

TYPOLOGIES OF EVIL IN THE X-FILES

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ABSTRACT

This Master's thesis about analyzing a TV show, *The X-files*, in relation to evil. Evil, a never-ending problem, for Mankind. My research question is as follows: **There are different aspects of evil in *The X-Files*. What characterizes the different faces of evil in *The X-Files* analyzed in terms of the philosophy of evil by Hannah Arendt, Lars Fredrik Svendsen, John Kekes and Zygmunt Bauman?**

I have presented four typologies in my theory chapters. These are Hannah Arendt (evil banality), John Kekes ("Evil in itself"), Lars Fredrik Svendsen (idealistic evil) and Zygmunt Bauman (instrumental evil). The content in these four typologies have been checked up against evil empirical outcome in *The X-files*. My method is mainly applied ethics focusing on specific evil outcomes. In order to find answers, I have included the context in the analysis. No movies develop in a vacuum. *The X-Files* is greatly inspired by American history and society, from Watergate to 9/11. Also, themes such as cloning, terrorism, idealism, technology, and science going too far "loom" in the background. The large amount of ethical themes is the main reason why I choose to investigate this particular series. By including context in the analysis, it is possible to argue that movies are more than banal entertainment. Movies reflect certain values in a culture (Gripsrud 2007). What is the specific evil outcome in this show?

In *The X-files*, the state turns out to be mainly instrumental evil when pursuing a certain aim. The state is lying, killing and withholding information to survive. The state is also involved in evil science, dehumanizing people in the name of rationality. Characters are rarely linked to one act or motive only.

Despite this, I cannot claim that my knowledge of the "four faces of evil" are applicable to other settings in society. This research is useful as a small contribution to the large research material about evil. I am able to find a lot of examples of evil in *The X-Files*, but whether my findings are transferable to society in general can be debated.

CHAPTER 1, INTRODUCTION

1.1) General introduction of evil in movies

The movie industry has focused widely on evil as a theme. The battle between good and evil is a common and traditional pattern in movies. The villain threatens to destroy the good people, but the hero defeats evil and saves the world in the end. Movies like *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), *The Exorcists* (1973), *Omen* (1976) and *The Shining* (1980) are only a few classical examples. Movies are inspired by real events, and they have an influence of their own. They entertain, delight and provoke us. A movie mediates, interprets, enhances and changes our perceptions (Deighton, 1971).

Kjartan Leer-Salvesen writes in his book «*Fra glansbilde til antihelt*» about Jesus in movies. Throughout the book, Salvesen shows how the story of Jesus is retold from new perspectives, for instance in movies such as *Breaking The Waves*, *The Matrix trilogy*, *Star Wars* and *Superman* (Leer-Salvesen 2005). Following his logic, it is possible to raise questions such as: Are movies like *Jurassic Park*, *Pleasantville* and *The Truman Show* depictions of paradise? What about *The Terminator*? Did Terminator save the world from Judgement Day? Is a machine able to show kindness? “E.T.” also has religious references about good versus evil. *E.T.* comes from heaven, is persecuted by the evil authorities, dies and is brought back to life. There are obvious parallels to Jesus in the gospels (Endsjø 2011:108).

Evil in movies should be connected to a certain cultural context. Some evil personalities stay with you, long after a movie has ended. Some of them quite memorable. In *Batman* 1989, the Joker raised the following question to his victims: “*Have you ever danced with the devil in the pale moonlight?*” before killing them. In *Game of Thrones* (2011-19), Cersei Lannister is a terrifying character. She does whatever it takes to achieve her goals. Hannibal Lecter (portrayed by Anthony Hopkins in 1991, 2001, 2002) is a smart killer who love the finer things in life. Moreover, when a person dares to mess up an orchestra performance - he gets killed for it. Literally because he missed tune. Warden Norton in *Shawshank Redemption* (1994) is another character who abused his position of power, and with a great deal of happiness. The worst thing about Norton is the fact that despite some prisoner’s goodhearted behavior, he refuses to give them a second chance. Norton, with the bible in his hand, is manipulative and treat prisoners like slaves. Perhaps most evil is Colonel Hans Landa in *Inglorious Bastards* (2009). For the Nazi Landa, war is just an excuse to let his inner monster roam free. He has no remorse in killing innocent people.

All these characters are truly evil, in every sense of the word. Their acts just cannot be justified. As the examples show, I could have chosen many movies to analyze. My choice is to investigate *The X-files* in relation to evil. My Master`s thesis will be looking at connections between *The X-files*, evil and society. Why *The X-files* and what the show is about? See part 1,6 and 1,7.

1.2) My Research Question

These days, many people spend a substantial amount of time watching TV series through streaming. Young people encounter many ethical themes through their massive use of the media (Nyjordet 2018:24-25). Therefore, it might be of interest to examine how one particular TV series, *The X-Files*, emphasizes ethical themes with a focus on evil. My research question is as follows:

There are different aspects of evil in *The X-Files*. What characterizes the different faces of evil in *The X-Files* analyzed in terms of the philosophy of evil by Hannah Arendt, Lars Fredrik Svendsen, John Kekes and Zygmunt Bauman?

Evil is something I wish to explore purely because it is likely to influence the moral concepts of younger audiences for decades. Evil is a never-ending problem for humanity. I can only cover some elements of evil`s characteristics or its depths, but I can illuminate evil`s different faces and how they are expressed in a particular series that depicts evil. Who are really the evil ones` characters in it? Why are they evil? Why apply these four philosophers in relation to evil, you may ask? One answer is the fact that we do not live in a black and white world, but in a world of nuances, it is then important to include these four theoretical approaches. I will argue that Arendt, Svendsen, Bauman and Kekes complete each other. Sometimes they have a similar way of thinking, but in a large degree these four philosophers have a different stand on what`s the essence of evil is. To explore the term «evil», I would like to dig deep into these different philosophical stands in my theory part. Later I will “check” if the theory is relevant to empirical finding in X-files episodes. In the introduction it is sensible with a short introduction of four typologies of evil.

1.3) A short overview on the typologies of evil

Evil has many different faces: vengeance, wickedness, hurt, demonism, illness, torture, selfishness, suffering, revenge, fear, hatred, ignorance, killing, abuse and so on. Evil can be described as the opposite of good. Still, evil is a difficult term to define. If evil, is the contrast to good what is then good? What`s good for me, is perhaps evil in your eyes?

The best way to explain the content of evil is by referring to some theoretical approaches, in this case mainly four typologies will be used.

Instrumental evil and Zygmunt Bauman: Most people who turn to violence do so to get what they want. They want money, power, sex, influence and they want progress. Evil occurs in order to carry out some other purpose. People engage in certain evil actions because they believe will lead them to a desired outcome. This is known as instrumental evil. The goal is not to be evil it itself. Evil is more a byproduct of the goal. The evil which occurred in Holocaust was a byproduct of forces like modernity, bureaucracy, rationality and division of labor. Bauman argues that distance and dehumanization is a tool for violence. These two, reduce the moral responsibility and motivates collective evildoing (Bauman 1989). Still, what about a perpetrator who simply intends on hurting another person for sadistic purposes?

“Evil in itself” and John Kekes: Distance, dehumanizing and blind obedience could lead to evil. On the other hand, some would claim that evil in its worst form is when people living closely together hurt each other, face-to-face, as in the Rwandan and Balkan wars in the `90s (Vetlesen 2013). This sadistic type of evil does not view dehumanizing or distance as a necessity. A sadistic evildoer wants no object to deal with. They want to «break down» human beings to gain control and power (McGinn 1997 Kekes 2005). “Evil in itself” is about individuals intend for someone else to feel pain. John Kekes` follows up this «evil in itself» perspective by raising the question whether people harm each other due to boredom, entertainment and pleasure. He argues that most decent people will not allow themselves to acknowledge that they may get some pleasure from inflicting harm. Nevertheless, some people have fewer scruples. They will find it disgusting to kill someone, but over time, as they get used to it, they will accept it. Then it starts to become “fun” (Kekes 2005:134-36).

Banality of evil and Hannah Arendt: Alternatively, is evil as simple as a normal human feature found in our banality, obedience and thoughtlessness? (Arendt 1963, Zimbardo 2008). Can one do evil without being evil? Yes, according to Hannah Arendt. In observation of the war crimes trial of Adolf Eichmann, she found him “terrifyingly normal.” Eichmann was “neither perverted nor sadistic.” He was an ordinary bureaucrat (Arendt 1963/2006: 54-56). With this perspective evil is not demonic or ideologically motivated. This is closely related to Bauman`s thinking about evil, but they differ since Arendt is analyzing the Eichmann case on an individual level. Bauman is more concerned with the structural state and its agencies. To put it short, Bauman seems to be critical to the Nazi-Germany thinking too much in terms of

rationality, while Arendt is blaming Eichmann for doing evil duties “without thinking.” Both shows that under certain conditions, everyone has the capacity of becoming evil. The normality of evil is their perspective. What does Arendt mean by the banality of evil? Often we are doing our duty without thinking. We simply fail to reflect about good and evil at all. This is known as the banality of evil. Still, it is a too narrow definition.

Idealistic evil and Lars Fredrik Svendsen: It is apparent that evil acts also occur because of too much faith in promoting something good, known as idealistic evil (Svendsen 2013) where the end is supposed to justify the means. Robespierre, Lenin, Hitler Mao and Pol Pot are examples given by Svendsen. Not all evildoers regard themselves as evil (Svendsen 2013, Baumeister 1997). Nor does evil has to be intentional. Quite many evil actions are unintended consequences.

One example is science, which has a function to improve the well-being in society. Still, science can also turn out to be evil with its cold and rational logical methods. In fact, the whole modernization project with its technology, distance and bureaucracy is dehumanizing in its form (Bauman 1989). Tied closely up to Svendsen and idealistic evil is ideologically and religiously motivated violence. This research will include Mark Juergensmeyer (2003), who is well known for his studies of religious violence, into the discussion. Professor Mark Juergensmyer characterizes evil as a «cosmological battle» (2003). This evil could be defined as follows: a belief in something greater than ourselves for a greater cause, which again can create an «us» versus «them» division, and a willingness to sacrifice lives for the “greater good.”

1.4) Defining evil

Evil is a complex term to define. Why not use terms like “bad”, or “not good”? Moreover, is there any essence in evil at all? In this research, evil is understood as the outcome of the four typologies mentioned above. Evil is a wide concept. It is possible to try to narrow the concept down by introducing two different terms, natural and moral evil. Natural evil is a bad situation, which does not result from the intention or negligence of moral agents. Hurricanes, earthquakes or toothaches are examples of such evil. Moral evil, on the other hand, comes from motivation, intention, hurting others and ignoring other people’s worth. You have a responsibility for your actions. I will only focus on evil done by human beings. In this regard, a good definition of evil seems be to as follows:

«Serious (motivated) harm that causes fatal or lasting physical injury, as do murder, torture and mutilation. It could also be nonphysical such as loss of love and honor. In addition, destroying happiness. But also, a desire to create harm and take a delight in causing it (Kekes 2005:1-3).

This definition given by John Kekes` seems to be the best suitable one. The definition is not too wide, nor too narrow. The word “causes” tells us that serious harmful outcome is evil. One could easily object by claiming: “my dentist is evil.” He causes harm and pain.” Nevertheless, in following Kekes` definition, the dentist has no intention to destroy happiness or enjoyment in causing pain. The solid point in Kekes`s understanding of evil is its seriousness. One way to divert evil from terms like “bad” and “not good” is by emphasizing evil as a seriously harming concept. Lying should not be labelled as evil. In most situations, it would be bad or wrong, not evil. Especially if it is a white lie. Nevertheless, if a large structure does so systematically, it can create danger for the public. Then it is evil. An example of this could be when a state creates fake news to justify war. In this case, we are getting closer to understand evil as a term.

Although Kekes includes numerous aspects of evil, there are two weaknesses in his definition of evil. My first objection is that evil is “motived harm.” This is too narrow-minded. In our society, people also act without thinking. There are times when people do physical things without thinking of every part of the action. There have been times when we acted without consciously thinking, for instance doing things on autopilot. This is our day-to-day-evil banality. My second objection is the last part, seeing evil as “*a desire to create harm and take a delight in causing it.*” This sentence include sadism as explanation of evil. We should never ignore the dark human nature seeking thrill and excitement. Still, what about people who are doing evil acts but not enjoying it? Are they not evil? If not, it makes no sense. If the outcome is negative and harmful, they must be evil regardless of enjoyment or not. Nevertheless, for some people evil is a highly controversial term to apply.

1.5) A critique and defense of evil.

There are some good arguments against employing evil. For instance, is there any universal truth about evil? Is the good the opposite of evil? In *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886/2002) by Friedrich Nietzsche, there is no universal morality at all. Evil is a constructed term the weak and poor had created to take revenge against their lords (Nietzsche 1886/2012:156). Our view on evil is most likely highly shaped by past thinkers who created a metaphysical system with

sharp division between good and evil. Some scholars will not apply the term at all. Baron-Cohen in *the Science of Evil* (2011) replaces what he believes to be an unscientific term, evil with the scientific term «lack of empathy». Instead of calling someone evil, we should say they have no empathy. However, people with empathy can also do harm. «The road to hell is paved with good intentions» is a well-known saying. Others think evil is an old-fashioned, outdated, and fictional concept. The monsters of fairytales and horror movies, vampires, witches and werewolves, are thought to be typically evil characters. These creatures possess the power to destroy humans. In *The X-Files*, there are monsters. Is this an over exaggerated form of evil which has nothing to do with Mankind? On the contrary, my perspective is that evil is rooted in our society.

Another misuse of the term evil is, when there is no explanation of a negative action, people simply cry out «evil». «It is evil». Why are innocent children dying? Why did they rob the kind, older man? The thief had a good income. Why did he beat his dog? The dog did nothing at all. When there is a missing link in the explanation, the gap is filled with evil (Cole 2006:9). Politically and ideologically, the term is also harmful and dangerous to use. In historical and political contexts, the term has been misused to dehumanize someone's enemies. Ronald Reagan compared the Soviet Union to «*the evil empire*» in Star Wars. Even the liberal Obama surprised us in his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech. He said: «*Evil does exist in the world. «A nonviolent movement could not have halted Hitler`s arms*» (Nobel Lecture. Obama 2009).

When we label someone evil, it brings about a desire to punish him or her. It also makes it easy for us to turn off our feelings towards the person we are harming. Regarded this way, evil can serve as a myth constructed by some to bring down others (Cole 2006:196).

Despite of these objections, we cannot abandon all concepts just because they are misused. If so, we will have to avoid employing all normative concepts such as bad, good, great, evil, love and so on. I believe we cannot deny the existence of evil (Kekes 2005). In my opinion, evil is no myth. It is a fact people must deal with in their lives. I believe it is more dangerous to ignore evil than try to understand it. If we manage to understand evil, we may be able to prevent it as well. Following John Kekes` definition of evil as “severe motivated harm and taking delight in hurting others and enjoying it,” evil has different ways of expressing itself, or to put in another way; there are multiple forms of evil expressions. By looking at evil's different faces, I take the same perspective as Lars Fredrik Svendsen (2013) who refuses to

discuss the nature of evil in a detached or theoretical way, preferring to look for an answer that will make us understand the outcome of evil instead.

Before presenting methods (chapter 2) and theory (chapter 3-6), it is vital with some information about *The X-files*. Taking into consideration that not everybody are familiar with *The X-files*, I will provide an overview of what the show is about and elaborate why exactly this show is chosen at subject for research.

1.6) What is *The X-files* about?

The X-files 1993-2002, with comeback seasons in 2016 and 2018, has been winning three Golden Globe Awards for best drama. The X-files had a great deal of impact in many families. There were discussions, should we be allowed to watch the show with all its terrifying characters? I still remember my mom trying to convince younger family members that the evil murderer Tooms did not exist (from the episode «Squeeze»). With a firm, but also gentle voice, my mother said, «Go to sleep, this Tooms guy is just a fairytale». The fictional murderer was able squeeze his body through narrow gaps; due to his unique muscle and bone structures. Tooms had large green eyes. He was often staring in the dark, hiding behind a door, or in a closet. I cannot forget his evil eyes. Tooms is a typical X-files character. An evil serial killer with special abilities. In the end, agent Mulder and Scully finally caught him.

The X-Files follows the careers and lives of these two FBI-agents. Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) is a brilliant detective and strong believer in the supernatural. He is also resolute about the existence of intelligent extraterrestrial life and its presence on Earth. Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson), his partner, is not a believer in the paranormal. She is a Catholic, and her faith plays an important role in several episodes. Scully, also a medical doctor, and Mulder, a psychologist and criminal profiler, complemented each other's strengths. Together they investigate paranormal cases, known as *The X-files*.

The X-Files portrays a world full of unsolved mysteries, and phenomena not in line with rational perceptions of our world. People shape-shift into other human beings, turn into monsters, use telekinesis, some even become werewolves to harm others and so on. The show raises the question whether; there is extraterrestrial life out there? Alternatively, as the show promotes in its opening montage: «The Truth Is Out There».

However, when truth is discovered evidence vanishes without a trace. The evil government is hiding and destroying evidence. Answers are rarely found.

The main story board involves the agent`s efforts to expose a government conspiracy that covers up the existence of aliens. In *The X-files*, mysterious men comprise a shadow element within the U.S. government, known as "The Syndicate." These are the evil guys in the series. Late in the show, it is revealed that «The Syndicate» acts as the only link between Mankind and a group of extraterrestrials that intends to destroy «Earth inhabitants». Cancer Man, a ruthless killer, and the series` principal antagonist usually represent them. Cancer Man is an expert at creating alternative stories to cover up the truth. As the series goes along, Mulder and Scully find evidence of the alien invasion piece by piece. It is revealed that the extraterrestrials plan to use an alien virus, known as the black oil to infect humankind and turn the people of the world into a slave race. It all goes back to Roswell in 1947 and the alien crash. Then the governmental men could start experiments on aliens.

The Syndicate, being egocentric, has made a deal of effort to be spared by the aliens. In return, they are working to develop an alien-human hybrid that will be able to withstand the effects of the black oil. Secretly, the Syndicate performed its own experiments under the code name "Purity control." They are trying to develop a vaccine to resist alien colonization and the «black oil» virus. In *The X-files*, many episodes deal with horrific scientific experiments inspired by Nazi doctors during the Second World War. Nazi doctors were granted immunity for war crime to continue their experiments. In my chapter 7, you can read about «evil science in *The X-files*». In exchange for alien biomaterial needed to carry out experiments, each Syndicate member had to give up one family member to the aliens. Mulder`s father, as a member of the Syndicate, had to choose between his son and his daughter. In this «Sophie`s Choice situation» he sacrificed his daughter Samantha to the aliens.

Mulder has a huge mental wound over his sister`s abduction. He has spent his whole life trying to find her. In hunting his sister`s whereabouts Mulder became a security risk to the Syndicate. Will he be able to expose their lies and evil actions? Mulder is obsessed by finding the truth. Mulder has a high degree of extreme idealism, so fierce that it leads to dangerous moralism (see chapter 8). Mulder and Scully must stop «the Syndicate», who are working together with aliens to bring about a Holocaust on mankind. When the date arrives, «the Syndicate», will seize control of the social order by declaring a state of emergency. On the other hand, so we thought back in the `90s.

In the series' comeback in 2016 and 2018, the storyline took a surprising turn. In *My Struggle* episodes 1 to 4, the alien's threat turned out to be a hoax, a fake story to cover up the true motives. The aliens never represented a vital danger to Mankind. The threat came from a group of power-hungry men releasing an alien's virus in order to achieve world-domination. It becomes evident that Cancer Man is the evil force behind a desire to wipe out «the dirty mankind», and replace it with a strong and worthy race.

1.7) Why explore *The X-Files*?

There are four main reasons why I have chosen *The X-Files* in particular. Firstly, it is a TV show deals with a range of ethical debates. Some of these are: The authorities lie and withholding of information when closing ranks, terrorism, abortion, cloning, social media, duty-based ethics, violence against «the others», religious fanaticism, dangerous idealism and cynical science. Secondly, I have a lot of knowledge about this show. In this research, I cannot be free of values or prejudices. *The X-files* was a central part of my youth. Already before the research, I have decided, «Cancer Man is evil». This «honest perspective», is important to include. Thirdly, I believe it is fruitful to analyze the show both from a distance as well as up close in terms of time. The first part of the show is from 1993 to 2002. The second part is from 2016 to 2018. The distance to the `90s makes it easier to analyze today. We can look back and see what was typical in the `90s. On the other hand, it is also interesting to see the show's changes with the comeback in 2016 to 2018 where «evil» is portrayed somewhat differently. For instance, we find that Islam plays a larger role in the show.

It should also be noted that it is possible to see a resemblance between the main characters of the show and real, historical persons. Mulder's slightly naïve, but hurtful idealism is close to the revolutionary Maximillian Robespierre. Cancer Man's brutal and cold approach can be compared to Adolf Eichmann. To use fictional characters and to compare them to real people will make it possible to broaden my arguments.

When I went to lower and upper secondary school, we debated who was good and who was evil in this show, and this is the fourth reason why I have chosen this series for scrutiny. We disagreed particularly on whether Cancer Man, arguably the show's most interesting character, was evil or good. Was he a cold cynic?

Alternatively, was he a loyal hero who did «what had to be done»? Is he part of a larger machinery? This debate still lives on. Recently, I overheard three students talking about the show in a classroom.

One of the girls commented that the main character (Mulder) made her «ill». Another girl said that she thought this person was handsome. This was when it hit me: We must not underestimate ethical discussions on TV shows taking place among youth. This discussion about the show's hero Mulder among my students gave me the idea to raise the question of whether apparently the good, maybe also the self-righteous, can do evil deeds. Can Mulder's idealistic acts lead to evil? Viewed in this way, TV shows are much more than entertainment (Gripsrud 2006:5).

