions, and the solution for the modern world was to finally simply eliminate belief in the reality of the symbol. Still, the myth captures something of great importance for the understanding of ethics, and without it our knowledge is incomplete

Other traditions and cosmological accounts which Russell, Carus, McGinn, Kramer, Maier, Pagels and Robinson describe have the same or less problem with the concept of Lucifer or Lucifers. Russell and Carus point out that Eastern versions frequently have great respect for the demons and view them as advancing the order of the cosmos and truly ethical (47,48). Sumerian and other Near Eastern myths have less demonization except for the monsters of chaos like Tiamat, Leviathan, or the Dragon, and the ethical evaluations are more complicated (49). All these myths, however, have to deal with ways to combine power, free will, reason, and good and evil. Those multiple combinations can be understood through the lens of the Lucifer story or its equivalent,

and an understanding of them will lead to a new and positive interpretation of Lucifer as an ethical creator on the cosmic stage.

“He caused his mind to take shape... thinking that, by staring down at his evil, he would be able to equal the Spirit. But he was not able. For he wanted to do an impossible thing.”

The Paraphrase of Shem, Nag Hammadi Library