CHAPTER 2, METHODS

My working tools to solve the research question will be as follows: theory (four typologies), applied ethics, looking at similar research, inspiration from Dean Kowalski, and movies as research objects.

2.1) Theory and applied ethics

To be able to reflect on various types of evil, I need theory and a lot of theory. This is a theory driven thesis. Still, I would like to try to avoid «theory for the sake of theory». My goal is to use theories to understand which type of evil is at play in specific episodes. The four typologies will be examined against empirical discoveries in *The X-files*. Most likely, not all occurrences of evil referred to in one typology will be satisfying. It could lack some elements to fully understand the evil outcome. Because we do not live in a black and white world, but in a world of nuances, it is important to include a large amount of theoretical approaches. See chapters 4 to 7 for a detailed description of these four typologies.

Furthermore, the philosopher Lars Fredrik Svendsen claims that evil is a practical problem. Evil is not something unclear or abstract. It is a specific, unwanted act (Svendsen 2013:28-29). With this in mind, my method for finding evil in *The X-files* will be of the practical sort. My type of “ethical working tool” is applied ethics. This type of ethics deals with practical moral problems.

Applied ethics is a practical analysis of specific actions in private and public life. Philosophers dealing with applied ethics do more than academic work. They serve, for instance, as consultants for business firms, military, schools, government agencies and in the media. Applied ethics do not deal with philosophy for only the sake of philosophy, but also for the sake of contributing to society and human beings. In order to discuss a specific case, for instance death penalty, we need historical, sociological, psychological and anthropological knowledge. In practice, many forces affect a subject. Therefore, applied ethicists often employ the methods of argument from analogy.

Peter Singer, as a representative of applied ethics, often utilize analogies in ethical cases. For instance, the Australian philosopher compare racism, which is about giving greater good to

members of our own race, to the lack of animal rights. Thinking of the development of rights, animals must be the next to receive basic rights (Singer 1993:58-59).

Singer deals with thought-provoking questions such as why should we act in accordance with moral principles? Why do some countries accept slavery as their culture, some not? Could not both be speaking the truth? Why do moral judgments differ from practical judgments? Why do we always regard a woman's decision to have an abortion as raising an ethical issue, but not her decision to change her job? (Singer 1993:6-8). What about people who do bad things? Some of them believe they are doing well. They are not living according to traditional conventional ethical standards, but they may be living according to some other ethical arguments. In practice, people are always able to justify their acts (Singer 1993:9).

Why is applied ethics of relevance in this research? One answer is that it is not possible to understand evil outcomes in *The X-files* without including a practical perspective. A philosophical approach must be able to analyze society. We need knowledge about society. For instance, Peter Singer applies history and social sciences to discuss two ethical debates: In the first one, euthanasia, which has been a taboo of discussing the subject due to Nazi Germany (history) (Singer 1993 preface). In the second one, some actions are practically defensible because of the context. The eskimos living in an environment where they must kill for food or starve. They must kill animals in order to survive. However, people in modern countries can choose their diet (social science) (Singer 1993:62). In order to find answers, Singer includes history, politics, science and culture in his argumentation. His philosophical method is specific, not abstract.

The strength by utilizing applied ethics is the acceptance of the fact that people do not act in a theoretical or metaphysical world. We live and act out in a practical world. Ethical theories like Kantianism, utilitarianism, contract theory and virtue theory are perhaps too abstract to address our daily philosophical problems. Singer illustrates this point by the following example when he writes: "*In most cases, it would be wrong to lie, but if you were living in Nazi Germany and the Gestapo came to your door looking for Jews, it would surely be right to deny the existence of the Jewish family hiding in your attic*" (Singer 1993:2). In Singer's view, the Stoics and Kant have failed to attain general acceptance for their universal law. We must deal with difficult moral questions and controversial moral issues that people actually face in their lives. Take another example: Suppose we are going to "share fruit from a tree." On the one hand, it leads to better consequences for all affected than not sharing the fruit.

Still, in practice, is this the truth? What if the amount of fruit is being reduced due to laziness? If people know that they will get fruit, why should they contribute? (Singer 1993:13). Again, human life is practical, not theoretical.

Instead of analyzing evil in a metaphysical or abstract way, my interest is to examine specific evil themes in the show. What are the specific evil themes in *The X-files*?

2.2) Specific evil episodes as subjects for research and constructing analysis chapters

The X-files has various faces of evil. Trying to define or understand evil in terms of focusing one theory or single factor only would be a mistake. Evil comes in many disguises. Looking at some episodes of *The X-Files*, a multiple perspective on evil could be rewarding. The show contains everything to fanatical evil (Armstrong 2001), group mentality (Zimbardo 2008), psychological instability or insanity (Baron-Cohen 2011), manipulative religious cult leaders (Jones 2010) and “In need of resources/lacking something” (Stieglitz 2013). However, my focus is to analyze episodes dealing with the show main types of evil. What kind of evil is repetitive present in *The X-files*? After watching the show multiple times, with my three point analyze scheme, three main forms of evil come to mind. I will argue that the shows specific type of evil (main theme) goes as follows,

*The evil government and science: *The X-files* is skeptical to the state. The state is most likely evil with its science experiments, murders, and lies and withholding of the truth. Even the shows hero Mulder is questionable in his actions.

*Mulder has a substantial amount of idealism behind to his actions. In numerous episodes, he is seeking the truth regardless of the cost. There is a tendency for people dying in the proximity of Fox Mulder. Mulder’s great belief in finding the truth appears to be more important to him than his family and friends. Maybe Mulder is a representative of idealistic evil? By exploring evil as the main theme in *The X-files*, there is no way around Mulder’s opponent, Cancer Man.

*Cancer Man is the governmental agent who loyally protects the powerful people he works for. He is an empty man with no other contentment in life than doing his work. An Adolf Eichmann character perhaps? Most likely, a type of «evil banality» or perhaps enjoyment keeps him ticking. Now and again, he seems to take pleasure in his power over other human beings, known as “evil in itself.”

This research is not about discuss whether evil exists. We need specific questions to specific problems. In my analyze chapter`s this research will be discussing practical questions like: Under what conditions is a lying and killing state morally permissible? Is it defensible in wartime? Could science be evil? Is it dangerous to believe to strongly in a case (idealistic evil)? What kind of evil is Cancer Man representing?

Is Cancer Man and Mulder comparable to historical personalities? My aim is to avoid the rigidity of the metaphysical theories and allow more precision. As we shall see, life is complex. In quite many incidents rules conflict, and even when they do not, following a rule can lead to a troublesome outcome. For instance, if we are not supposed to kill, no one could had stopped Hitler. With this as a backdrop I will in the analyze part construct the following three upcoming chapters. For the sake of clarity, here is also an overview of the episodes subject to analysis in my research.

Chapter 7: Analyzing Evil Government and Science.

The following episodes are relevant, *The Beginning*, *Red Museum*, *The Blessing Way*, *Anasazi*, *F Emasculata*, *Talitha Cum*, *Pine Bluff*, *The Truth*, *Die Hand*, *Eve*, *Anasazi*, *Paper Clip*, *731*, *F Emasculata*, *Rm9sbG93ZXJz99*, *Fight the Future* X-files the movie 1998, *The X-files 2008 movie*, *I Want To Believe*.

Chapter 8: Analyzing idealistic evil (Fox Mulder)

The following episodes are relevant, *Colony*, *Paperheart*, *The Truth*, *Redux 1 and 2*, *My Struggle 1-4*, *E.B.E*, *Babylon*, *Closure*, *The Sixth Extinction 1 and 2*, *Orison*.

Chapter 9: Analyzing the Evil Cancer Man.

The following episodes are relevant, *Musings of a Cigarette Smoking Man*, *The Beginning*, *The End*, *One Breath*, *The X-files 1998 movie*, *Fight the Future*, *My Struggle 1-4*, *The X-files 2008 movie*, *I Want To Believe*, *Talitha Cumi*, *One son*, *Terma*, *The Blessing*, *The Beyond Sea*, *The Truth*.

2.3) the importance of using scientific work related to movies and evil:

This Master`s thesis sets out to emphasize the power of movies as ethical discussion mediators within the discourse of evil. In this regard, what kind of academic work has been done in relate movies to philosophy of evil? My research will, hopefully, be a contribution to

the ethical and philosophical debate about evil. Maybe my finding will be transferable to similar work done in the academic arena? Here is a presentation of relevant research connecting evil, movies and society. Some of these research materials will most likely help me out in analyzing *The X-files* when it comes to explain why someone is evil, or not.

One of the relevant studies on evil in movies is the article *Dermatological Features in Good Film Characters Who Turn Evil* (2018), by Tylor Marion and Reese Vail, University of Texas. By classic evil, I refer to typical movie “bad guys.” This large article presents a large research analyzing 27 movie characters who turn evil. Often the evil person has the following features highlighted: Dark voice, dark clothes, anger and facial scar. They are not looking good. In the study Star Wars movies and Anakin Skywalker, better known as Darth Vader, holds up a central part. Anakin begins as a normal character who slowly progress toward the dark side. When Anakin is a good character, we see him smile. He has fresh skin, long blonde-hair. Anakin is a handsome young man. When he transforms into Darth Vader he is severely burned. He is full of scars and has a dark voice. Is this type of character present in *The X-files*? Perhaps Cancer Man? The show`s evil man is always dressed in black.

Toufic El Khoury, with PhD in film studies, has written about *The Problem of Evil in DC Universe Animated Movies* (2017). El Khorury explores the question of evil in animated movies. Why does evil spread despite all the efforts deployed by superheroes to stop the evil? This question is compared to the main question in Christian theodicy: how can we perceive and define the possibility of evil in a world where God`s omnipotence should have terminated such a possibility? El Khoury argue that Superheroes movies can be related back to a socio-cultural context (*The Problem of Evil in DC Universe Animated Movies*. El Khoruy 2017:7). There is a link between fictional movies and their mythological and religious roots. Spiderman is about teenage crises. Batman is highly politically. The Bat`s crime fight is most likely inspired by the brutal crime waves in major US. Cities. Relating this to my thesis, what is the cultural context in *The X-files*?

Another relevant study is *The Problematic Representations of evil in the Harry Potter Series*, a Master`s degree about Harry Potter, by Marthe Dahlin written at Oslo University 2014. In it, there is no need for discussing Voldemort as an evil character. However, what about the hero Harry Potter? Is not Harry a selfish boy with some evil tendencies? Harry grows up as a victim of the supreme act of evil. In addition, it shapes and forms his way of life. He has a

great deal of anger and without thinking, he is careless in using spells, in addition to likeness to Voldemort (Dahlin 2014:18). One argument in this Master thesis is even though there might not be evil intention behind an action, the effect might be evil, and so the perpetrator is morally responsible for the suffering inflicted (Dahlin 2014:18-19).

Relate it to *The X-files*, I could raise the following question, is the shows hero Fox Mulder also an “evil man”? This is a possibility since evil could be perceived as more than intentional.

All the research mentioned above, recognizes that movies are entertainment. Banal, light entertainment, but they also recognize movies as a substance of knowledge to cultural references. Movies is more than fiction. This has been well known for a long time. Religious authorities have been aware of the power of movies as a medium. In 1936, Pope Pius II defended religious censoring of movies by explaining that good movies contributed to perfecting «the moral personality», while bad movies «hurt the soul» (Ensjø 2011:54). Movies reflect debates in society (Gripsrud 2006). In *The X-Files*, familiarity with context is of great importance to be able to understand. No movies develop in a vacuum. *The X-Files* seems to be greatly inspired by American history and society, from Watergate to 9/11.

2.4) Methodological inspiration for my thesis, work done by Dean A. Kowalski

My approach to my Master thesis, using movies to understand philosophy of evil, is highly inspired by film philosophy work one by Dean A. Kowalski. Professor Kowalski, at University of Wisconsin, use popular movies and TV-series for introducing key philosophical concepts. In his 2015 book *Classic Questions and Contemporary Film: An Introduction to Philosophy*, Kowalski explores 28 films and discusses numerous philosophical issues: rhetoric, life, death, divine command ethics, existentialism, forgiveness, altruism and evil. In analyzing *Schindlers list* (1994) Kowalski raises the question, is Oskar Schindler a good or evil man? Even though Schindler helped many Jews, some of them refused look him in the eye. The commandant of the Kraków-Płaszów concentration camp, Amon Goth is described as a moral monster, a typically movie psychopath who enjoyed inflicting pain (Kowalski 2015:99). In *Extreme Measures* (1996), Kowalski raises the question: If you could cure cancer by killing one person, wouldn't you have to do that? Wouldn't that be the brave thing to do? (Kowalski 2015:234).

Kowalski is also editor of the book *The Philosophy of The X-files* (2009). The book has three sections. The first examines the show's slogan "The Truth is Out There." The second section is an analyze of central characters: Mulder, Scully, Cancer Man, Walter Skinner. Finally, there is an analysis of the 1998 movie *Fight the Future*. In these parts, there is discussions of Kantian versus utilitarian ethics (Kowalski 2009:189-91).

Presented in the book is a variety of ideas and thinkers—from Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, Bentham to Kant- all set against the backdrop of the X-files universe. In a creative way, Kowalski argue that Mulder, the believer, and Scully the skeptic- represents two different methods of seeking truth, which he characterizes by reference to Raphael's The School of Athens. Plato point to the heaven above (Mulder) while Aristotle to the earth below (Scully). Mulder has a more rational point of view than Scully's empirical one (Kowalski 2009: Part 3).

2.5) Working with movies as a source

TV shows such as *The X-Files* can affect our sense of right and wrong. Our emotions are provoked directly through the fictional characters and events. Fox Mulder and Dana Scully, and the evil they encounter move us. It hurts us emotionally when watching Dana Scully combating cancer due to horrible experiments. The American philosopher Martha Nussbaum has argued that film and literature teach us to «see» other people not only intellectually, but also affectively and emotionally. Then by watching movies, we might enhance our capacity for empathy and understanding other people (*Moral Attention and the Moral Task of Literature*. Nussbaum 1985).

The lack of discussing movies as an emotional medium is a weakness in Dean A. Kowalski's work. He avoids discussing the fact that movies often apply to our feelings, not only our rational academic sense. Whom many average viewers do think intellectually about a TV-show? Kowalski needs an analysis scheme in order to reduce biased intellectual interpretations. If not, it is possible it discover Plato everywhere. Without a set of criteria, we could easily steer a content in a preferable direction.

In this thesis, I have not put emphasis on knowing about the movie in itself. The research does not focus on analyzing sound, clipping, pictures, montage or other elements related to film techniques. It is not fruitful to «guess» what the movie's message or morale is. There would have been every chance of interpreting these specific elements through our own values, norms and preferences. *The X-Files*' «hidden meanings» are often debated. Some view *The X-Files*

as a conservative show; others view it as a liberal show (Muir 2015, Kowalski 2009). In this discussion, everything from lighting, music, houses, and clothes to cars has been interpreted into an ideological context. I am critical of this way of working with TV shows. When a family in the episode *Home* drives a Cadillac into the sunset, it does not have to equal a return to «making the USA great again». The scene can be a total coincidence from the movie director's point of view. In relation to evil, these technical details are irrelevant.

It may be claimed that the evil in *The X-Files* is also expressed visually. When an evil character (like Cancer Man) arrives, the lighting often goes dark. When the good people arrive, the lighting is much brighter. The music also adheres to this (Gunning 2000:10). Still, this is not part of my research's scope. These details are just «the icing on the cake». My focus is on describing evil men like Cancer Man. His specific evil acts and formulations.

It is not fruitful to be «academically pompous» and force *The X-Files* into a rigid form of analysis, nor spend energy diving deeply into the technical film style. We should first watch *The X-Files* with the open mind of the average viewer. As Tom Gunning writes in his book about Fritz Lang's movies: «*I strongly believe films should be viewed and listened to first, rather than read through a particular grid.*» (Gunning 2000:15). The best interpretation is built on some specific observations. Specific violence, evil expressions and ignorance are of the utmost importance to me here. Former film scholar John R. May who claims that we must stick closely to the specific details in the movie (May 1982: 25-27) inspires this point of view. That is why I will use a simple analysis scheme as a “working tool” to collect information relevant to movies in relation to evil.

With this in mind, my method for finding evil in *The X-files* will be of the practical sort. A fruitful analytical scheme to be found in Yale center for movie analysis (<https://filmanalysis.yale.edu/analysis/> 2019). Parts of the Yale analysis scheme will be utilized because it is possible to make it brief and to-the-point in analyzing evil. Since the main question is to figure out whether there are any evil tendencies present in my selection of X-files episodes, it is enough to analyze the following:

- 1) What kind of specific evil expressions and acts do the characters make?
- 2) What kind of evil is this in relation to my four typologies available theory?
- 3) In what context does this evil happen?

The first point of analysis is quite simple. The evil that takes place in *The X-Files* is clearly portrayed. This evil both kills, lies, threatens, hurts and acts unthoughtfully. Evil is about practical actions done towards another human being (Svenden 2013:26). Therefore, the most important part in the analysis is to examine the way a certain character behaves in relation to a specific challenge. Here Mulder and Cancer Man are up for analysis.

The second question is more demanding. Deciding what kind of evil, we are dealing with in the various scenes can be more challenging to categorize. Characters are rarely linked to one act or motive only. To try to put the expressed evil into words, this Master thesis will refer to a large amount of theory. Theory, especially the four typologies, is a useful tool for understanding, explaining and commenting evil acts.

The third point of analysis reflects that the episodes must also be placed into a historical and social context. The episodes do not exist in a vacuum. Some episodes seem to be inspired by real events. Both the Oklahoma bombing, famous serial killers, 9/11, Watergate, Holocaust and Nazi Germany «loom» in the background. Before entering the theory part, what could be potential weaknesses in my research?

2.6) Potential weaknesses in this research

Movies are great as research material. In the first viewing, there is always something you overlook, and we can watch them again in order to get the nuances. Easy access to research material makes the work process easier. Still, movies or TV-shows are not the real word. In best case, movies is a copy, or a mirror of our life. The evil portrayed can easily become too black and white. *The X-Files*, as with other TV-show, places itself in an overwhelming narrative in popular culture, namely the battle between good and evil. We often meet hollow, simplified, evil characters. Is this “Hollywood constructed evil” worth analyzing? Lars Fredrik Svendsen argue that Hollywood movies to often are presenting diabolical villains, cartoon caricature, rather than a true paradigm of evil (Svendsen 2013:35). So why spending time analyzing fictional evil in *The X-files*? The mythological dualism between good and evil is a great weakness if the aim is to learn something absolute about evil. Evil goes on in the real world, not mythological movies. However, I will defend my use of movies. As already told, evil in movies reflects our society (Kipp 2015, Gripsrud 2006). Not only a false fictional and constructed copy of our reality.

One comparable case is the Vikings and their mythological universe with Valhalla. Valhalla was fictional. However, the belief in life after death was largely responsible for the heroism of Viking warriors. Myth are telling us much of a culture values and norms. There is much knowledge to gain by working with myths and entertainment. Myths can form and shape social behavior (Anderson 2006:81). In addition, I would argue that as a long running TV show, the main characters in *The X-files* develop some depth. Sometimes they are as believable as in real life. Another potential weakness is the theoretical framework. This is a theory driven thesis. Theory and typologies is my working tools. Still, I would like to try to avoid «theory for the sake of theory».

My goal is to use theories, mainly four typologies, to understand which type of evil is at play in specific X-files episodes. I need typologies to be able to describe what I see, but I am aware of «the tyranny of models» as a methodological flaw (Bratberg 2016:144).

In terms of research, I need to lean on «the shoulders of giants». Quite a few researchers have worked with evil as a theme in the past. It will be impossible to do a revolutionary groundbreaking discovery with my thesis. It is impossible to free myself completely from these researchers, but I can comment on the strengths and weaknesses of their scientific work. Let us now turn attention to a detailed description of the four typologies of evil, starting with Hannah Arendt.

CHAPTER 3 THEORY, “BANALITY OF EVIL BY HANNAH ARENDT”

3.1) Hannah Arendt, Totalitarianism and Radical Evil

Hannah Arendt was born into a German-Jewish family in 1906. The Jewish philosopher's understanding of evil is affected by the context in which she developed her thinking. In 1933, she had to run away from her home in Hanover because of danger in Nazi Germany. Hannah Arendt's understanding of evil appears mainly in two, quite different work, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) and *A Report of Banality of Evil* (1963).

In Origins of Totalitarianism Arendt's analysis of evil focuses on evils which results from a system put in place by totalitarian regimes. Her analysis does not address the character of individuals who take part in the perpetration of evil. *Origins of Totalitarianism* is more a structural historical/philosophically analysis. The book is split up into three essays. “Antisemitism”, “Imperialism” and “Totalitarianism.” Arendt examines the roots of Totalitarianism in Nazi-Germany and Stalinism in the Soviet Union. Some of the explanations considered are anti-Semitism, the rise of multinational empires, imperialism in Africa, many stateless people, unemployment, loneliness, technological advances, mob mentality, among some. By the '30s democratically elected parliaments were ineffective. Jews, gays and Slavs were the scapegoats. The society needed a savior, a protector of the people. The main idea of the book is to show how multiple factors that had already existed in some form melted together to form a conglomerate of evil that was dangerous. Evil is closely linked to terms like “totalitarianism” and “radical/absolute evil”. What is the specific content in these terms?

What does Arendt mean by totalitarianism? Total domination, no privacy, no free thought, no free movement, no freedom at all, is one way to describe it. A totalitarian state seeks to dominate every part of our life (Arendt 1951/2017:456-457). After World War 1 and the Great Depression, people were more receptive to totalitarian mentality. The Nazi and Bolsheviks used propaganda, Hitler oriented himself toward aiming at a purified race, while Stalin had an anti-materialistic class doctrine, declaring some classes “enemy of the state.” Totalitarianism gain ground with promises about protection from insecurity and danger Arendt regard these two states as evil since they apply terror against its citizens in order to subjugate the mass. People are being transformed from classes to masses. Fear is the tool to control the masses. The fear is what keeps the movement going. By using terror through random “liquidating” individuals are being isolated and avoid face-to-face contacts (Arendt

1951/2017: chapter 13). Arendt is giving the Nazi-camps a great deal of attention. I think she regarded the camps as the central institutions of a totalitarian system. The camps aim was to eradicate individuality, and so they did (Arendt 1951/2017:453-454).

Radical evil is used to describe the evil of the Holocaust. What Hannah Arendt really meant by radical evil is a bit confusing. In some cases, the term is explained by referring to absolute evil (1951/2017: Introduction chapter). There is no extensive discussion of the radicalism of evil in her work. Perhaps it is up to us as readers. As I understand it, radical evil, differs from banality of evil since it is more about intentions. The aim of Stalin and Hitler's was to stamp out the spontaneity of human beings totally. These dictators could be described as intentional radical evil mass murderers. They were men with a plan who sought total domination, and they did not allow free initiative in any aspect of life. They were trying to eradicate the concept of humanity, making human beings superfluous (Arendt 1951/2017:416).

Radical evil is also described as accomplished when human beings are made into living corpses who lack any spontaneity or freedom. Throughout the book, she argues that the evil of the Nazi was absolute and inhuman, not only shallow and empty. Arendt compared the concentration camps with hell (Arendt 1951/2017:447). It was intentional evil driven by hate. The aim was to exterminate certain human beings. According to Arendt, a feature of radical evil is that it is not only done for humanly understandable motives such as self-interest, but also to reinforce totalitarian control and the idea that everything is possible (Arendt 1951:459).

3.2) The Banality of evil and the Eichmann Case

More than ten year after the *In Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), Hannah Arendt reported from the Eichmann-case in Jerusalem. In this case, I will argue that she took an opposite position in describing the essence of evil, known as the banality of evil. Most likely Arendt had a desire to add something crucial into the philosophical debate of evil. By using the term banality of evil, she took a break with traditional concepts of evil as demonic.

In *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963), *The New Yorker* sent Hannah Arendt to report on the war crimes trial of Adolf Eichmann (1961). Who was Adolf Eichmann? The Nazi SS Obersturmbannführer was given the job of organizing the transportation of Jews from all over Europe to the death camps.

Eichmann was instrumental in the murder of millions of people. After the war and after escaping to Argentina, he was finally caught by Israeli security forces, brought to Israel, tried and faced 15 charges of war crimes. Adolf Eichmann was sentenced to death. Arendt's report came as a series of articles in 1963. From these articles, she later published a book *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. This book became highly controversial. Despite of Arendt never questioning Eichmann's guilt or death sentence, she did provoke. How could someone claim that the Nazi Eichmann was no monster? He was one of the leaders in exterminating the "inferior races."

The book is a record of Eichmann's trial and Arendt's thoughts about the process. In it, she turns her attention to individual responsibility for evil through her analysis of the Nazi bureaucracy. She argues that "desk murderers" such as Eichmann were not motivated by demonic motives. Instead, "*It was sheer thoughtlessness—something by no means identical with stupidity—that lead [Eichmann] to become one of the worst criminals ever lived* (Arendt 1963/2006 287–288). In Jerusalem Hannah Arendt was surprised by Eichmann's appearance. He was no sadistic «Nazi monster» contrary to the media's coverage. An ordinary man, a thoughtless man who never took pleasure in killing. In the witness stand, he described the killing of Jews as a horrible sight (Arendt 1963/2006:89). During his imprisonment and before his trial, the Israeli government sent six psychologists to examine Eichmann. They found no trace of mental illness or personality disorder. Why is he still evil? The challenge with Eichmann was that so many were like him, and that many of them were not demonic. In fact, they were and still are terribly and terrifyingly normal.

Adolf Eichmann stated in court that he had tried to follow Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative (Arendt 1963/2006:135-137). Nevertheless, Eichmann had misunderstood Kant's lesson. He had overlooked «the golden rule» and the principle of reciprocity that is implicit in the categorical imperative. All men and their reasons are legislators, not only one man following a general law. In this case, the legislator was Hitler (Arendt 1963/2006:135-138).

The troublesome part Arendt found with Eichmann was the fact that he had no ability to think critically. He was a joiner, talking in clichés without true emotions. A blind man who followed the fuhrerprinzip, not motivated by ideology, more by professional promotions. He showed ignorance towards everything that was not technically and bureaucratically connected to his job (Arendt 1963/2006: 54-56).

For instance, Eichmann knew well the train destinations and understood that Jews were to be killed at the “end station.” Nevertheless, he did not relate his activity with the consequences (Arendt 1963/2006:200-201).

Eichmann`s form of evil is about an inability to think from the standpoint of someone else. He was lacking cognitive ability to identify with other human beings. Eichmann was “a doer”, not a “thinker.” Arendt chose to believe Eichmann when he claimed not to harbor any “ill feelings against his victims” (Arendt 1963/2006:26). In fact, Eichmann acted not as a man, but as a coldhearted functionary. The thoughtlessness and extinction of individuality classifies him as truly evil. The man was an instrument of the totalitarian state, the corrupt and wicked Nazi regime.

Eichmann did not only obey orders he also followed the law in the Third Reich. The primary intention of the bureaucrat was not so much to destroy, in whole or part, but rather to fulfil the expectations of a bureaucracy, and from a career perspective, precede the desires of the hierarchy. The work was established in a routine with logistic operation. In other words, leading the transportation of Jews to the gas chambers. With its thoughtlessness, it became a faceless industrial killing (Bauman 1989:54). Eichmann is also described as a man with little spontaneity and freedom in mind. We must remember the fact that he rarely was in direct contact with the horror of the killing in the concentration camps. Perhaps the distance between agent and victim made it possible for him to operate with a great deal of efficiency. He was following orders and avoided the human consequences of those orders (Arendt 1963/2006: 54, 243, 246).

3.3) A Critique of Hannah Arendt.

All of us can do evil acts. Evil is normal, and that`s the frightening part of Arendt`s understanding of the concept. Some researcher and philosophers take Arendt`s thesis of the banality of evil as a scientific fact. For instance, Philip Zimbardo (2007) and Stanley Milgram (1974) have attempted to explain how social pressure can lead ordinary men to perform evil actions. Hannah Arendt also inspired Zygmunt Bauman. In *Modernity of Holocaust* (1989), there is trace of Hannah Arendt legacy with the inclusion of normality of evil, rationality, distance, dehumanization and efficiency critique. But, Bauman`s approach is not the same. Bauman is a structure-oriented sociologist who relate Holocaust to the division of labor and a more technocratic way of carrying out genocide.

While Arendt encourage people to think, Bauman seems to be skeptical to the enlightenment and rationality of Mankind as the main driving force in society.

The main critique against Arendt is her suggestion that ordinary people can be regular sources of evil. What about people doing evil for its own sake? Not just doing it, but also thinking while performing an evil act? (Kekes 2005:103). There are reasons for not accepting the total picture of Hannah Arendt`s explanation. Eichmann is only one man. It is problematic using one particular man as a general example. Eichmann as a single individual is not representing all evil in men. Some would argue that Adolf Eichmann was a man of clear thoughts. For example, he helped his Jewish relatives emigrate to Switzerland. A man with true power can rarely proclaim himself to be a mere loyal servant.

Moreover, seriously, why not characterize Eichmann as a monster? He was responsible for killing over 1 million human beings. Why did Eichmann and his Nazi-friends trying to destroy evidence of their crimes if he was unaware of his evil acts? Did not Eichmann accept and embraced the idea of racial purity? Did Arendt completely miss his radically evil political stand? Did not Eichmann, like many other evil people, have an ideologically strong belief? His last words were a salute to the Nazi regime before he was hanged (Cesarani 2007:321-22). Most likely, Arendt somehow overlooked the fact that evil people are also people who believe they are doing the morally right thing. Idealistic evil, one might call it. Is not the very idea of racial purity evil in its essence?

The German historian Bettina Stangneth argues in her work *Eichmann before Jerusalem* (2015) that Eichmann was a harsh anti-Semite. She says that Eichmann was proud of his position as a powerful Nazi. The man had a lust for power. Eichmann was an ideologically anti-Semitic murderer (Stangneth 2015:8-9). Why pay attention to Stangneth so many years after the Eichmann case? The sources are only getting weaker and weaker as time goes by, some scholars maintain. Nevertheless, Stangneth does present a new approach to the case. She has pieced together new material; some lost transcripts of the interview Eichmann gave to the Dutch Nazi Willem Sassen. Among misplaced files, she has also tracked down essays and fragments of Eichmann`s own writing. Based on this material it is meaningful to raise the question to what extent Eichmann had evil intentions or motives to commit such horrors. In the 2007 book *Becoming Eichmann, Rethinking the life, crimes and trial of a desk murder*, Holocaust historian David Cesarani questioned Arendt`s portrait of Eichmann on several

grounds. He was critical of Arendt's attention to only one part of the trial, namely the witnessing of Eichmann's testimony. Has she missed vital parts of his character traits? For instance, Eichmann had most likely negative feelings towards the Jewish people. The Norwegian philosopher Arne Johan Vetlesen has argued that one should always remember to include aggressive and primitive evil acts when explaining violence. Evil in his eyes is much more than a banality (*Ondskap er ikke banalt*. Söderlind 2006). Vetlesen argues that Arendt is too intellectually oriented in her understanding of evil. Arendt has a Socratic way of thinking by connecting evil to good and rational thinking, without discussing it. In Eichmann's case, lack of empathy seems to be the main problem (Vetlesen 2005:60-61). Arendt seems to understand conscience as an intellectual internal dialogue of thinking. This is too simple. Compassion is also about feelings. Evil banality can then be too simplistic as an explanation. An evil motivation is found in several layers of motivation.

The main problem with Hannah Arendt is her lack of clarity. She does not define any terms at all. As discussed above, what does she really mean by radical evil? Another example is *In Origins of Totalitarianism*. Although there is a correlation between antisemitism, imperialism and totalitarianism, Arendt does not discuss totalitarianism itself in part one and two, only in part 3. In the last part of her book there is no direct reference to the 350 pages that precede it. In her writing there is a lack of consistency, for instance, why not elaborate the connection between imperialism in Africa and Nazism? In part, II Arendt states that "African colonial possessions became the most fertile soil for the flowering of what later was to become the Nazi elite" (Arendt 1951/2017:206). On the other hand, it seems like Arendt's purpose is to understand the roots of evil more than explaining the causes of it. Arendt is not an empirically focused scholar. Apparently, she has a phenomenological approach. Although she uses historical examples, she is a philosopher trying to understand the specific phenomena, evil.

CHAPTER 4, THEORY: “JOHN KEKES EVIL IN ITSELF”

4.1) John Kekes, the dark human nature

John Kekes is professor of Philosophy at the University at Albany New York. His is author of several books on ethics and evil. Even though he is not particularly neutral with his normative stand, defending a conservative political philosophy, his presentation of evil is of high relevance. In *Facing Evil* (1990), he shows that, the main source of evil is to be found in our character flaws, but in *The Roots of Evil* (2005), he has updated his arguments.

The Roots of Evil is an important contribution to this discussion of what evil is. Since World War II philosophers have become increasingly interested in understanding the concept of evil. How can we understand various atrocities such as, genocides, terrorist attacks, tortures and killing sprees by psychopathic serial killers? Kekes raise these questions. He provides us with multiple explanations of why evil occur. Still, his main point seems to be our dark human nature. Kekes walk “hand-in-hand” with the British philosopher Thomas Hobbes` pessimistic view on human nature. Human beings are egocentric, hateful with envy and lack of self-control (Kekes 2005:4). *The Roots of Evil* can be regarded as a journey into humanity`s darkest aspects. We are evil, because it makes sense to us. According to John Kekes, it seems that we cannot capture the moral significance of evil actions and their perpetrators by calling them “wrong” or “bad.” We need the concept of evil. In Kekes`view, evil is not about stealing some pears (Augustin), or employing a white lie, or skipping school a day or two to go to a party. As opposed to Hannah Arendt, John Kekes gives us a specific definition. It goes as follows:

«Serious harm (motivated) that causes fatal or lasting physical injury, as do murder, torture and mutilation. It could also be nonphysical such as loss of love and honor. In addition, destroying happiness. But also, a desire to create harm and take a delight in causing it (Kekes 2005:1-3).

Evil is morally wrong, sinful and wicked. It is something that creates harm, with or without the moral dimension. Evil behavior includes negative violent acts against other people. Evil is about murdering, being willing to sacrifice other people, treating people as a «means to achieve a goal » and lying because it creates dangerous situations. Harmful acts are opposite to good ones. Kekes never tells us what good is. Is it up to you and me to define good?

One answer here is that evildoers often have a reason for their actions. However, absurd this reason might seem to others. Self-interest is the key to understand human nature (Kekes 2005:6). Kekes promote a negative worldview. Kekes himself would probably characterize his understanding as a realistic one. He tells us that evil is a problem for all individuals because it is an attack on the fundamental conditions of human well-being. Since evil is rooted in our nature, it cannot be eliminated by setting up any social order that might somehow change that nature. The best we can do is to form external conditions that will give individuals reasons for avoiding evil actions. In many instances, we will fail. Societies must establish policies such that individuals have good reasons not to choose to do evil. Nevertheless, there remains the chance that circumstances, miscalculation or deviant choice will produce evil (Kekes 2005:232–33).

4.2) “Evil in itself” introduced

Kekes is also skeptical toward “the naïve faith” in the Enlightenment period (Kekes 2005:6). Suppose we are rational human beings and evil is banal and stupid, why are we still making anti-rational choices? Evil should make no sense at all. We are supposed to be rational beings. Good people. Why hurt someone without reason? Kekes thinks we often base ourselves on the assumption of the Enlightenment period, telling us that human beings are good, and reason can solve every problem that occurs. We must discuss what rational behavior is. He argues, for example, that it is perfectly rational for people to prefer a life of evil instead of a life of boredom, are we immoral for doing so? (Kekes 2005:116). Rationality for an evildoer could be seeking purpose in their life. Seeking thrill in order to avoid an empty life (Kekes 2005:118). Kekes` write as follows: “*Evil motivates them, and they do not mistake it for good. They do evil knowingly, precisely because it is evil*” (Kekes 2005:116).

This is what I would define as “evil in itself.” When researching evil, it can be argued that we fail to recognize human features such as aggression, envy, pleasure seeking, revenge, boredom, self-love and ambition. Some of the evil we meet in life do not come from an outside force, like poverty or group pressure, but instead from a twisted, psychologically damaged member of our own kind, or as Kekes thinks a moral monster or a bad human nature. A human nature seeking enjoyment, happiness, kick and entertainment (Kekes 2005:118-119). This stand would claim that most of the Nazis were evil because of hate and envy. Maybe some of them also wanted to hurt other human beings in order to gain pleasure and control over them. Twisted people do evil acts. Monstrous people it is.

Instrumental evil is acceptable as explanation in many cases, but it is not enough. “Evil in itself” does more harm than necessary. If the instrumental aim is money and you rob someone then it is evil. However, if you also murder and torture the victim it is pure evil (Kekes 2005:2). Although Kekes`put stress on “evil in itself”, he states in the *Roots of Evil*, there is no single cause for all the evil in the world. Although an evil and weak human nature is emphasized, motives vary from time to time, place to place, and person to person.

4.3) Five forms of evil exists

To elaborate this point, Kekes`give us five examples from history and the present time.

* the crusade against the Cathars in France (Medieval age)

*the Terror under Robespierre (French Revolution).

*the exterminations of Jews performed in Treblinka under Franz Stangle (World War II).

*the murders committed by Charles Manson (1969)

*and crimes committed by John Allen, (born 1942)

In each of these cases, Kekes argues that there is always a motive behind the evil act. The crusaders were influenced by extreme Christianity. Many crusaders were told that the defense of Christendom required the killings of the Albigensians. Pope Urban 3 was leading the crusade and people were burned alive and tortured before being killed. The dark human nature exposed itself (Kekes 2005:18). Some more secular crusaders were motivated instrumentally by wealth during the killings (Kekes 2005:19).

Strong ideological faith and little room for reason was the case with Robespierre and his dangerous idealism during the French Revolution. Everyone, not supporting the new republic were traitors. Traitors should be punished (Kekes 2005:37). Franz Stangel, the commander of Treblinka, with thoughtlessness, following orders and a huge desire to advance his career. Ambition, not ideology, motivated Stangel. Stangel defended himself by saying he had to do what he did because it was a matter of his family’s survival (Keeks 2005:55). He promoted himself as a family man. Who can blame him? Protecting our family is something many would do in a state of war. Nevertheless, Stangel organized a system that killed nine hundred thousand people. Instead of taking responsibility, things are turned upside down.

He had no compassion for the people he put to death. Rather than doing so, he complained about what horrible things he had to watch in the pursuit of his duties. Stangel disliked the smell of dead people decomposing in the sun in Treblinka. It was awful for German eyes (Kekes 2005:58).

Charles Manson, who ordered a series of killings, was evil because of envy. Failure in his desire to succeed as a musician led Manson to envy and hate those who had succeeded, and to manifest this envy by striking back randomly at the society that he thought had wrongfully made him a failure. Envy lies deep in human psychology (Kekes 2005:81).

Finally, John Allen is John Kekes' last case study. Allen was a psychopath, doing evil acts because he enjoyed it. Doing evil acts made him feel alive. He was seeking thrill and did not care about the price others had to pay (Kekes 2005:196). For Allen, the easiest way out of the boredom is to pursue the thrills of evil actions. Boredom is one root to evil also according to Søren Kierkegaard. The Danish philosopher defines boredom as a sense of emptiness and examines it not as an absence of stimulation but as an absence of meaning. Finding life "utterly meaningless" is dangerous. You have nothing to lose (*Kierkegaard on Boredom*. Popova 2017).

In the next part of the book, he argues that evil are caused by internal psychological and external circumstances (Kekes 2005:184). Take Robespierre as an example. Internally, the motivational factor Kekes identifies in his case is revolutionary ideology, combined with no family and social life. In Robespierre, as in all evildoers, Kekes detects a weak human nature. There is a lack of critical self-knowledge. However, this evil potentiality might never have amounted to much had not external factors (overthrowing the king) collaborated to produce the terror. Without the revolution, says Kekes, Robespierre might have been an ordinary lawyer (Kekes 2005:189). However, the Revolution gave a psychological unstable man gasoline to the fire, and he was ready to ignite it. Kekes is with internal and external forces combing sociology, psychology, history and philosophy to explain evil in his academic work. John Kekes' strength seems to be that he traces evil to multiple sources: fanaticism, rooted in faith or false reason, lust for power, and ideology or false visions of reality, ambition, envy; an exaggerated sense of honor; and boredom. He offers an analysis of the similarities and differences among the evil acts he discusses. One conclusion that emerges from *The Roots of Evil* is the notion that evil cannot be eliminated. Evil is part of human existence.

Evil is in our weak nature. In all the five cases, there is a lack of critical self-knowledge and self-control. Too often, the motivation is pleasure and avoiding boredom (Kekes 2005: Chapter 15).

4.4) A critique of John Kekes

After reading Kekes, there are mainly three critical questions to present themselves. These are,

- 1) Is evil always motive based/where does the motive come from?
- 2) What about evil human nature? Where is the evidence?
- 3) Is evil rational for an evildoer?

The first objection, although Kekes includes numerous aspects of evil, it is a weakness in his understanding of evil that he constantly looks for a motive behind it. It is not clear how Kekes define what the motives is. Is it motive that rational human beings seek to gain a certain goal? Is he thinking of the structural (demands) pressure from society? Alternatively, is it more about human beings following their desires, feelings and nature? These questions remain open after reading John Kekes. The motives are also too narrow-minded as a single factor to explain evil. In our society, people also act without thinking. Some people have no evil motives, evil intension, or good intention for that sake. We`re just doing “our everyday thing” in our everyday life.” Doing our duty without thinking (Arendt 1962, Kaspersen 458:2013).

The second objection is that Kekes seems too skeptical to human nature. Yes, the Enlightenment and its worldview insist that people are good. Yes, maybe this is a naïve false understanding of the reality. A constructed worldview, blinding us to the multiple factors that combine to produce the evil we encounter. However, are we blind to the evil in human nature? I think not. Nonserious researcher will contest the fact that human beings are a part of nature. We are moved by aggression, greed, envy, and selfishness. Many of our human features are closely related to animals, while some are not. In our nature, we are motivated to pursue well-being, altruism and good, In nature, cooperation is the oldest survival strategy. We are nice to others, in order to ensure that others are nice to us (Sober and Wilson 1998:217-221). The larger philosophical questions, the debate about determinism, Kekes ignores completely. If evil is motivated, how much is choice, and how much biology? If someone has a mentality illness, how much blame do they have to take for their actions?

One can also easily object by claiming, evil is more rooted in deep cultural values than Kekes` allows thinking.

The third objection is that although Kekes repeatedly insists that evil actions are not necessarily contrary to reason, the good or evil in people in general (collectively) may not be good or evil for individuals (Kekes 2005:151). There are multiple attempts to define what good actions are for a large amount people. What a society can be seeing as an evil irrational act might be rational for someone else. Particular greater goods is of higher importance than universal ones (Kekes 2005:151). Kekes concludes his discussion of the psychopath John Allen by claiming that, though evildoers may have reasons to act as they do, "*reasons against evil actions outweigh reasons for them*" (Kekes 2005:117). John Allen was an intellectual psychopath who had an inability to tolerate boredom. In doing evil acts, he found meaning and joy (Kekes 2005:101). In other word, evil could be rational for an evildoer. With this perspective, it seems like Kekes has no idea or opinion on what good is. Is he a moral relativist unable to define good? Is good up to you and me too define? One answer to this is in another work by Kekes, known as *The Morality of Pluralism* in which he studies the relation of values and conflicts between them. He begins by saying that:

"the basic belief that unites pluralists is that good lives require the realization of radically different types of values, both moral and non-moral, and that many of these values are conflicting and cannot be realized together" (Kekes 1996:11).

Still, is it a rational act to torture people due to boredom? Is it up to murders like Allen to define what is good? Moreover, where is the evidence saying, "boredom leads to evil"? Boredom could lead to apathy and laziness, but also creativity.

One could disagree with Kekes, but he makes a brave attempt to define the complex term evil. His five examples of horrendous evil are described clearly with central motive. Kekes` analysis of motive is generally quite convincing. This is especially true with respect to Manson and envy toward others. He seems to be a thinker who tries to understand, not condemn perpetrators. It would be hard to argue with Kekes` suggestion that terrible evils often result from a lack of self-knowledge, or self-control. The problematic part is the fact that he does not discuss the deeper essence of evil. Since Kekes essential project is to explain why people do evil, he should have gone deeper into his explanations. Why motivation? Why anger? Why boredom? Where is the link between negative human psychology and evil?

CHAPTER 5 THEORY, «LARS FREDRIK SVENDSEN IDEALISTIC EVIL»

5.1) Lars Fredrik Svendsen and four typologies of evil

Lars Fredrik Svendsen is professor of philosophy at the University of Bergen. He is known as the author of books like, *A Philosophy of Boredom* (2005), *Fashion a Philosophy* (2006), *A Philosophy of Fear* (2008), and *Philosophy of Evil* (2013). Some would perhaps say, why using Lars Fredrik Svendsen? He is not sufficiently scientific in his work. Svendsen is highly normative and is communicating through a combination of science and popular literature. In this case, I think the other way round, why should Svendsen ability to communicate with the reader be a problem? Svendsen is an accomplished writer who gets a lot of attention for his thoughts on evil. His books have been translated into more than 25 languages. Svendsen might not to be a doctrinaire with a strong original theory about evil, but he is rather a convincing generalist.

The book *Philosophy of Evil* (2013), is my focus here, Svendsen is drawing on a variety of sources to find an answer: literature, paintings, research and movies. The book is grappling with the question: what is the essence of evil? Svendsen states that he refuses to discuss the nature of evil in a detached or theoretical way, but rather hopes to discover an answer that will make us all better people. This is closely related to applied ethics. His book is normative, not scientific; it is about making a difference. Evil should never be justified, it should never be explained away, however he writes. *“It should be fought”* (Svendsen 2013:28-29). Moreover, he is raising questions like: What is evil? Who is evil? How do we fight evil? How is evil characterized in a modern and post-modern society? He also states that, coming close to Arendt, it is normal to be evil. Still, Svendsen seems to be a realist. He doesn't believe that evil can be eliminated. It is a part of our human nature. The plan to remove evil and promote the good is apt to fall into the trap of idealistic evil itself. Our job is to reflect and control evil desires. To answer his question`s he breaks down evil into four types. These are:

- 1) Demonic evil: Closely related to John Kekes' "evil in itself" perspective. The aim is to hurt other people. A serial killer who slowly tortures his victims would be an example. Demonic evil gets much attention in the media. Nevertheless, Svendsen is skeptical to Demonic evil. In his eyes, it is irrational behavior. He doubts that "evil in itself" could be a motive in itself.

Even a murderer who enjoys inflicting pain on others has joy as his or her goal, not simply being evil. Rarely, we think of ourselves as demonic. Demonic evil is “fiction”, he writes (Svendsen 2013:35, 81).

- 2) Instrumental evil: Evil that occurs in order to carry out some other purpose. Evil happens because you want to gain something. This theory is seeing human beings as being constantly selfish. Often, we know what's the right thing to do is; still we desire something so strongly that we ignore our moral duty and willpower. People are doing evil acts to gain something. This is Bauman's view on the Holocaust (see chapter 7).
- 3) Stupid evil: Evil due to human incompetence. The term has nothing to do with lack of intelligence. Intelligent people can absolutely be guilty of this type of evil (Svendsen 2013:83). It is, rather lack of sensibility. If you are stupid, evil occurs when there is no reflection about your actions. As Hannah Arendt, the example of stupid evil used by Svendsen when describing evil, is the Nazi's who claimed that they had done nothing wrong. They were simply doing their duty. Their job was only being a cog in a large machinery.
- 4) Idealistic evil.

5.2) Main focus – idealistic evil

The breakdown of evil into four types makes much sense. It gives structure and meaning to the essence of evil. It illustrates the multiple perspectives on an evil act. Still, Svendsen does favor one of these typologies, idealistic evil. What is idealistic evil? Evil done due to a desire to do something good is one explanation (Svendsen 2013:123). Evil is justified by some greater cause. Some have great ideals. Evil occurs when you have moral intentions and idealism as the end goal, but to get there you must perform evil acts. Many so-called heroes are responsible for severe evil acts (Svendsen 2013:122).

Historically, according to Svendsen, idealistic evil is responsible for some the worst crimes against humanity. That's why evil idealism gets so much space and time (Svendsen 2013:34-36). Svendsen is giving us a bird's eye perspective on idealistic evil. Telling us that individuals may well intend to do good fail to take action.

Moral conviction can be used to justify the harm done by failing policies and actions. Those with good intentions believe their practices will eventually be good for the group; and they are prepared to «break eggs» in the process. They justify collateral damage in the belief that they are doing a greater good (Svendsen 2013:125). Idealistic evil also addresses group dynamics, where a group's power is often more intense than the sum of the power of its individual members (Baumeister 1997). This suggests that social pressures and conformity in evil behavior influence people. We tend to follow the strong, idealistic and inspirational leader.

Svendsen's example is the Nazi concentration camps. These were created to destroy so-called «racially undesirable elements» in German society. The Nazis had 25 million people killed, all in order to create an ideal race. The Gulag camps were introduced in order to isolate disloyal people not contributing to the dictatorship of the proletariat. According to Svendsen, communism has over 100 million lives on its conscience. Many violent actions were based on dreams of Utopia. In Cambodia, two million people were murdered because Pol Pot had a desire to return to year zero (Svendsen 2013:34-35). The Inquisition in Medieval times was established to eradicate heretics in religious states. The Crusades were promoted as «holy war with a just cause». Today, harm is done in many places all over the world. This harm is often written off as a «price worth paying», or the lesser of two evils. Idealistic evil is dangerous since it often divides the world into “us versus “them”, good versus bad, pretty versus ugly and so on (Svendsen 2013:123). The consequence is demonizing “the others” followed by mistreatment.

If the “others” are dehumanized, they have no values as human beings. Typically, religious warfare with the mentality: “if Satan is your enemy, you know that the fight is not going to be conducted in the line with those goodness.” The evildoer may think he is doing the right thing, fighting evil. The end justifies the means. Svendsen shows many examples of idealistic evil. However, where is the source of this evil? The answer to this could be elaborated by shortly include sociology professor Mark Juergensmeyer theory “cosmological worldview.”

5.3) Cosmological worldview by Mark Juergensmeyer

A cosmological worldview means believing in a battle «larger than life». It is a belief in a metaphysical conflict between good and evil. Furthermore, the notion of a supreme power often plays a central role in these cosmological theories. The cosmological worldview is a metaphysical system based on order or chaos, belief and disbelief, truth and falsehood (Aslan 2013:260). If the belief is strong enough, it might ignite physical struggle.

As long as humans have been trying to gain knowledge about the universe, they have been proposing cosmological theories. Mark Juergensmeyer writes well about this concept in *Terror in the Mind of God* (2003). The book could be summarized into five main characteristics of the cosmological worldview. These are:

- 1) Opponents become dehumanized or demonized.
- 2) Struggle over identity and human dignity.
- 3) No compromise or surrender.
- 4) The conflict is controlled by a higher force/power.
- 5) Judgment day is often involved in the story. The final battle between good and evil.

These five points are some of the roots of idealistic evil. Mark Juergensmeyer give us examples by including Mike Bray. In the USA, there are idealistic terrorist organizations such as *Army of God*. One of the leaders in this group is Mike Bray. Minister Bray was convicted in 1985 of two accounts of conspiracy and one account of possessing unregistered explosive bombs in relation to ten bombings of women's health clinics. Bray is supporting the use of force for «the good cause». Once he said:

«When a man sacrificed his own children to a false God, the whole community was obligated in an execution by stoning (Lev. 20:2-4). The use of lethal force is not only commanded as a judicial act, but granted to the individual in cases of self-defense and defense of others (Ingersoll 2013:320).

In Juergensmeyer`s interview with Mike Bray, he found nothing «pure evil» with him. On the contrary, he described him as a cheerful and charming man (Juergensmeyer 2003:20). However, Bray appears to share a large extent of the cosmological worldview. The government is in his eyes comparable to Nazi Germany. The USA is a state of hidden warfare, and the government is «demonic evil» (Juergensmeyer 2003:23). This example illustrates that, idealism lead to evil acts. Svendsen`s example in this context is Baruch Goldstein. Goldstein, a medical doctor, killed over thirty Muslim men because they were praying at the tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron. Goldstein saw himself as a good Jew defending Jewish identity.

In order to execute violent acts, you often have to demonize your enemy. One way of doing it, is to utilize a dualistic «us» versus «them» worldview. (Svendsen 2013:125).

5.4) A Critique of Lars Fredrik Svendsen

Idealism could lead to evil. Men like Robespierre, Napoleon, Lenin, Hitler, Pol Pot, Mao and many more, did not hesitate in their use of violence to promote the great society.

Nevertheless, visions and great ideas do not have to be dangerous. For contrasting leadership consider George Washington, Mikhail Gorbatsjov and Nelson Mandela. Three different idealists. But with one important value embedded in their leadership. They refused to help themselves to more power. All three had many opportunities to use force and hide it behind false moralism, but they chose another path.

Another form of critic is the fact that Svendsen ends by declaring that demonic evil may not exist at all. It is a piece of fiction inspired by Hollywood villains (Svendsen 2013:35). The term “demonic” is also a bit misleading. It implies metaphysical evil, God versus the Devil. Why not replace “demonic evil” with “sadistic evil”? Svendsen`s focus is not to debate God, the devil or evil spirits. Evil in human relations is his “business.” So why is Svendsen trying to reduce four types of evil into three? Svendsen seems to think that demonic evil is only a problematic form of instrumental evil (Svendsen 2013:108). Everything must be done for a reason Svendsen claims, and therefore everything a person does, even when defined as evil, must somehow please that person`s notion of good. Therefore, the person does not commit evil for the sake of evil, but rather for promoting something good. Svendsen writes:

Every wish is tied to be concept of the “good”, even if the good is only for the agent himself and, in general, can be considered evil. The satisfaction of desire is good-as in the example of rape and murder satisfying a desire, and thus having subjectively, a good side—though, obviously, rape and murder are certainly evil in and of themselves (Svendsen 2013:108).

The idea that a serial killer`s motivation to torture victims can be constructed as that person`s pursuit of good makes little sense. Is the satisfaction of a desire good? Is it not evil? The concept and words we are utilizing cannot be stretched that far. An evil person may have the intention to harm just for the harm`s sake (Kekes 2005). To Svendsen`s defense, he doesn`t deny that some evildoers are psychopaths, but Patrick Bateman-type (American Psycho) only account for a small portion of evil acts. Sometimes it seems realistic that people`s aim is to harm other people precisely for the enjoyment of seeing the other suffer, and this type of evil

is more than instrumental. It is not good to throw a cup of coffee against a wall in a fit of rage, but it sure does feel good. A lot of evil is committed simply because it feels good to the perpetrator. A perpetrator could easily know what that he is doing is evil. Is good similar to the satisfaction of a desire? There is a difference between goodness and pleasure. Explaining away evil in an Augustinian manner as “the absence of good” raises the question, is evil nothing in itself? Some people are driven by the enjoyment of seeing other people suffer (McGinn 1997 Kekes 2005).

On one hand, I agree with Svendsen`s premise. It is clear that no one does anything expect in the desire to achieve some needs, on a conscious or unconscious level. On the other hand, moral evil may have different manifestations. Sadistic evil involves gaining pleasure from seeing other people undergo pain. Simply for pleasure. Power is one explanation for sadism (Baumeister 1997). One motivation could be to dominate another human being. You have a great ideal of influence over a human being if you hurt them. A sadist torturing his victim is doing something evil. Perhaps he is following his own internal logic, pursuing his own goal and desires. Still, it is evil. It is “evil in itself” (Kekes 2005).

CHAPTER 6 THEORY, “ZYGMENT BAUMAN INSTRUMENTAL EVIL

Bauman is a great thinker, but also a controversial one who in his works has explored the fluidity of identity, postmodernity, consumerism, globalization and Holocaust. Relevant to evil are his two books, *Modernity and Holocaust* (1989) and *Liquid evil* (2016). The first-mentioned one, is of most importance in understanding Bauman`s theory on evil.

6.1) Modernity of Holocaust and instrumental evil

Bauman`s Holocaust theory calls attention to instrumental evil. Hitler`s dream of a Germany that had been cleansed of Jews, was ambitious. At first, it seemed impossible. However, the modernity made this possible. Places like, Auschwitz, Treblinka and Belzec could never had happened without factories, specialization, and bureaucracy and cold rational planning. The modernity was the instrument to promote evil acts. Modernity was supposed to be our “finest hour”, but looking back on a century of genocide, we can say that modernity produced some unexpected negative consequences. The dream of dominating nature, industrialization, ordering the world according to our own design and finally entering a new civilized age of technology, rationality and science ended with a tragic result (Bauman 1989 introduction).

Many would quickly think, genocide is a return to barbarism. A return to the traditional society. In Bauman`s eyes this is wrong. Bauman is critical to the myth that civilized means becoming more peaceful. Bauman developed the argument that the Holocaust should not simply be considered an event in Jewish history, nor a regression to old-fashioned barbarism. Rather, he argued, the Holocaust should be seen as deeply connected to modernity and its efforts to make sense in rational manner. Holocaust is a child of the modern world (Bauman 1989:9, 97). Joseph Goebbels explained once: "*There is no hope of leading the Jews back into the fold of civilized humanity by exceptional punishments. They will forever remain Jews, just as we are forever members of the Aryan race.*" (Quoted in Bauman 1989:73).

Modern civilization was the necessary condition for the Holocaust (Bauman 1989:13). Holocaust came as a byproduct of the modernization project. The Holocaust is a demonstration of what the rationalizing, engineering of modernity is capable of if not reduced (Bauman 1989:114). Bauman`s thesis invites comparison with Hannah Arendt`s theory on the banality of evil. Although Arendt uses one specific analysis, with Eichmann as the main source, while Bauman sets up a structural method, both of them put stress on bureaucratic murder and obedience (Bauman 1989:90, Arendt 1951/2017:454-57).

In Bauman's eyes the Nazis were not particularly evil in a historical context. Jews had always been discriminated against during history. The difference this time was the modern German society. Evil came as a negative byproduct of enlightenment, culture and education. Bauman writes:

Modern genocide is genocide with a purpose. Getting rid of the adversary is not an end in itself. It is a means to an end: a necessity that stems from the ultimate objective, a step that one has to take if one wants ever to reach the end of the road. The end itself is a grand vision of a better and radically different society (Bauman 1989:91)

Genocide as a tool to achieve a better society is not about sadism or "evil in itself." The goal is to exterminate certain groups in the most rational, efficient and cost-effective manner as possible. A bureaucrat feels shame or pride depending on how well he has performed his task (Bauman 1989:160) According to instrumental evil people choose evil means to achieve their goals. What is of importance is efficiency. If your children were, starving and you had no money to buy food. The regular way of solving the problem would be to save money or get a job. Perhaps ask for help. However, individuals desperate for money will not wait. Waiting is not effective enough. Let's steal money, some would say! In instrumental evil, there is no desire for being evil. Evil is the tool you apply to obtaining acceptable ends. Often combined with a fast and effective act. German Nazis were thinking rationality in their sense of the shortest and most efficient way to the desired end.

6.2) Science and Enlightenment skepticism

The Jews were never killed because of strong ideological hate, or rage. The killing took place by cold rationality, from an efficient instrumental state. The state's aim was to remove Jews. Doing it quickly and turning the elimination into an industry. It involved controlling nature, hierarchical bureaucracy, rules, regulations and categorization. All aimed at removing individual personality. In order to carry out Hitler's instrumental goal, a nation without Jews, this rational bureaucracy was needed. Who should carry out the job, was left up to the bureaucrats to decide (Bauman 1989:15). As many before him, Bauman explains the gas chambers, the horrific medical experiments, and the mass graves, as forms of evil that can be explained as the Nazis' failure to see their victims as humans. The groundbreaking significance of Bauman is his skepticism towards technology. He has no blind faith in science. The Nazi-science defined people of another race as cancer. With the enlightenment, scientists became the new priests. The goal is to classify and understand everything.

With the modernity, man could finally be master, not only over nature but also over fellow human beings. People with irrational conduct was sacrificed in the civilizing project.

Modernity removed uncertainties

With the Enlightenment and the modern state system, science became the new «theology» and scientists its «high priests». The aim has become classify and understand everything's and everyone's position in the natural order, including humans. Not only do some scientist want to explain nature, but they also want to dominate nature. When applied to society, this means that some circles want to control the place of humanity in the natural order. When science was aimed at manipulating nature, it can soon manipulate Mankind. The historian Jan Barzun describes science as a faith as dogmatic as any in history and warns against the use of scientific thought to suppress the meaning of our existence (Barzun 1964:15).

6.3) Distance, categorization and dehumanization

In organizing the killing there were many small steps in the process, the ending was extermination. Another crucial point made by Bauman is the procedural rationality, the division of labor into smaller and smaller tasks, the categorization of different species, and the tendency to view obedience to rules as morally good. All played their role carrying out the Holocaust. The killing process went as follows: every employee where given a specific task isolated from the direct contact with killings. The prisoners where abused, starved and had their personal effects confiscated, and in the end, they were exterminated. With division of labor and specialization, an evil person could kill his victims without touching, seeing or hearing them (Bauman 1989:99-100).

Bauman thinks, inspired by Levinas, that humans have problems with hurting others face-to-face. That`s why we need a distance which allows people to overcome this moral problem related to killing other people. One example, given by Bauman, is that many Nazi-soldiers and leaders refused to kill people face-to-face. Shooting a soldier is acceptable, family, and perhaps a baby, is not. For the Nazis it was important to remove the victims from sight. Concentrations camps were built to protect Germans from horrific sights of blood and fear (Bauman 1989:155).

In *Modernity and Holocaust*, three conditions that erode moral inhibitions are defined:

- 1) Authority (authorization of violence)
- 2) Routinization (making the work a routine)

3) Dehumanization (making people seem less than human).

Authority serves to distance people from each other and makes it easier for people to disregard the moral responsibility they would otherwise feel. We were just following orders! Routinization removes the choice where a moral choice should normally be made. By doing the same thing repeatedly, one can act without thinking. Habit and routine kick in, and one does not have to face a moral choice at every point. The Nazis used bureaucratic words such as “transfer” and “selection” to justify different forms of murder (Bauman 1989:103-103).

In the Vietnam War with B-52 flights and Napalm bombs, the evildoer hid his responsibility behind being technologically superior. Bauman shows an example of interview with workers in a factory producing Napalm. Do the workers in the Napalm production process feel responsibility for burned babies? The answer was, no, of course not. There is no reason to say yes. The splitting of the “baby-burning process” in functional tasks and then separating the task from each other have made such responsibility irrelevant (Bauman 1989:101). Modern bureaucracy and technology acts as moral sleeping pills (Bauman 1989:27).

Stanley Milgram has similar findings related to the first two points mentioned above in his research experiment. He did a practical test on «ordinary people» to see how they responded to social pressure and conformity demands. Milligram concluded that ordinary people are likely to follow orders given by a strict authority figure, even to the extent of killing an innocent human being. Obedience to authority is «in» us all from the way we are brought up (*The Milligram Shock Experiment*. Mcleod 2017).

The last point, concerning dehumanization, is a process of moving a person outside the individual`s moral universe. We are creating a distance between the other and me. Bauman argues that we have a set of people for whom moral laws apply, if a person is renamed and reframed so that as they do not fit in that universe, we can avoid the moral complexity when killing the person (Bauman 1989:148-149). It is difficult to kill another human being up close and in cold blood, so when it does happen, it can be helpful to understand what it is that allows people to overcome the very deep and natural inhibitions they have against treating «others» like animals, vermin or dangerous predators. Dehumanization made it possible for great atrocities to take place (Vetlesen 2016:81).

People who practice animalistic dehumanization are instinct-based, unintelligent, and lacking in self-control. On the other hand, not all dehumanization is accompanied by cruelty. There is

nothing wrong with a surgeon viewing her patients as bodies when they are on the operating table; in fact, it is important for doctors not to have natural reactions such as anger, moral disgust or sexual desire when examining patients. Moreover, some nuances are needed, without a human core, it is much easier to hurt a fellow man, or as in this case, use them as human guinea pigs.

Making a person invisible morally is also a part of dehumanization: Bauman give us three steps in this process (Bauman 1989:24-27)

- 1) Mediating the act of killing. In a rationalized organization, each person gives an order and takes an order; this ends up in a long chain of event from the discrimination of Jews to the killing. ‘
- 2) Making the victims invisible – making people hard to see and hear. Bombs, gas chambers, but also starving people, shaving them, dress them alike. In the end they don't look like people. The victims are faceless, objects invisible.
- 3) Deny them humanity. Refer to them as non-human. Refer to things people want to kill, lice, cancer and rats.

Bauman adds a bit new to the evil content in his 2016 book titled *Liquid Evil*.

6.4) Liquid Evil and “hidden evil”

In *Liquid Evil* (2016) Bauman is, together with Leonidas Donskis, highly pessimistic to the “new society.” One could claim he is a reactionary critic of present day society. Bauman is anti-technology, anti-capitalism and anti-flexible. Still, his core is that human beings want a non-complex world. There is a need for order-a need to categorize and rationalize the world, so it would be understandable. This is not the situation in our world today, according to Bauman (Bauman and Donskis 2016). Instead of the term “postmodernity”, Bauman use “liquid society” to explain the overthrowing of traditions, mobility and changes in relationship and identity. Humans are becoming “tourist”, without a firm identity, in search of happiness, which we think we can buy for money (Bauman 2016:109). Flexibility has replaced stability, is one way of putting it. Which way are this liquidity related to evil?

The evil that characterized earlier forms of firm modernity was in the hands of states claiming monopolies. The state used the means at their disposal to pursue a certain goal. The end-result were at times horrifically brutal. In our contemporary liquid-modern societies, by contrast,

evil has become cleverer and less visible. Liquid evil hides in the course of its routine in our day-to-day life. This type of evil lurks in the black holes of a thoroughly deregulated and privatized social sphere. Liquid evil is hard to spot. It seduces us by its ordinariness and then jumps on us without warning (Bauman and Donskis 2016:28) When life is characterized by not preserving a firm direction, because “liquidity” doesn’t maintain the same form for a long time, this causes life to be constantly defined by fear, instability and uncertainty. The result is a life that is comparable to a minefield: we know it is full of danger and that explosions will happen eventually, but we have no idea when and where they will occur (Bauman 2016:143).

Today we are afraid of everything from food to terrorism. We think we have freedom, but our life is being suppressed by capitalism and technology. Technology and social networks have become the new control form. Due to surveillance and internet, privacy is dying in front of our eyes. Facebook is a combination of loneliness and narcissism. (Bauman and Donskis 2016: 8, 11). To summarize the book, a culture of shallowness, a culture of fear, with little human contact will create evil in the years to come. To fight it there must be some enduring bonds between human beings (Bauman 2016:2-3).

6.5) A critique of Zygmunt Bauman

One major critic against Bauman seems to be that he overlooks the individual perspective for doing evil acts. What about individual motives? Is structure (Durkheim-inspired) more important than human beings are? Not all Germans held up bureaucratic rationality as the highest ideal. Bauman has no psychology, only a sociological approach, in his work. Many German people most certainly had a great deal of anger after the Versailles treaty and economic crisis. Maybe Holocaust took place due to German vulnerability. The Nazis were hurting other people to get relief from their own vulnerability. I think Bauman also downplays anti-Semitism as having a key role in Holocaust. Was it not Nazi ideology (and hate) that led to brutality? Some of the Nazi guards were also highly sadistic in their behavior. Most likely some of them enjoyed being evil (McGinn 1997:74).

The Norwegian Philosopher Arne Johan Vetlesen is critical to Bauman’s thesis. Vetlesen argues in *Evil and Human Agency* (2005) that Bauman is not a good source for a historically correct explanation of how the Holocaust came into making. The trouble with Bauman, in Vetlesen’s eyes, is that Holocaust did not happen like that. The Jews were never faceless

victims. They were stigmatized for years because they were Jews. Media brainwash the audience into accepting the inferior status of Jews (Vetlesen 2005:26). Jews were portrayed as scary people, not belonging among Germans (Vetlesen 2005:31).

In Chapter 1 "*the ordinariness of modern evildoers: a critique of Zygmunt Bauman's Modernity and the Holocaust*", Vetlesen cast light upon empirical data by investigating Holocaust and the ethnical purification in the former Yugoslavia (Bosnia) and Rwanda 1994. Empirical discoveries from these places shows that distance is no required condition for violence. People could easily kill each other face- to-face. Dehumanizing is no necessary condition of evil doing. Mass killings do not require a technological industry. In Rwanda and on the Balkans in the `90s, people closely related, friends and neighbors, were capable of a great deal of harm. As a matter of fact, people who know each other well, and end up in conflict are on some occasions more dangerous than strangers in disagreement (Vetlesen 2016:104-105).

The `90s saw the slaughter of almost one million people within 100 days in Rwanda, as well as the murder of nearly 200 000 people in the former Yugoslavia. In the former cases, the victims attacked with knives, axes and broken bottles, victims was in all ages and sexes (Vetlesen 2005 introduction). It is also a sad fact that, in some cases, the evildoer will be close to his victims. For instance, the Serbian leader Milosevic is known to have made use of psychologists for identifying were specific the community of Balkan Muslim is most vulnerable (Vetlesen 2005:12).

6.6) Summary of the typologies

Soon there will be a transition from the theory part to the discussion of specific evil *X-files* episodes. A short summary can be useful. Hannah Arendt is presenting evil banality by referring to normal people doing evil things due to their lack of thinking. The Eichmann-case is her main subject in her theory. The cynical Eichmann was responsible for many human lives. Still, he was no monster. He was just not thinking. John Kekes seems to be skeptical to human nature. He argues that evil acts have multiple motivations, one of them is harm for harm's sake (Evil in itself). His case study is John Allen, the bored killer. Lars Fredrik Svendsen, on the other hand, stresses unintentional evil acts. We often seek to do well, but end up as evildoers. Especially if we are becoming too extreme (idealistic evil) in our desires. The end can sometimes justify the means. Zygmunt Bauman focuses largely on instrumental evil, the aim is not necessarily to do evil, but evil can be a tool, used to gain a certain goal. The state is performing evil, due to rationality, distance, bureaucracy, dehumanizing and efficiency. In my three next chapters I will investigate how the insights given by Arendt, Kekes, Svendsen and Bauman, can be used to illuminate the various forms of evil in *The X-files*.

CHAPTER 7, ANALYSIS OF AN EVIL STATE AND SCIENCE IN THE X-FILES

7.1) A state with evil features

A government can be viewed as a large organization, a collective unit with boundaries, hierarchies, rules and a monopoly on the use of power. An organization has the capacity to create widespread good, as well as execute terrible evil. Some states do well, some do not. Many factors indicate that the state today is weaker than before, but the state still has a structural potential to carry out evil deeds to a great extent, such as mass murder or genocide (Hagtvedt and Thorsen 2014:13-16).

A recurring theme in *The X-Files* epos is the evil government, which cannot be trusted. *The X-Files* relies on well-known myths, Roswell, alien abduction and some verified facts, such as government withholding information and creating alternative versions of truth. «The Truth Is Out There» and «Trust No One» are the «Credos» from *The X-files*. Mulder and Scully can be viewed as fighters for democracy, liberty and freedom. Their crusade for truth is linked to one of the most important philosophical problems of our political life, namely publicity. How much should the inhabitants of a state know? How do we protect secrets? Moreover, is evil violent behavior acceptable as an instrumental tool to protect vital secrets?

There is also a recurring criticism of science in the show. Many episodes are about government doing horrific experiments on its own citizens. The sinister lab-coated scientific figures reminiscent of Nazi Germans make their comeback in *The X-Files*. In the show, the state cannot be trusted: it lies, creates alternative stories, kills and is involved in experiments on human beings. What kind of evil typologies does this representing? Let me start by introducing the context of *The X-files*.

7.2) The context to *The X-files* and evil government

As pointed out in the introduction movies mirror society (Gripsrud 2006, Kipp 2015). Stories about a false government creating alternative stories are not fairy tales. They are fact. I will now refer to some historical and current empirical incidents. It was well understood, long before Orwell, that memory and critical sense must be repressed. Not only memory, but also consciousness of what is happening in front of you must be repressed, because if the public understands what is being done in its name, it will most likely not permit it.

Adolf Hitler ran an aggressive evil media propaganda campaign. His propaganda had quite a big impact on future aggressive developments. Back in the in early post-world war decades with the Truman, Eisenhower and JFK administrations, Americans trusted the government. After the JFK shooting, the Vietnam War and Watergate, public confidence turned negative (Kowalski 2009:58). Back in the 1960s, the Johnson administration fabricated a story about a South Vietnamese ship being fired at in the Gulf of Tonkin. President Johnson went on TV and misled the American people in order to receive support for an unjust war. Congress unanimously passed the Gulf of Tonkin resolution, which gave permission to attack North Vietnam. Furthermore, there was the secret bombing of Cambodia. The result was evil war crimes against innocent local farmers. Richard Nixon and Watergate speak for themselves when it comes to promoting an evil and corrupt state.

In the `90s, we had the incubator hoax during the Gulf War. A girl, the daughter of Kuwait's ambassador in Washington, USA, lied and told the world in tears that she saw how Saddam Hussein's soldiers took babies out of their incubators and let them die on the cold floor (McNair 2017: Introduction). This is simple «making my enemy a monster» propaganda in the spirit of Joseph Goebbels. The hoax just referred to was not unique; the second Bush administration was also involved in a deception. Back in 2003, there were governmental sponsored reports claiming that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. The Secretary of State, Colin Powell, a man with a great deal of credibility logos, lied and fabricated evidence (McNair 2011:219).

Why is this relevant for *The X-Files*? Like many other TV series with a historical backdrop, *The X-files* was not created in a vacuum. It emerges from a certain context, first the `90s and then post 9/11 in the USA. In many ways, this «manufacturing of false consent» is the show's contextual foundation. *The X-Files* operates in a context of governmental mistrust. In the `90s, the Cold War was over, the external enemy was gone. Americans then turned their attention inwards, looking at conflicts between the government and the people, as it occurred at the Oklahoma City bombing, Ruby High, Waco and the Clinton sex scandal.

The series' creator, Chris Carter, has stated that he is «a big fan of Woodward and Bernstein». As a child, he developed a distrust of government (Mooney 2017:16). The inspiration behind *The X-files* from the Watergate case is embodied in the series' goodhearted man, Deep Throat. In fact, his living counterpart helped Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein in exposing

the Watergate scandal. As in *The X-Files*, he was the inside source providing vital information about the truth. Chris Carter also said in an interview that 9/11 and its effects on civil liberties were the prime motivation for the revival of *The X-Files* (Rodriguez 2017: 83). In the episode *My Struggle 1*, season 10, there are warnings against a government that taps your phone, collects your data and monitors your whereabouts with impunity. What if this government is preparing to use that data against you when it strikes? One could easily agree with Chris Carter that the theme is highly relevant today, thinking of Edward Snowden and Donald Trump. Various episodes focus on the government, which is lying and even killing to protect its secrets. Let us investigate some episodes.

7.3) *The X-files* and a purposely misleading evil government

One of the leaders of the Syndicate, the Well-Manicured Man, says: «*We predict the future. And the best way to predict it, is to invent it*». One more specific example is found in the same episode (*The Beginning*). Here is the dialogue:

Cancer Man: «*There was some sloppiness in Phoenix where they found the body. The local PD got involved. These were taken at the scene by a crime reporter*».

Man from Syndicate: «*These were run in the press?*»

Cancer Man: «*I trumped up a story about a crazy Indian on the loose. Never underestimate the public's willingness to blame the Red Man for... anything they can't explain*».

This conversation shows that the government intimidates people into silence and threatens their livelihoods and families. They have also been successful at discrediting the truth seekers. Government officials are creating an alternative world, «a kind of Matrix world» for the people. No one knows the truth, the truth is out there, but it is being kept away from them by powerful forces. The government has betrayed people. *The X-files* is comparable to George Orwell's *1984* dystopia where The Party stamps out anyone who does not fully conform to their regime using the Thought Police and surveillance through television screens. In Orwell's *1984*, as in *The X-Files*, the government appears to be evil. In the following episodes, there are similar tendencies:

-In *Red Museum*, the government uses a vegetarian religious sect as a control group to perform experiments with chemicals. The same doctor treats all teenagers in the little town,

and none have any history of normal childhood diseases. They are certain that the doctor who experimenting with them. They were injected with an unknown substance named «Purity Control». When the experiment eventually fails, the government destroys all the evidence.

-In *The Blessing Way*, taking place in New Mexico, Mulder has a digital tape containing highly classified governmental secrets. The «Men in black», led by Cancer Man, are searching for Mulder's whereabouts. In their quest, they use violence against Native Americans. The brave Native American leader Albert Hosteen explains that the Native Americans «*trust memory rather than history because history can be, and has been controlled by dangerous evil men with their own agenda*». In most of the episodes, the FBI agents are not able to prove anything at all. The evil shadow government, the Syndicate, destroys all the evidence.

Why is it evil to mislead the public? Mulder gives one answer in the episode *The Truth*: «*Liars do not fear the truth if there are enough liars. The devil is just one man a plan, but true evil is a collaboration of men*» (referring to the state). This answer is close to Kekes' understanding of evil. In daily life, we often withhold information to protect others and ourselves. Lying is evil if it creates severe harm (Kekes 2005). If you and I, lie it is bad, but if a large structure does so to justify violence it could be defined as evil. In Kant's famous work *The Perpetual Peace*, he mentions publicity as one element to preserve peace. Without publicity, it is not possible to gain an open rationality (Kant 1795/2016:135-136). Kant's stand on lies is widely known. No one should lie. It is against rational man's absolute moral duties. Kant explains that it is ethical when we act on a maxim that can work as a universal law for everyone to follow in a similar situation. According to deontological ethics there is an objective truth, telling that no one should lie (the philosophy.com. *Kant and Right to lie* 2018).

A liar can become evil and corrupt, as with the government in *The X-files*. If everyone lies, truth would cease to exist. In *Origins of Totalitarianism*, Arendt warns against lies and propaganda. Lies and propaganda are by her seen as an instrumental key in performing evil acts. Totalitarian ideologies give a total explanation of reality, where there is a complete absence of the ability to distinguish between fiction and reality (Arendt 1952/2017:385).

A philosopher, like Bentham, could defend a lie "as the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people." Nevertheless, in essays such as «On the Liberty of the Press and Public

Discussion» (1820) and «Securities against Misrule» (1822), Bentham`s claim that in order to maintain a good government it is also necessary to reduce state power by creating a critical public opinion and a free press. Lying and secrecy could easily be an instrument of conspiracy; therefore, it ought not to be the system of a democratic government (*The Liberty of Press and Opinion in Jeremy Bentham`s Philosophy*. Amante 2013)

It is a prerequisite for a true democracy that citizens make informed decisions about public policy that cannot be made without publicity. In *The X-Files*, the government cannot be trusted. If leaders are making decisions without informing the public or not making room for a discussion, they are undemocratic, or worse, evil. However, as stated in my theory part, evildoers rarely see themselves as evil (Arendt 1962, Bauman 1989, Svendsen 2013).

7.4) The Syndicate defends itself.

Can governmental evil actions be defended? The answer depends on who you ask. If you ask Mulder, he would say «no» without hesitation. Sometimes we need to look at the broader picture. What Kant and Bentham are describing above are idealized issues, pointing towards how a public sphere is supposed to be. An objection can be found in the following question: Is openness most correct in all situations? The shadow government`s main argument appears to be based on Plato and Thomas Hobbes`state philosophy. In *The Republic*, Plato sees noble lie as necessary for political safety and stability. He argues that the people can be incompetent. People are too stupid to understand democracy. They will follow their passion (*Plato's Republic and Greek Morality on Lying*. Zembaty 1988). This argument is still relevant today. Fake News is playing games with our rational senses. In the public sphere, many decisions are too technical for people to make sense of. Cancer Man states in the episode *Talitha Cumi*:

«Men can never be free, because they`re weak, corrupt, worthless and restless. The people believe in authority, they`ve grown tired of waiting for miracle or mystery. Science is their religion; no greater explanation exists for them».

Cancer Man is a man with evil features (see chapter 9). Despite this, his statement makes sense. Is it not good being lied to if it makes us feel better? Letting the big news out would cause panic and chaos in an interconnected world. What would happen to the stock markets or the crime rate? Most likely, a wave of violence would follow.

If the secret of the alien invasion got out, it would be a big media event, and some people would panic. Most likely, people would demand protection from the government.

Another aspect concerns what to do if the truth makes us uncomfortable? In the short term, a lie is perhaps good. The episode *F. Emasculata*, casts light upon these philosophical questions, the storyline starts with the death of several men in a prison because of a mysterious illness. Scully tries to discover the cause while Mulder attempts to find two infected fugitives who could potentially spread the disease. A private medical company, Pinck Pharmaceuticals, a major drug developer, has been experimenting on prisoners, in cooperation with the government.

Mulder confronts his superior Skinner and Cancer Man, believing that he and Scully were deceived into taking the case without knowing about the contagion. Mulder is adamant that the public should know the truth about Pinck's actions. Cancer Man finds that public knowledge of the truth would create mass panic and do more harm than good. Mulder tries to take his case to Scully, but she agrees with Cancer Man that exposing Pinck may result in a deadly hysteria. Mulder confronts Cancer Man by saying: «*You can't protect the public by lying to them*». Cancer Man replies: «*Mulder, it's done every day*».

So, can you handle the truth? Even if you think you can, maybe you are wrong. So, what if, for your benefit, and for the benefit of the whole society, the government lied to you? Utilitarianism states that the best action is the one that maximizes the sum of all pleasure that results from an action, minus the suffering of anyone involved in the action. If a lie brings happiness to a majority, then it is ethically justifiable. If the state withholds information to protect people from the truth, it is an instrumental act, but not an evil one.

A government can be justified in withholding information on a sensitive operation if disclosure would jeopardize lives. One example involves Sir Winston Churchill and the Nazi bombing of Coventry. It has been claimed that the wartime Prime Minister knew that the city was to be targeted by the German Luftwaffe, but he chose to do nothing because it would have alerted Adolf Hitler about the fact that the Allies had recently cracked the Nazi top-secret Enigma codes. If so, Coventry and its people were sacrificed «for the greater good». If so, Churchill had to deal with a huge moral dilemma playing the long tactical game consciously «ignoring» the short-term costs of leaving the West Midlands city to a terrible fate.

In *F. Emasculata episode*, the government is withholding information about a virus, to avoid mass hysteria; it is lying for a greater good. If lying can create more happiness, then perhaps then you should lie.

Whether the government is doing evil deeds or not, also depends on the context. Is it wartime or peacetime? We have to take into consideration that *The X-Files* does not take place in peacetime. It takes place in a hobbistic time. Hobbistic refers to human beings as being purely self-interested, egocentric and violent. In order to survive we should give our obedience to a person or group empowered to decide every political issue. Otherwise, what awaits us is a «state of nature» that closely resembles civil war (Hobbes 1651/2011). In the series, aliens are invading us and the Syndicate (shadow government) is engaged in a series of programs to deal with this enemy. Should we the –citizens- be informed or have a public discussion? Alternatively, are we incapable of it? Thomas Hobbes is not positive to human cooperation and rationality. He writes, «During the time men live without a common strong power to keep them all in awe, they are in the condition called war, and such a war is of every man against every other man» Hobbes sees human nature as cold and violent. Selfishness is the driving force of human actions (Hobbes (1651/2011: book 1 chapters 10-13).

In times like these, we need a strong leader to guide us. If necessary, this includes telling lies, killing and creating alternative stories. In many ways, we are not able to handle the truth. It would hurt us to discover that millions of people have died in an unjust war, such as in Vietnam or Iraq. In addition, would not being informed about catastrophic events such as terrorism, virus and alien invasions lead to panic and chaos? Viewed in this way, we can justify the governments' evil deeds in *The X-Files* as an instrumental necessity. It all depends on what is most important to our lives, freedom or security. It is therefore that the Well-Manicured Man asks Mulder in the movie *Fight the Future*: «Do you see why it was kept secret? Why even men like your father could not let the truth be known? »

Is there anything that resonates with pure evil? To characterize the government in *The X-Files* as purely evil would be a mistake. John Kekes' "evil in itself" explanation is not valid in this part. If the aim is instrumental ethics, to keep stability, safety and control, then it is considered good.

7.5) A government with evil features?

As seen above, there are sometimes clear justifications for withholding information. On the other hand, I have four objections. First, it may seem like arrogant, negative paternalism when a leader thinks people are incapable of handling the truth. Who are you to tell me what to do and think? Taking for granted that everyone in a crisis would be hysterical when they find out the truth, seems to be an exaggeration. In crises, people tend to be willing to work together. Governments can underestimate their citizens. Secondly, what happens when the truth finally is revealed? A state of shock is a likely scenario. The justification for secrecy should only be temporary, not structurally permanent as with the government in *The X-Files*.

Thirdly, why would the government use so harsh methods? Democracy generates consent: people make the rules, and they have ways to change the rules within the political institutions. You do not need a bloodbath to solve a problem. There are methods such as leaking information to the press, using the courts and having an election. The solutions in themselves do not have to constitute less democracy. It is well-known that a lie could be monstrous if it is aimed at hurting people, as with Stalin and Hitler's propaganda (Arendt 1952/2017:342). In the "spirit" of Arendt and Bauman, the government has a large bureaucratic machinery to kill, lie and create alternative stories. As with Nazi-Germany the states do whatever it takes to reach its final goal. Bauman describes modern state agencies in terms of efficiency, and states that above all bureaucracy offers the optimum possibility for carrying through the principle of specialized administrative functions according to purely objective standards, without regard for individuality (Bauman 1989:14).

With harsh methods, the government is partly evil according to John Kekes' definition. The government creates serious (motivated) harm with murder, torture and "destroy happiness." However, the state does not seem to "take delight in causing evil acts." Mainly it is about instrumental evil.

Fourthly, we need to know, what is the real motivation behind the state's actions? As John Kekes highlights, with his five motivational cases of evil, there is rarely one motivation behind an act (Kekes 2005). Evil government mostly acts out of self-interest, to enrich itself, to get rid of political opponents, or to avoid criticism. In *The X-Files*, we do not have exact knowledge about government motivation, but mostly it seems to be selfish. The Well-Manicured Man talks about a cooperation with aliens with the purpose of developing a

vaccine, a vaccine for the survival of their family. What about other people, non-relatives, then? Are they just numbers being sacrificed? In addition to this, *The X-Files*' creator compares the Syndicate to the Vichy government and the German final solution. In 1998, he said on the *Fight the Future* movie's soundtrack that those leaders were men with «a simple, self-directed and selfish worldview». Instead of instrumental ethics, a more suitable term seems to be instrumental evil, understood as evil that occurs in order to carry out some other purpose. Evil can be seen as an «instrument» or a «tool» to achieve what is wanted. Often this type of evil is known as a collective form of evil (Bauman 1989, Vetlesen 2005:20).

The instrumental type of evil is present in another typical «distrust of the government» episode, *Pine Bluff*; Scully is negative to Mulder when she thinks he may be helping a terrorist group. Eventually, it is revealed that Mulder is working as a mole in the group, and that he is trying to stop them before they are able to use a biological weapon—possibly-created by members of the US government—which causes rapid degeneration of human flesh. The title is a reference to the Pine Bluff Arsenal, a real United States military base with stockpiles of chemical weapons. In *The X-files* episode, the line for immoral behavior is being crossed. A secret wing of the CIA tests biological weapons on random Americans in a movie theater in Ohio. Here is one of this episode's dialogue:

Scully: «*Mulder, before you go any further you should know that the biotoxin they used may come from government labs. Our government.*».

Mulder: «*You're saying I was set up? I was being used? This whole operation? The people who died in that theater?*»

CIA agent, walking towards Mulder... «*Our government is not in the business of killing innocent civilians.*».

Mulder: «*The hell they are. Those were tests on us used on someone else.*».

CIA agent: «*There is absolutely no evidence of any biotoxins.*» And... «*Say that were true. Then what do you hope to accomplish, agent Mulder, as a whistle blower? To mobilize a civil rights action? To bring down federal government? What do you want? Law against those men, or law protecting them?*»

Mulder: «*I want people to know the truth.*».

CIA agent: «*Well, sometimes our job is to protect those people from knowing it*».

The *Pine Bluff*-episode is a good illustration of why publicity is required for democracy. People from the government perhaps think that they are doing the right thing. However, the use of brute force on innocents is an evil act in itself. It creates severe harm. The government in *The X-Files* cannot be defended in terms of utilitarian ethics either. They kill and withhold information. Furthermore, the government in *The X-Files* is also involved in «evil science» experiments on people. This does not make sense; the aim of science is to do well.

7.6) Evil sciences: a bird's eye perspective

We suppose that science is not evil. Scientists presumably follow their scientific curiosity and neutrality. When medical scientists experiment, they want to contribute to medical knowledge. The discoveries of the smallpox vaccine, antibiotics and development towards combating cancer and cardiac arrest are good, even if they could save the life of a would-be-Hitler. However, in recent history we have seen a relationship develop between dehumanization and unethical scientific research. The outcome can be morally wrong. In the worst case, it can be evil.

The worrying aspect is that scientific research is not limited to academic institutions. Government agencies, military and private profit companies are all involved in research. If someone with power has a desire to do evil harm, science can easily be his or her tool. Some types of science have truly evil outcomes. The Soviet bioweapon research led to the bacterium that causes legionnaire's disease, attacking the victim's immune system. During the First World War, the Germans developed poisonous gases to use against enemy soldiers. The Americans created Napalm.

Medical progress saves lives, but sometimes scientists let the hope of a breakthrough get in the way of ethics. One could object by arguing "science is not evil in itself, evil is done by people." But although Nazi doctors had some success in identifying the link between cigarette smoking and lung cancer, it was evil science. Men like Joseph Mengele (Auschwitz) and Sigmund Raschner (Dachau) did horrible acts. In Nazi experiments, Gypsies, Jews, homosexuals, the mentally ill and those with incurable diseases were all subjected to transplantation experiments involving organs, nerves and bones.

How was it even possible to put another human being through this? There are multiple answers: Ideology, envy, scapegoating, instrumental and evil banality and «evil in itself».

In *The X-files*, it seems like dehumanization is the main factor. Humans were considered to have no more worth than animals among scientists. The Nazi doctors in Germany have made a comeback in *The X-Files*.

7.7) *The X-Files* and science skepticism

Progress going wrong is a recurrent theme in *Jurassic Park* (1993), *Planet of the Apes* (1968) and numerous *Frankenstein* movies. *The X-Files* seems to be negative towards science and technology throughout the whole show. Almost all the scientists portrayed in *The X-Files* are depicted with a connection to evil, the only exception being Agent Scully. Dana Scully is a typical representative of modern science. Scully has studied physics. She believes in science and empirical studies. Mulder does not. Still, Scully with her science turns out to be incorrect almost every time. Some scientists have complained about *The X-Files*. They think the show is too negative towards science (Mooney 2017:224). Among these is Richard Dawkins who disliked the fact that Mulder week after week wins with no rational conclusive evidence. Dawkins claimed that the show promotes pseudoscience (*Science and The X-files*. Dimpleby 1997).

Briefly inspecting some *The X-Files* episodes, it is noticeable that Dawkins has a point. *The X-Files* downplays science. In the episode *Die Hand*, a local New Hampshire sheriff calls in Mulder and Scully when there is evidence of a satanic cult operating in his town. One teen has already died, and paranoia has now gripped everyone there. Traces go back to the local high school. As the investigation progresses, it becomes apparent that some of the staff are involved in devil worship, and the danger turns out to come from within as the leader of the group is a natural science teacher. At the end of the episode, this teacher turns out to be the devil.

The 2017-episode *Rm9sbG93ZXJz99* pitted Mulder and Scully against modern technology in what is by all account a critique of the present time and the future. The plot runs as follows: On a romantic night, Mulder and Scully go to a fully automated sushi restaurant. No human beings run it, no chef, no waiters: only mechanic machines make the food. Suddenly problems occur. The technology goes haywire. That Mulder cannot return a wrong order and his credit card is stuck in the machine become the least of his worries when he refuses to tip the machines.

When trying to use force, an alarm goes off and the restaurant starts shutting down. Scully uses a chopstick to forcefully open the door so they can get out. It eventually turns into a vengeful game of cat and mouse between man and machines. Further, on in the episode, technology seeks revenge. Mulder enters his own car and drives off. At home, drones stalk Mulder. Three bigger drones appear, and he escapes by driving away in his car. He drives to Scully's home, where she has just started to smell a gas leak. The robotic vacuum cleaner is just about to light the match when Scully runs out of the house. The explosion throws both agents onto the grass. Both their phones refuse to let them dial 9-1-1. When they try to get to the office, they find themselves being chased by the drones again and ditch all their traceable electronics. After being shoot at, Mulder eventually tips the restaurant 10% and the machines retreat, and everything goes back to normal. This episode suggests that science and technology have gone too far in our lives (Bauman and Donskis 2016: 8, 11).

The X-Files' creator, Chris Carter, seems to be skeptical towards science and technology. He is not alone in being negative to the progress of science. The same train of thought is pursued by Zygmunt Bauman, as well as Michael Foucault. In the French philosopher's eyes, the truth of science is more about expression of ethical and political commitment of a particular society. Science is a product of people with power. It is a product of the time we live in and history. One short example can illustrate this. In the Renaissance, the «mad ones» were seen as good people in contact with nature. With the growth of the modern state, the insane ones must be controlled and hidden in an institution. The so-called scientific neutrality of modern medical treatment of insanity is in fact a cover-up for controlling people (Foucault 1973:150-152).

Back in history, the concentration camps are not only supposed to exterminate and dehumanize but laboratories where changes in human nature are tested. Nazi science and its strictly scientific standards can be seen as a tool for promoting a totalitarian society (Arendt 1952/2017:438). In other words, science is claimed to be a set of discursive power practices within a larger knowledge base. Discourse means the process through which a hegemonic reality comes into being, or a way to speak in order to gain power, trust and attention. Again, science is not without context or power: it is not free from values. This is apparent in *The X-Files* episode *Eve*. In *Eve*, Mulder and Scully investigate two seemingly identical murders that occur simultaneously thousands of miles apart. They find that both victims' daughters may be the product of a secret human cloning project created by the government.

Deep Throat provides Mulder with information about the Litchfield experiments, attempts at gene modification where children, named Adam and Eve, were produced. Both Adam and Eve have 56 chromosomes instead of the usual 46. Chromosomes 4, 5, 12, 16 and 22 have been duplicated to allow additional genes for heightened intelligence and strength. In total, there were 10 Eves. All this is done to compete with a similar eugenics program in the Soviet Union. The goal is to breed a new race of super soldiers, but with this came homicidal and suicidal tendencies and extreme psychotic behavior causing the project to be abandoned. The remaining Eves were in a *Foucaultic* manner locked in at the Whiting Institute for the Criminally Insane. This Eve episode shows how morally wrong it is to treat someone merely as a means to an end. The episode can be seen as a warning against the human genome project, better known as an initiative, to fully map our DNA.

The X-Files raises the following question, as Bauman did in *Modernity and Holocaust* (1989), what happens when we try to dominate nature with rationality? *The X-Files* is warning against scientists trying to play God. Moreover, look what happens: We create monsters, and turn other people into objects. The English scientist Simon Baron-Cohen explains in the book *The Science of Evil* an incident when he was seven years old. At this age, his father told him that the Nazis had turned the skin of Jews into lampshades. Cohen, himself from a Jewish family, learnt then what it meant to see people as objects (Cohen 2011:1-3). How can humans treat other people as objects? How can humans switch off their natural feelings of sympathy for another human being who is suffering? Cohen is focusing on «empathy erosion» and dehumanization. In several X-Files episodes, people are sacrificed in the name of science or turned into objects. This is demonstrated in the following three episodes: «*Anasasi*», «*731*» and «*Paper Clip*».

7.8) Dehumanizing Nazi inspired science in *The X-Files*

Bauman's theory of "instrumental Holocaust evil" can be connected to evil science in *The X-Files*. In the episode *Anasasi*, agent Mulder found dead aliens and humans in the desert. They were exposed to experimental testing carried out by Axis scientists in the USA after World War II. In a secret file, the government referred to them as «*merchandise*» - a technical language to cover up the true word, «test subjects». We later learn that they were killed with hydrogen cyanide. The Emmy Award winning episode *731* is also close to Bauman's theories about evil. This episode starts with a mass killing of people experimented on. In Quinnimont, West Virginia, a team of soldiers arrives at an abandoned leprosy research compound,

rounding up most of the patients. One patient, Escalante, hides beneath a trapdoor during the arrival and follows the group to a secluded field nearby. He watches as the soldiers shoot the other patients, including apparent alien human hybrids, into a mass grave. When they are not useful anymore, they are executed in mass graves. An incident like this makes us think about historical atrocities like Katyn and Screbenicia or the many mass graves during the Second World War.

Afterwards, Dana Scully talks to a few of the survivors. They said: «*We are being treated like garbage*». The doctors experimented on homeless, poor and sick «elements» by doing secret radiation tests. These «elements» were treated as laboratory animals that needed to be put out of their misery. Inferior people could easily be sacrificed in the name of science. The men were dehumanized into «things». Like in the concentration camps in Germany and Poland, they were dressed alike, shaved, starved and subjected to testing. Their individuality was taken away. This cold logic is well known throughout history. During Holocaust, Nazis referred to Jews as rats. Hutus involved in the Rwanda genocide called Tutsis cockroaches (Rees 2005:56).

These two episodes deals with fiction, but as seen above, it is not pure imagination. The storyline reflects real historical incidents. The Tuskegee experiment has inspired *The X-Files* (Muir 2015: Introduction). This was an experiment in the USA that lasted for 40 years. In 1932, the U.S. Public Health Service launched a study of the health effects of untreated syphilis. Unfortunately, for the unknowing test subjects, this study did not involve treating syphilis. The researchers tracked the progress of the disease in 399 black men in Alabama, telling them they were being treated for "bad blood." In fact, the men never received adequate treatment, even in 1947 when penicillin became the drug of choice to treat syphilis.

The last out of three episodes, *Paper Clip* deals with the ethically questionable cooperation between the US Government and former Nazi criminals. Mulder and Scully locate a former Nazi scientist working as part of Operation Paper Clip. This operation is about the US government providing a safe haven for Nazi criminals in exchange for their scientific knowledge. Victor Klemper is one of these criminals. He drowned Jews, forced them into pressure chambers and did horrible things, all in the name of science. In the series, he is described as «the most evil Nazi escaping the Nurnberg trials». In this episode, Mulder and Scully arrive at a secret mining facility and unlock one of the reinforced doors inside. The agents discover a large complex of filing cabinets containing smallpox vaccination records

and tissue samples. Mulder and Scully then drive to Klemper's greenhouse to find some answers, and they only find the Syndicate member the Well-Manicured Man there. Klemper is “gone” for good, he says, meaning he was killed so that the Syndicate could hide its secret testing on humans. The Well-Manicured Man admits that he helped gather genetic data for post-apocalyptic identification, data Klemper used to work on alien-human hybrids.

Why does the Syndicate have a smallpox vaccine storage and why do they collect medical data? The Well-Manicured Man says that all this was done in order to continue Mengele’s work in producing a super race through genetic engineering. Klemper did succeed in creating human alien hybrids. He then used human test subjects. As Victor Klemper says in *The X-Files*: «progress demands sacrifice». He gave the impression of being a man without any regrets. As a representative of instrumental evil, the former Nazi doctor insisted he had a job to do, with a good purpose as his aim. As Bauman and Arendt would put it: Routinization, efficiency and doing his duty are the main characteristics of this type of evil. One could object to Bauman’s thesis and claim that this is more about idealism, or «evil in itself», or scapegoating, or perhaps a desire for revenge. All these evil factors are apparent in *The X-Files*, as well as among certain Nazi guards.

However, most of the Nazi criminals were ordinary family men (Bauman 1989:22). Even an apparent «movie monster» like Victor Klemper in *The X-Files* is no horror figure. We meet him as an old, retired man in love with flowers. In the episode, he is no evil psychopathic monster. On the contrary, Klemper answers questions in a polite manner. In this respect, «evil in itself» is no good explanation of the evil act that has been committed. What these scientists, as Klemper, lost sight of, in their quest for knowledge, was the humanity of their “subjects.” He seems to be representative for “banality of evil.” In the episode, Klemper never considered his actions as evil.

This picture of a cynical modern science relates with Bauman’s *Modernity and Holocaust*. This link is especially valid in terms of what Bauman sees as highly problematic: Science is closely connected to state, business and the military (Bauman 1989:155-156). Science is not neutral but influenced by ideology and profit motives. All scientists are humans. They are exposed to social influences. The A-bomb creators did not invent this bomb due to of their passion. Ideology, combined with a desire for military security, was highly involved.

7.9) Evil instrumental profit science

If forces like capitalism and the military work together, it can result in dehumanizing. This was the case with Nazi Germany. Doctor Joseph Mengele most likely regarded himself as a standard scientist (Cole 2006:175). He held seminars and received research funds from Kaiser Wilhelm Institute in Berlin. He also worked closely with the SS. An episode in *The X-files* related to this topic is *F. Emasculata*, deals with two murderers escaping from prison.

Without knowing it, they are infected with a virus. A related theme is the Ebola outbreak in some African countries in 2015. Mulder and Scully must track down the infected murders to stop further contagion. Scully, as a medical doctor, uncovers evidence that the government and a large pharmaceutical company engineered this test as secret testing. The company is hungry for money and is testing the virus on people. This is done in cooperation with the government. In Bauman's opinion, big science costs big money (Bauman 1989:155).

It is hardly surprising when the suppliers of that money perform virus experiments on human beings on the basis that they eventually will make a profit. This type of instrumental evil was present in Nazi Germany. The Nazis used the population with the least amount of power and freedom to act as guinea pigs. In the episode mentioned above, the enemy is big business. Evil can be labelled as instrumental, referring to an «instrument» or a «tool» to achieve what is wanted.

My last empirical example is in the 2008 movie *I Want to Believe*. Here we meet scientific dehumanization, but also motives such as profit and commercialization. In *I Want to Believe*, it all begins with the kidnapping of a female FBI agent. Soon, Mulder and Scully are up to their necks in conspiracy, psychic visions, questions of faith and redemption, plus murder. At the end, the agents discover the truth. In a hidden storage facility in the middle of nowhere, some evil doctors are performing medical procedures on unwilling victims. An Eastern European medical team that has been murdering people and stealing their organs for years uses the compound.

This movie includes graphic, horrifyingly detailed depictions of young women who are captured in cages. They are treated like animals. People are kidnapped because the doctors want to sell their organs. The creator of *The X-Files*, Chris Carter, makes repeated references to Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein* during the show (Mooney 2017:18). This movie is only one of many. *I Want to Believe* is a modern-day Frankenstein monster story.

People's value can only be found in their flesh and science becomes unethical. There is money to be made. The chief doctor creates two-headed dogs planning to put them up for sale.

I think Bauman and *The X-Files* seem to provide a somewhat reactionary ideological critique of modern society. Still, they focus on something vital. A society believing too much in science and rationalism can turn out to be harmful. Science is not only about finding the truth. It is also about power, which the first Elder told Scully in 731: «*The ruler of the world is no longer the country with the bravest soldiers, but the greatest scientists*».

It is time to raise the following question: What kind of world are we living in? The world is shrinking with free trade, drones, social media and borderless terrorism. Human beings seem to be losing their ability to communicate in person, to smile at each other, to quarrel peacefully, to enjoy a meal without thinking of smartphones or efficiency. If this «picture» is accurate, then future evil actions are being planted. Bauman has a point. We need to look into each other's eyes. Emotions are not dangerous. Rage, for instance, has a time limit, a rational, cynical science may not have. Too much emphasis on science for «its own sake» or on «power/ profit motive» can turn out to be evil (Bauman 1989:156). Perhaps this is the message in *The X-Files* episode *Rm9sbG93ZXJz99?*

In the last sequence, after meeting violence from technology, Mulder and Scully enjoy breakfast together in a humanly (not mechanically) operated diner, settle the bill with paper money but still pay attention to their smartphones. Scully decides to put her phone away and romantically touches Mulder's hand, to which he reacts by turning his phone upside down. Without the phones, they hold hands and snuggle.

7.9.1) Summary Chapter 7

Despite some “defense arguments”, mainly utilitaristic ones, it is obvious that the state is evil. The state kills, withholds the truth and lies. We cannot defend the state. The specific evil outcomes in these X-files episodes can relate to instrumental evil (Bauman 1989). In several episodes, there is a huge governmental buceracracy seeking to protect themselves against danger. The state creates alternative stories and kills. The state's action has little to do with “evil in itself” (Kekes). Little indicate that the main motivation is “enjoyment in hurting fellow citizens”. The state engages in evil action because some believe it will lead to a desired outcome, survival and safety. Evil seems to be a tool to achieve a goal. In terms of evil

science, the state is also close to Bauman's theory from his book *Holocaust and Modernity*. Science is supposed to be good, but several episodes suggest otherwise. Science is a product of power, and cooperation between military and big business, as Bauman warns against. The state creates distance and dehumanizes some "unworthy" citizens. In the episode *Anasasi*, people are referred to as "test subjects" and "merchandise". Some of the scientists, like the former Nazi Victor Klemper, did never consider his actions as evil. He can be a representative of evil banality by Hannah Arendt. This man is no monster, but he has no regrets (*Paper Clip*).

Even though Kekes' view on evil as enjoyment of pain does not fit into the analysis, some part of his definition does. The government in *The X-files* "creates severe harm and destroys happiness." When the state lies, it is evil. This because the state is a large structure that creates violence when not telling the truth. However, some lies are best kept as secrets (see episode *Pine Bluff* and the virus outbreak). In some cases, we are not able to handle the truth. Nevertheless, a state cannot lie and kill as it "pleases." Evil is used as an instrument to gain a certain goal. However, the aim is not to keep stability, safety or control. The real aim seems to be to protect a group of powerful men (Syndicate), enrich themselves and get rid of criticism. Clearly, the wrong motivation is present.

Svendsen, with his idealistic evil, is almost not present in this part. In fact, in *The X-files* there is little idealism when it comes to discussing the state. The world is perceived as a dark, hobbistic place. You need power to survive. The show is created in an environment with a great deal of skepticism towards the state.

Nevertheless, Svendsen's view on evil is present when it comes to "going on a quest for the absolute truth and progress." What if science finally found the cure for cancer, but in doing so we would have to sacrifice five people in a deadly test? Is this not good? The next chapter will deal with the classical philosophical question: Are good and evil truly opposite elements?

CHAPTER 8, ANALYSIS OF IDEALISTIC EVIL IN *THE X-FILES*

8.1) Is there evil in good?

Socrates believed that nobody willingly chooses to do evil. In his view evil is the result of ignorance, not intentions. People doing evil things do them involuntarily. Perhaps they lack knowledge, or choices. A man who steals food to feed his starving family knows stealing is wrong, but often believes that he is doing a good thing. One example given by Socrates is that we drink medicine for the sake of health, a longer-term good, even though it is unpleasant. Therefore, a person may choose an unpleasant sacrifice if they believe the result will promote the “greater good.” Perhaps an expression of “the end justifies the means”? (Rudebusch 1999:28-29).

One can easily object to Socrates way of thinking. People are often aware they are doing evil acts. The previously chapter demonstrated that evil is intentional and instrumental. Evil is utilized as an instrument to gain a certain goal. In addition, is not an objective truth often subordinated the power of our self-understanding? John Kekes write as follows: “*Evil motivates them, and they do not mistake it for good. They do evil knowingly, precisely because it is evil.*” (Kekes 2005:116). On one hand, human actions are driven by rationality. On the other hand, passion, feelings and pain, must also be included as strong forces in our life. Many people tend to benefit themselves. Even when there is an obvious evil act involved, people can cause “severe harm” while their goal is to seek after the good, they know will benefit them.

Still, Socrates got a point. A good person could also be doing evil acts because of ignorance of other human beings in a decision. Some people have no intention to hurt others, still they end up as evildoers. As Svendsen writes: “*Rarely we think of ourselves as evil*” (Svendsen 2013:81). Often, we have a desired goal, but to get there we must perform evil acts. With applied ethics, it is possible to raise the following specific question: Is Fox Mulder evil? Is he, to use a Socratic term, “misguided in his assessment of goodness?” (Rudebusch 1999:35). Later in this chapter, Islam and cosmological evil is up to analysis as well.

The series’ creator, Chris Carter, tends to romanticize Mulder. Fox Mulder is a brave man, who thinks outside the box. That is why he has knowledge about the alien threat and the government conspiracy. Nevertheless, to some viewers, Mulder can also come across as a self-centered obsessive character.

Previous research, as seen in my method chapter, has shown that even the hero could be representative of evil features (Dahlin 2014). Is this then the case with Fox Mulder? One of the show's writers, Darin Morgan, is critical of Mulder (Monney 2017:35). Mulder is so haunted with his quest and his sister's disappearance that he rarely dates women, meets friends or has a normal life. He searches for the sort of truth he believes in whatever it takes or costs. You do not question his good intentions; the consequences are more debatable. I would like to raise the following question: Is it worthwhile hunting down the truth or the good at all costs? What if your good actions cause pain? In this regard, one historical figure is comparable to Mulder and his quest for truth, namely Maximillian Robespierre. Let us compare at these two idealistic searchers of truth.

8.2) Mulder and Robespierre, two idealistic evildoers?

Some define evil as «actions where one person with his will and intention causes pain to another human being against his or her will» (Vetlesen 2016:110). You are doing evil because you have a desire or a certain motivation to do so (Kekes 2005). A perceptive definition, but maybe also too narrow. The French revolutionary leader Robespierre believed strongly in something and in doing so, he hurt many people. It is a highly fruitful question to what extent he and Mulder thought that a ruthless approach was necessary to progress. Perhaps they both knew they were hurting others, but they did not bother to care. After all, the end justifies the means. It is hard to disagree totally with Vetlesen and Kekes. People are rational beings. We are doing bad things because it benefits us, even if we are aware that they are causing pain.

On the other hand, evil is more than an intentional desire to create pain. Evil is also more than an instrumental act. I would argue, in comparing Mulder and Robespierre, evil is the byproduct of whatever goal they want to achieve. Some actions have unintended consequences; effects we cannot control or had not expected at all. Christopher Columbus, who completed four voyages across the Atlantic Ocean, can serve as an example. His expeditions helped create the modern Western world: «The discovery» and the colonization of America with all its resources. After some time, Columbus's effort backfired catastrophically. Tobacco came to Europe, increased amounts of sugar as well, the near extinction of Native Americans took place, slavery was introduced, and imperialism thrived. Most likely, none of these consequences were intentional from Columbus's perspective. At any rate, it turned out to be evil features for large groups of people.

What about Robespierre in this context? He is the exact example of a murderous ideological evildoer. Together with Lenin, Hitler, Mao and Pol Pot, he is, according to Lars Fredrik Svendsen, the prototype of the scary idealist (Svendsen 2013:35). Robespierre was an idealistic lawyer, also known as «the incorruptible». In the execution of King Louis XVI, he became a controversial figure. His name has become symbolic for the period known as the reign of terror from 1792 until 1794. The terror took form of arrest, trial, and execution of thousands of innocent people. The shocking Committee of Public Safety ruled through terrorism and systematic beheading of thousands by way of the guillotine. The historian Simon Schama writes about «rivers of blood» in France. Schama also applies the term «A holocaust for liberty» (Schama, 1990:691-698).

How were such horrible actions possible? Parts of the answer can be found in Robespierre's strong beliefs and dualistic worldview. In France, there were those who were with us and those who are against us. This is well-known rhetoric from communists seeking a classless society, from Nazis with their racial purity and from Islamic terrorists seeking a pure faith. In France, the revolutionary Jacobins tried to achieve a pure republic. Once Robespierre said, *«There are only two parties in France, the people and its enemies. We must exterminate those miserable villains who are eternally conspiring against the right of man... we must exterminate all our enemies»* (Midlarsky 2011:35).

The enemies of the republic are cowardly, self-centered and corrupt liars (Keeks 2005:36). Both Mulder and Robespierre think they have a higher ethical standard than the rest. Robespierre believed that «he» knows what is best for the people. Robespierre is of high moral and not corrupt (Keeks 2005:42). A similar passion can be found in Mulder's quest. As Mulder says in the introduction of the episode *Colony*:

«I have lived with a fragile faith built on vague memories from an experience that I could neither prove nor explain. When I was 12, my sister was taken from me. Taken from our home by a force that I came to believe was extraterrestrial. This belief sustained me, fueling a quest for truth that was as elusive as the memory itself. To believe so passionately was not without sacrifice, but I always accepted the risks - to my career, my reputation, my relationships, to life itself».

Mulder has, as Robespierre, a desire to oppose evil forces. None of them are married. Robespierre has, like Mulder, little interest in sex, money, food and pleasure.

The only thing that matters is the «great cause» (Svendsen 2013:54, Keeks 2005:34). Mulder is willing to sacrifice himself and people close to him, and he has a bad temper. Mulder's great anger is clearly visible the episode *Paperheart*. In *Paperheart*, Mulder hits the roof with his temper. He loses control and pummels a convict named John Lee Roche. At the end of the episode, Mulder has grown tired of Roche's mind games. He kills Roche with a bullet to the head at point blank range. Some viewers will most likely defend his action. The man he shot was after all a “nasty child murderer.” He had it coming. A desire for revenge can be tempting. Nevertheless, in doing so, we are no better than the man or the evil actions that we despise. Did Mulder need to kill the man? My answer is no. Even though it could be argued that the action was an act of self-defense.

Because the end goal is so important to men like Mulder and Robespierre, they will stop at nothing to get there even if it means committing evil acts. With this type of idealism, any form of violence is ultimately possible, from bullying to murder. It turns out that these supposedly starry-eyed idealists are the Lenins, Hitlers and Bin Ladens of this world. The idealist will destroy institutions and pull-down societies in order to install, by the use of force, their vision of the new world. Idealism could be fantasy – in this case violence. If chasing monsters and shadow governments in the dark leads to dead people around you, it is time to take stock.

In *The X-Files*, numerous good, innocent people die because of Mulder's actions. In *The X-Files*, the former Syndicate member Deep Throat warns Mulder several times, but he will not listen. It turns out that Deep Throat has a point. Deep Throat is gunned down trying to save Mulder and Scully in the episode *Erlenmeyer Flask*. In the series, Mister X. replaced him. This character provides information but is not willing to die for a cause or to sacrifice anything. Even so, he dies trying to protect Mulder (episode *Herrenvolk*). Mulder is like a train running wild, nothing stops him. If it is evil not to protect people close to you, it is ignorance.

Especially Dana Scully experiences traumatic years as Mulder's ally. She is abducted by members of the Syndicate and experimented on. Because of this, she develops terminal cancer. Moreover, Scully's sister is also assassinated and even his old father ends up being murdered in cold blood in his home. Scully seems to be in love with Mulder. In the last episode in season nine, *The Truth*, Mulder is being tried for murder before a rigged military

tribunal. Here, he tries to prove the very existence of an alien conspiracy and justify *the X-Files*. The jury dislikes crusaders like Mulder and he loses the trial. In the prison cell, Scully tries to persuade Mulder to make a deal, a compromise:

Scully: «*Make them a deal, Mulder. Guilty on a lesser charge. Maybe they let you walk outta here*»

Mulder: «*I'd rather die, Scully*».

Scully: «*How can you say that to me?*»

Mulder: «*Because this is greater than you or me. This is everything we've worked for, the truth we've sacrificed so much to uncover*».

Scully: «*Mulder, I'm fighting for you and me*».

At the end of the conversation, Mulder does not give Scully an answer, and she leaves the prison cell with a sad expression on her face. Mulder's search for truth is not popular in his family. They do not have a close relationship. For example, his own family never calls him Fox, just Mulder. In *Redux 2*, Scully is hospitalized, in coma, due to their exploits. At the hospital, Mulder meets Scully's brother, Bill. The following dialogue shows his anger towards Fox Mulder's idealism:

Bill, «*You are a real piece of work, you know that, Mr. Mulder?*»

Mulder: «*Why is that? Because I don't think the way you think? Because I won't just sit passively back and watch the family tragedy unfold?*»

Bill, «*You're the reason for it. And we've already lost one sister to this quest you're on. Now I'm losing another. Has it been worth it?*»

Mulder: *I lost my father all because of this thing I'm looking for.*

Bill, *This what? Little green aliens?*

Mulder: *Yeah, little green aliens.*

Bill, *You're one sorry son of a bitch. Not a whole more to say.*

In the name of academic fairness, there are obviously some huge differences between Mulder and Robespierre. Why compare them at all, you may ask? A revolutionary state leader and a fictional FBI agent in a TV show. Nevertheless, neither of them is into self-assessment. Why are they not more self-critical? By avoiding viewing ourselves critically, you have what the social psychologist David Dunning calls «False moral superiority». Dunning explains the term by applying the iconic biblical story of Peter, denying Jesus three times before the cock crows the next morning. Peter's story is about hubris, or the arrogance of thinking more generously of your moral character than what will actually be revealed in practical behavior. Some people do not see their personalities accurately.

Research shows that people are trying to come across holier than they really are. We think we act in a more socially desirable way than everyone else. In one survey, students in a psychology class were asked whether they wanted to buy a daffodil to support the combat against cancer. 83 percent of the students predicted they would buy a daffodil, but in fact, only 43% bought the flower (Dunning, 2016:251). This illustrates the fact that people tend to falsely predict the likelihood that they will act in ethical and socially desirable ways. This picture of false self-pride fits with Mulder's and Robespierre's personalities. By contrast, his partner Dana Scully is capable of critical reflections on her actions. After she has murdered serial killer Donnie Pfaster (episode *Orison*), Mulder tells her to relax:

Mulder: *«You can't judge yourself. The bible allows for vengeance».*

Scully: *«The Law doesn't»*

Mulder: *«The way I see it...he didn't give you a choice. And my report will reflect that....in case you're worried. Donnie Pfaster would've surely killed again if given the chance»*

Scully: «*He was evil, Mulder. I'm sure about that, without a doubt. But there`s one thing that I'm not sure of*».

Mulder: «*What`s that?*»

Scully: «*Who was at work in me? Or what...what made me....what made me pull the trigger*».

Mulder: «*You mean if it was God?*»

Scully: «*I mean...what if it wasn`t?*»

In this conversation, there is a difference in ethical argumentation. Mulder defends the killing utilitarianly simply by arguing, «We stopped a monster». Scully disagrees. The law does not approve of killing (Kantian ethics), and in the end she suggests either the devil made her do it, or she did it of her own free will.

Scully seems to avoid doing evil things. In “the Arendt-tradition” Scully is a thinker. Mulder and Robespierre however are ignoring people around them. Are their aims of equality, justice and reason for Robespierre, and truth for Mulder, more important than their fellow men? Most likely, Mulder and Robespierre do not see themselves as evil men. They both act in good faith. Maybe passion blinds them. Both are obsessive men, constructing an image of themselves as romantic knights fighting against evil.

Scully is critical towards Mulder’s faith when she says, «*I have never met anyone so passionate and dedicated to a belief as you. It's so intense that sometimes it's blinding*» (episode *E.B.E*). The same could have been said about Robespierre. It does not matter whether you live during a revolution or an alien take-over, a strong ideological stand can be dangerous.

With the inclusion of the empirical outcome in the episodes mentioned above, the theory of idealistic evil, as presented by Svendsen turns out to be a bit confusing. If good also is evil, who then do we separate them? Idealism can be seen as a coherent worldview to understand the present society and to suggest ways of improving this society. Very harmless, one might say. Perhaps evil or good is no constant factor at all? Maybe it all depends on the *Zeitgeist*? What is regarded as good and evil in our lifetime may very well be seen differently 50 or 100 years from now. Consider the following facts to illustrate this:

-slavery was once accepted as legitimate work force.

- women were once not supposed to participate in the public sphere.

-gays and people with mental illnesses were institutionalized.

In a Foucaultian, perspective it is generally those with power who define what is good and what is not (Foucault 1973:17-19). Today, many will define the statements referred to above as evil principles from the power elite. Therefore, we might reflect on what principles would have been forced on the world if the Nazis had won the Second World War. Perhaps then, the extermination of Jews had been viewed as an act of «purification» to promote a good society. It is very likely that the «war hero» Prime Minister, Sir Winston Churchill, had been on trial in Nurnberg accused for crimes against humanity. After all, he was an aggressive, imperialistic head of state. With this in mind, it is hard to argue that there is a constant force of evil in our lives.

Inspecting evil in a relativistic way like this has weaknesses. It overlooks the contextual situation. It ignores central parts in John Kekes` definition. Harmful is harmful, regardless of time and space. Most likely the goal is not to harm or to do it for fun. Nevertheless, idealism is problematic if it turns out to be claiming an objective truth when in fact an ideology is highly normative. Then it could create a prophetic vision. Nietzsche stated in *Beyond Good and Evil* that there is no universal morality or objective foundation of truth (Nietzsche 1886/2012:156-57). A too strong reliance on a dream, reason or good hope can turn out to cause serious harm. Instead of promoting happiness, it can destroy it.

Little indicate that Robespierre or Mulder intended to do that much harm. Nevertheless, in this case I disagree with John Kekes` “motivated harm” definition of evil. Evil is also the outcome or end result of an action. If the result is causing others pain, it is an evil act, regardless of intention or not. In the case of Fox Mulder, as well of Maximillian Robespierre, they are ignoring other human beings and the «road to hell is paved with good intentions». Another perspective on idealistic evil is to be found in people who are willing to die as martyrs for a good cause. In this case, Islam.

8.3) Islam and evil idealistic sacrifice

The X-Files surprised a bit in its recent comeback season when Islam was «the monster of the week». In defense of the show the context has changed since the `90s.

After 9/11, the new enemy is radical Islam. The episode named *Babylon*, goes as follows: In Texas, two Muslim men walk towards an art gallery for an art opening, which is later revealed to highlighting controversial cartoons of Muhammad considered blasphemous to Muslims. Prior to leaving the car, they hold hands, say a prayer, and then walk into the gallery, which shortly thereafter explodes. *Babylon* received criticism in the USA. Some thought it was promoting islamophobia. Let there be no doubt, the stereotyping of Muslims is creating problems. Too often, when we see Muslims on television or film, it is about violence. Jack Shaheen has with his analysis found that of about a thousand films with Arab or Muslim characters made between 1996 and 2000; only 12 portrayed them positively (Shaheen 2009).

How do we explain the evil in the *Babylon* episode? The idea of martyrdom has a long history within various religions. In Christianity, Christ himself was a martyr. Today it is highly relevant within Islam (Bruce 2008). In order to treat the topic further I wish to introduce Emile Durkheim. This French philosopher came up with a theory of suicide. According to him, suicide is neither an individual act nor a personal action. It is caused by some power which is over and above the individual or super individual. He concludes that suicide is the result of social disorganization, or lack of social integration or social solidarity (Durkheim 1897).

One of the categorical suicides, according to Durkheim, is the altruistic one: This is a sacrifice of one's life to save or benefit others, for the good of the group or to preserve the traditions and honor in a society. It is always intentional. A Japanese Samurai intentionally ends his life (Seppuku) to preserve honor and to avoid disgrace. In *Babylon*, we experience Muslims as martyrs. Why are they doing such an evil act, hurting innocent people? Durkheim put too much stress only on one factor, namely the social one. We must not ignore egocentric motives, such as the desire to become a holy man or being respected by their followers (motivated evil). A suicide bomber is a symbol of exceptional leadership and heroism in the face of difficult surroundings. Dr. Rantisi refuses to use the term «suicide bombers». From his perspective, they are not doing evil acts thoughtlessly. They are idealistic self-chosen martyrs willing to give up life for a «higher cause». They are not trying to avoid life, but to fulfill it (Juergensmeyer 2003:174). An idealistic terrorist interprets a text, often with a great deal of selection, such as the Quran to justify their violent tactics. Here is one example from the sword verses:

«And slay them wherever ye find them, and drive them out of the places whence they drove you out, for persecution is worse than slaughter... and fight them until fitnah is no more, and religion is for Allah. — Quran 2:191

Evil actions occur because good people have defined a good cause. This was certainly the case with the Christian crusaders. It is also the case with today's terrorists, as in *the Babylon* episode. Bin Laden and ISIS later on think they are representatives of a fight for freedom, not terrorism, because they are fighting against the USA and Israel. Karen Armstrong, a British historian, claims in *The Battle for God, A History of Fundamentalism* (2001) that religion is becoming more militant than ever. Her explanation is that religion is reacting with hostility to the modern societies' attempt of removing the metaphysical faith. Or the reduction of religion into a private sphere. Our tendency to see truth as factual and empirical will not be celebrated by everyone. Some people demand respect for their faith. Arguably, the focus on reason, freedom and science has gone too far in the Western world? (Armstrong 2001:161-169).

8.4) «Us» versus «Them» and Cosmological worldview

In order to describe someone or something as good, we have to present someone else or something else as less good and even evil. A division of the world into good and bad people is not a new phenomenon. In this case, Edward Said is a central contributor to explaining «us» versus «them» in history. In *Orientalism*, he pointed out that the Western world tends to create stereotypes of «the others», especially by patronizing them. The Orient is viewed as weaker as and less developed than the West (Said 1978:204). We in the Western nations are «good, democratic and modern». They are «militant, barbaric and corrupt» (Said 1978:6-8). The creation of stereotypes is one of many features in the concept of a cosmological worldview.

A cosmological worldview means believing in a battle «larger than life». It is a belief in a metaphysical conflict between good and evil (Aslan 2013:260). If the belief is strong enough, it might ignite physical struggle. The book *Terror in the Mind of God* (2003) by sociology professor Mark Juergensmeyer could be summarized into five main characteristics of the cosmological worldview: 1) Opponents become dehumanized or demonized 2) Struggle over identity and human dignity. 3) No compromise or surrender. 4) The conflict is controlled by a higher force/power. 5) Judgment Day is often involved in the story. The final battle between good and evil.

The X-Files has a menacing idealistic and cosmological worldview. In several X-Files episodes, the characters and the story arcs deal directly with the notion of idealistic religion. Episodes such as *The Sixth Extinction*, *Signs and Wonders* and *I Want to Believe* movie, illustrate the series cosmological theme. I will investigate these five features a bit closer.

Starting with point 1, “Us” versus “Them.” As argued in the text above, this distinction is widely known. At first sight, it appears to be very harmless. In our daily lives, we structure reality without even reflecting on it. You are a conservative. I am a liberal. I am a «dog person». You are a «cat person». In everyday life, there is nothing wrong with this. We need generalizations to make sense in a complex reality. Without categorization, everything turns into chaos. Benedict Anderson explains the process with his concept of the imagined community. Members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow citizens or meet them face to face. But they have a similar interest in constructing an image of being part of a group. Unity, safety and identity are important values for all human beings (Anderson 2006). When the dualistic worldview becomes discriminatory, problems occur. For instance, negative dichotomies such as free world versus dictatorship, Hutu versus Tutsi, pure versus unpure, pretty versus ugly, good versus bad, tends to split societies down the middle.

In *The X-Files*, Mulder and Scully see the world in black and white. In their own eyes, they are the heroes. The government is evil. As we have already seen, this is a simplification. Mulder is jeopardizing good, innocent people`s lives in his quest. If we turn our attention back to the episode *Babylon*, it did not discriminate only against Muslims, but surprisingly, it managed also to paint most Texans as truck-driving, racist farmers. *Babylon* pitted the two against one another accusing Muslims of being unwilling to adapt and Texans as being reluctant to accept them. At the end of the episode, a group of Muslims insisting that, «God is the greatest» were captured and arrested. During the arrest, a news segment was playing footage of 9/11 and the attack on the Twin Towers. This was a method of propaganda that used fear and painful memories as a tool to justify the rest of the episode`s stereotypical tone.

Point 2: When struggling with identity and human dignity, Juergensmeyer takes us on a global tour of recent religious violence. Christians who attack abortion clinics and the bombing of the Oklahoma City Building are his points of departure. He then examines Catholics and Protestants who support violence in Northern Ireland; Muslims involved in the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center; then 9/11 and Hamas` attacks in the Middle East.

These evil acts is meant to be visible, to symbolize a «larger-than-life» struggle. Much of the motivation can be found in people fighting for their identity.

The X-Files deals with the subject of a «man's identity». A large portion of the series takes place in the '90s when globalization was on the rise. The Cold War was over. It was «End of History» with the USA as a unipolar power promoting democracy and free trade deals. The moral struggle between capitalism and communism was over, leaving the secular state empty in its attempt to provide meaning for its people. The result was a rise in religious movements, proving the falsehood of the Enlightenment has declared “death of religion.” Rather than the “end of history,” as some have argued, we have entered a time of confusion about morals and values (Juergensmeyer 2003, Bauman 2016). Are we in for a time of confusion? The series' slogans «Fight the Future» and «I Want to Believe» resonate with the show's «time spirit». Do we need more firm values to prevent people from doing evil acts? Without a firm identity or value base, people become afraid. If meaning is not firm, but liquid as in modernity, it will lead people into uncertainty (Bauman 2000). In a Western world with shallow universal values, some seek extreme and violent fundamentalist ideas in order to find meaning.

These ideas lead us on to point 3): No compromise or surrender! Mulder often casts organized religion as a madness. However, Mulder still believes strongly in things outside materialist explanations himself. Who are we and where do we come from? Is there something greater than us out there? As Mulder said in the pilot episode: «*In most of my work, the law of physics rarely seems to apply*». Mulder's worldview contains religious elements, as this, one taken from the episode *Closure*:

«I want to believe so badly in a truth beyond our own, hidden and obscured from all but the most sensitive eyes. In the endless procession of souls, in what cannot and will not be destroyed, I want to believe we are unaware of God's eternal recompense and sadness that we cannot see his truth».

Both statements are typically representative of a cosmological worldview. As Mark Juergensmeyer implies, a cosmological worldview also means that some believe the American society has been in the grip of a demonic force for some time, and that the great struggle to liberate it has only begun (Juergensmeyer 2003:163). Mulder thinks he and Scully will save the American society from evil forces. This belief is his justification of faith. There is no rational conclusive evidence. He has constructed a belief system.

With his perspective, there is no compromise or surrender whatsoever. Mulder nearly dies in some episodes because of his crusade for freedom and truth. What is he fighting for, you may ask?

The answer is found in point 4). The conflict is controlled by a higher force. As the series moves along, Mulder and Scully learn about evidence of the alien invasion piece by piece. The aliens are out to get us! *The X-Files* legend has it that aliens arrived on earth millions of years ago and left behind a virus, the black oil. The aliens are now returning to colonize the planet, but they require help from humans to do so. They select a group of powerful men from industry, the military, science and government. These men, nameless men, like Cancer Man, form the Syndicate, and together determine the fate of the world.

In the seventh season episodes *The Sixth Extinction Part 1 and 2*, the cosmological worldview is clearly present in so far as the background of conflict is explained: an evil higher power has existed since before humankind. The episode starts on the coast of Ivory Coast when Scully sits in her tent studying photographs of the crashed spacecraft half buried on the beach nearby. Scully's tent is swarmed with flying insects. The Biblical plagues are coming. Soon another plague occurs – that night the ocean turns blood red. Scully, with some assistance, is able to translate some of the spaceship symbols. On the top surface of the craft, Scully finds words describing human genetics and various religions. They find passages from the Christian Bible, from Pagan religion and the Quran. Even information about the day of the final judgment appears all written by aliens. This story strongly suggests that aliens were the originators of the notion of God and religion. In other words, there is an evil force, stronger and more powerful than Mankind.

Further on in the episode, Mulder becomes ill and nearly dies. This part is inspired by Nikos Kazantzakis's novel *The Last Temptation of Christ* (Mooney 2017:130). In this novel, Jesus is torn between the son of God and being part of humanity. In the episode, Mulder is comparable to Christ. He is destined for greater things—in this case, stopping the oncoming alien invasion—but he also seeks a normal life. In addition, as scientists experiment on him, he is tied up on a cross-like table, resembling the cross to which Jesus was crucified. Mulder wears a metal ring around his head, identical to the biblical crown of thorns. Cancer Man enters the room and advises Mulder to save himself, which echoes what the bystanders told Jesus as he hung from the cross. Most likely, Cancer Man in this part is meant to symbolize the temptations of the devil?

Comparing Mulder to Jesus truly illustrates the cosmological forces involved. If Mulder sees himself as the savior of humanity—he is walking down a path of arrogance and pretentiousness.

The fifth and last point about Judgment Day and a final battle between good and evil is evident in the series. As *The Sixth Extinction Parts 1 and 2* indicate, and quite a few others later on, the future is not bright for Mankind. The end seems to be nigh; the eradication of Mankind is going to happen. Judgment Day is near. Every religion has mythic or legendary scenario of warfare that can be transported into contemporary conflict and escalate a social or political confrontation into cosmic war. The term “apocalypse” is used in some of the episodes. In the last episode in season nine, there is a date and time for the «end of days». In *My Struggle part 1*, Mulder even quotes Revelations 8:2, known as end of day: “*And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets*».

Mulder and Scully’s son, William, is the key at the end. William is important to *The X-Files* mythology, as he seems to be a messianic figure with supernatural powers. A war-like King David figure is going to save us. This is the case in seasons 10 and 11, *The X-Files* revival. Seasons 10 and 11 bring on a new direction in the mythology. It starts with assistant Director Walter Skinner who wants Mulder and Scully to meet a right wing online webcaster named Tad O'Malley. O'Malley claims that the idea of an alien invasion is just a smoke screen for a clever governmental take-over plan. Mulder and Scully are told that the alien technology is used against humanity, not by aliens, but by a conspiracy of men against humanity.

A fascist multinational group has been the real mastermind behind the whole scheme. In the episodes *My Struggle 1 to 4*, these evildoers start to spread a virus, destroying our DNA system. The virus is produced by using alien DNA from Roswell 1947. After the virus there will be a take-over by a well-armed multinational group of elites that will kill and subjugate. In other words, the cosmic alien battle was a hoax to cover up real motives. The danger is not the aliens, but humankind itself. From this perspective, Mulder and Scully have been hurting many people believing idealistically in a false cause. At the end of season 11, Mulder and Scully manage to stop the virus by shooting Cancer Man.

What a failure, one could say. Some would object to the agents and ask, why sacrifice so much without any evidence? Why give up a normal life when your work is never verified by credible sources? These seem reasonable questions, but not to two idealistic agents who are seeking justice beyond their own personal good, with cosmological motivation.

8.5) Summary Chapter 8

Some people commit evil acts, as in Kekes' opinion, intentionally and with motivation. They seek to gain a certain goal. We turn evil because the objective moral is subordinated to our egocentric understanding of ourselves. My empirical findings in these parts demonstrate that Kekes' definition of evil has ignored the "thin line" between what is defined as good and evil. Evil is more than intentional acts. It is also the outcome or end result of an action. Evil is not the aim, it "just happened."

Mulder is with his extreme idealistic behavior ignoring other human beings. "The case" is more important than fellowmen. Mulder is comparable to Robespierre in the French Revolution. I doubt any of them wanted to perform evil acts. Still, due to their "misguided assessment of goodness" they end up as partly evil men. Good people, even Mulder's family, dies because of his crusade for the truth. In the words of Lars Fredrik Svendsen, "evil people often think they are doing the right thing" (Svendsen 2013:85). This is present in the episode *Babylon*, which is about Islamic suicide bombers.

Mulder have a very wrong idea about the conspiracy. All the time, someone deliberately misled his cosmological faith. Both Mulder and Robespierre's actions were hurtful to innocent people and families. Despite their acts being unintentional, they still have a responsibility. They have so much passion that it blinds them from seeing the dark objective truth. As other idealists (Lenin, Pol Pot as well as teachers and demanding parents), they have a vision of how a system should work to make it acceptable on their terms. However, if you construct a way of life, impose it on others, and by doing so hurt them; that in itself is a kind of evil. The world is complex and divided it into "us" versus "them" can create dangerous situations. "The Road to Hell is paved with good intentions" is a well-known saying.

In the next chapter, Cancer Man is up for analysis. He is evil. The question remains: What kind of evil does Cancer Man represent?

CHAPTER 9, ANALYSIS OF CANCER MAN. WHAT TYPE OF EVIL?

9.1) Cancer Man, background and function

In terms of being evil, Cancer Man is one of the most captivating characters. His style is not limited to a fictional movie plot. This chapter explore how Cancer Man represents many different types of evil in humankind. In the pilot episode, he is lurking in the background, smoking and saying nothing. The nickname «Cancer Man» is most likely used to symbolize a dark and corrupted soul. Every time he is present, he smokes. The rest of the cigarette is smashed under his black, governmental employee shoe. Cancer Man prides himself in being non-existent; no President should know his identity. This is a man of mystery, without a name, but with several aliases (see below). His story is clouded in willful disinformation.

In the episode *Musings of a Cigarette Smoking Man*, we finally get some information about his background. While Cancer Man eavesdrops on a conversation, Mulder and Scully are having with Frohike, he recalls his own past and how he got to where he is today. As a young military officer, working alongside Mulder's father, he was recruited by a secret agency. His past was erased and from that point on, he worked only in the shadow world. Cancer Man is powerful and involved in several historical events, from the murder of JFK and the shooting of Martin Luther King, to the collapse of the Soviet Union and research programs including genetic testing.

Cancer Man is often discussed among viewers of *The X-Files*. Does he represent true evil? The actor playing the role, William B. Davis, once claimed in an interview with the *New York Times* that Cancer Man was not a bad person. The journalist asked Davis the following question: «*Is that at all troubling, considering he's a supervillain?*» The answer came quick: «*No, people think Mulder's the hero, but they've got it wrong: I'm the hero. Mulder's the guy who's going to mess everything up*» (*Interview with William B. Davis*. New York Times. 2016).

William B. Davis sees his character as a hero, doing a difficult job under extraordinary circumstances. In that case, Cancer Man is a deceptive liar who kills easily, all for the greater good, protecting the government and the people. He is a powerful member of the Syndicate and is especially dedicated to diverting attention from the covert operations of the Syndicate and its ongoing cooperation with alien colonists.

9.2) Comparing Cancer Man and Adolf Eichmann's banality

An interpretation of Cancer Man as a hero is hard to support. In numerous episodes, Cancer Man executes truly evil actions. Once, the series' creator Chris Carter referred to him as the devil (Dunn and Foy 2009:143). In one way, he is a typical bureaucrat. Cold, efficient, clever, doing his duty, always smoking and wearing a black suit. He appears to be a man who sacrifices his life, or at least some vital parts of it for the government. Even his wife and family have been abandoned. From this perspective, it is plausible to compare his evil with the one Hannah Arendt found in Adolf Eichmann's character. Cancer Man clearly shares some of Eichmann's characteristics, but there are also dissimilarities. First, what are the resemblances? One obvious common feature is the tendency to follow orders. Cancer Man often asks, «*Do you have a job for me?*» Cancer Man seems to believe in nothing else than «the work». As Cancer Man said in the episode *The Beginning*, talking to his hitman Krycek:

Cancer Man: «*We tell you only what you need to know*».

Krycek: «*I think I have a right to know*».

Cancer Man: «*You have no rights, only orders to be carried out. If you have a problem with that, we'll make other arrangements*».

In his answer to Krycek, he is certainly a man of duties. Do not ask and do as you are told. Do not ask questions. Be loyal! If God tells you to kill your own son, then you have to do it. At this point Cancer Man is referring to Abraham and Isaac, a story of faith and obedience to God. The subordinate Krycek receives an order to carry out several assassinations. Innocent people die, such as Scully's sister. Who cares? It is after all a desire from someone higher in the hierarchy. We are here to do our duty.

In a strict environment, the respect for individuality is fading away. Eichmann and Cancer Man are both governmental men with no respect whatsoever for individuality. They appear to be calm, neutral, intelligent and without compassion. It is not easy to see any altruistic traits in their personalities. They are ruthless in pursuing a goal. By looking at these two men it is understandable that Max Weber viewed a strong bureaucracy as a threat towards individual freedom, with the potential of trapping individuals in an impersonal "iron cage" of rule-based, rational control (Månson:2013:113-117).

These two figures represent the «iron cage» image. People are merely seen as pieces in a board game. They are impersonal men overlooking events from the shadows.

They have misinterpreted Kant's universal law formula constituting that for an action to be ethical, we must be able to want this action done for ourselves or everyone else in similar conditions alike. Eichmann and Cancer Man see human beings as means to achieve something, not as ends in themselves.

One example is found in the double X-Files episode *The End* and *The Beginning*. The plot starts with the assassination of a chess master, which leads Mulder and Scully to learn that the real target is a telepathic boy named Gibson Praise. The two agents soon learn that Praise may hold the secrets to all the mysteries that they have sought answers to in *The X-Files*. For reasons unknown, Praise carried within him alien DNA and was capable of reading other people's minds. During this time, he was targeted by the Syndicate because of his abilities. After an assassination attempt on Praise fails, the Syndicate sends Cancer Man to kidnap him. When meeting the Syndicate, Cancer Man as a loyal servant of duty, asks: «*You have a job for me*»? One member of the Syndicate says: «*The boy is a problem for us*». Cancer Man replies with a cold face: «*What would you like me to do? Shoot him dead? Splitter his brain*»?

After kidnapping the boy, Cancer Man supervises doctors to do a procedure on him in a surgical operation room. Suddenly, Cancer Man interrupts the doctors, telling the medical staff to conclude the operation because «*Gibson's expertise is required*». The doctors warn him that the boy can die. Cancer Man does not care, and replies: «*It's him or us*». He was ready to destroy a small, innocent boy. For what, you may ask? To experiment on him, seeing the boy as an object. Dana Scully, who later on discovers Gibson badly injured, becomes angry. Seeing the boy with a swelling infection and fever after experiments, she uses the term «*butchers*» when describing the doctors. Gibson said he was treated like a «*lab rat*». The episode can easily be compared to the treatment of Jews in concentration camps. What is the true motivation behind evil like this? We do not know exactly. Maybe duty-bound honor. Career promotion? Alternatively, lust for power in itself? Or is it an attempt to protect oneself in what is regarded a hostile environment.

Nevertheless, in Hannah Arendt's terms, Cancer Man represents «*banality of evil*». Alternatively, as I interpret it: Hollowness. Cancer Man has a sad story. In the episode *Musings of a Cigarette Smoking Man*, he is described as a boy with no friends who spent time reading books. His father was a communist sympathizer and his mother died of lung cancer from smoking. Over the years, he has been given many names.

Old Smokey, Jack Colquitt, Raul, Mister Hunt, C.G.B Spender or Carl Gerhard Busch, but most likely these are aliases. Cancer Man is a lone wolf. Hannah Arendt describes loneliness to be unbearable to the point that you lose your own self. Without other human beings we lose the ability to put ourselves in someone else`s shoes (Arendt 1951/2016).

Like Eichmann, he has no core, no center. In one way, he appears to be an empty man. On Christmas Eve, he is isolated. Every Christmas he gives his employee the same tie. What a shallow man, you may think. He had only one dream, and that was becoming a writer, but as an author, he is a failure. Emptiness is followed by lies. As with Eichmann, Cancer Man is full of lies. Lying and killing innocent people are considered evil acts. Cancer Man has no integrity, especially when he lies and says in *Musing of a Cigarette Smoking Man* that «*I never killed anyone.*»

Research suggests that people tend to lie and cheat on a daily basis, much more than we care to admit. The behavioral scientists Francesca Gina and Dan Ariely show that people strive to maintain a positive self-perception, both in private and in public. In order to feel good about ourselves, we create a positive self-image. We need some self-deception (Gino and Ariely 2016:324). Eichmann and Cancer Man are two men who create a false self-image. They can be perceived as pathological liars. It can be argued that Eichmann was downplaying his role as only a cog of a machinery. In court, this turned out to be a lousy argument. Eichmann admitted to sabotaging Himmler`s orders, as they were too moderate. (Arendt 1963/2006:144). Or, as when he in court told lies such as remembering nothing else from certain places than his participation in bowling (Arendt 1963/2006:81). Nevertheless, he was confronted with documents that said he had been sent to places to discuss «the current evacuation action against Jews». After a thorough study of her book *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report of Banality of Evil*, I doubt Arendt trusted Eichmann`s testimony entirely. Arendt raises the question whether Eichmann was a liar, or was he trying a get away with it acting as an innocent man of duty? (Arendt 1963/2006:146).

Cancer Man also regards human beings as «trash or objects». In *Musing of a Cigarette Smoking Man*, he proclaims:

«Life is like a box of chocolates. A cheap, thoughtless, perfunctory gift that nobody ever asks for. Unreturnable because all you get back is another box of chocolates. So you're stuck with this undefinable whipped mint crap that you mindlessly wolf down when there's nothing else

left to eat. Sure, once in a while there's a peanut butter cup or an English toffee. But they're gone too fast and the taste is... fleeting. So, you end up with nothing but broken bits filled with hardened jelly and teeth-shattering nuts. And if you're desperate enough to eat those, all you got left is an empty box filled with useless brown paper wrappers».

In a certain way, Cancer Man and Eichmann are both involved in ethnical cleansing. Eichmann with his transportation of «inferior people» to death camps. In *The X-Files*, we find a similar situation: Cancer Man is an integral part of a plan that involves wiping out a large portion of Mankind. For that plan to succeed, a virus has to deactivate the immune system. After this, millions of people, especially the weak ones, would die of generic disease. Then the world would start over with an elite in control. An elite given alien DNA to protect themselves from the viruses. In the episodes *My Struggle 1 to 4*, as with Eichmann, Cancer Man is playing with life and death. This means a new Holocaust where certain kinds of humans, the weak ones, are removed.

9.3) Cancer Man and “evil in itself”?

We are still using Arendt`s descriptions of evil, although one aspect of her theory falls short. When inspecting Cancer Man`s actions, there are certainly strengths in her theory, but also some weaknesses. Eichmann is only one person. He is not representative of all evildoers. What Arendt says about evil fits Eichmann and others like Stangel or perhaps military officers from the Balkan war in the `90`s. But it does not fit with the total picture of fictional Cancer Man, or men like Robespierre, Mao, Lenin, Pol, or occasionally, as seen in chapter 8, Mulders idealistic evil. In this respect, Cancer Man differs from the thoughtless Eichmann. Or, does he? Eichmann and Cancer Man are not thinking about what is best for their fellow human beings. They are powerful men trying to hide their evil behind the slogan « I did my job for the government», «My duty», an argument well known in genocide from all over the world.

Cancer Man`s power increases after the Syndicate is destroyed. Eichmann also had a great deal of power in his important function in Nazi Germany, cleansing Europe ethnically. Some would say that Eichmann`s desire to complete the destruction of the Jews became an obsession. This was demonstrated with force in Hungary, where Eichmann was sent by Himmler in 1944 to step up the process with their deportation to Poland. In the last episode made in *The X-Files (My Struggle 4)*, Cancer Man has a similar way of thinking. He wants to release a deadly virus to exterminate humanity.

In his view, people are weak savages who destroy the Earth. As he said in *My Struggle 4: «I'm not killing people, «I'm just cleaning up the mess»*. This is obsession with purity typified. Why do Eichmann and Cancer Man promote violence all the way to total destruction?

Arne Johan Vetlesen has argued that one should always remember to include aggressive and primitive evil acts when explaining violence. Evil in his eyes is much more than a banality (*Ondskap er ikke banalt*. Sjøderlind 2006). Evil banality can then be a bit reductionistic as an explanation. An evil motivation is found in several layers of motivation (Kekes 2005).

There is a saying «If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen». In Nazi Germany, some did. Although they risked their lives, some people, like Oskar Schindler and Karl Plagge, decided to save people. In *The X-Files*, men like Bill Mulder and Deep Throat also reach a point where the deception, lies and killings become too much for them. Their stories show that the involvement with the Syndicate had one main motivation, namely protecting their families. In *Fight the Future* 1998 movie, even the Well- Manicured Man commits suicide being unable to live with his mistakes. Before ending his own life, he tells Mulder the truth. However, men like Cancer Man and Eichmann do not back out. Their motivation has to be more than a job, duty and efficiency alone. Most likely, they are inspired by some idealism for promoting a great society as well. Alternatively, are they simply driven by sadism?

In this respect, we should not ignore the possibility of Eichmann being proud of his power or his seeking «power for its own sake», as with Cancer Man. Great lust for power can lead to evil actions. They both wanted to do as good job as possible. Probably, they were chasing personal advantages. Their duties coincided with supposed self-interest. As seen Cancer Man shares a lot of Eichmann`s personality, but they also differ when it comes to finding pleasure in doing evil. Hannah Arendt is convincing when explaining evil, although I have one more reservation. Has Arendt overlooked sadism, the part where some people find happiness in doing evil actions?

Sometimes, Cancer Man seems to enjoy being evil. In Arendt's defense, this seems not to be the case with Eichmann. He personified neither hatred nor madness. Eichmann would never kill anyone himself as Cancer Man does. The two evildoers differ at this point. Cancer Man is a loyal servant, but he is also prepared to do the dirty work himself, with his own sadistic

agenda. Below are four examples of Cancer Man's egocentric sadistic behavior. All these could be linked to "evil in itself."

Firstly, Cancer Man helps people only when it benefits himself. In the episode *Ascension*, members of the Syndicate are «hunted down» because they are going to kill Fox Mulder.

Cancer Man disagrees: «*If Mulders dies, you turn one man's religion into a crusade*». The egocentrism is visible when he orders an alien to heal Mulder's mother. At first sight, this is a good gesture. In reality, the genuine motive was a Machiavellian cynical maneuver, illustrated in the saying: «*There's nothing more dangerous than someone with nothing left to lose*». In *Redux*, he is exploiting Mulder's weakness, the disappearance of his sister Samantha. Mulder is obsessed with finding her. From this perspective, Mulder is being manipulated. When a deadly virus affects people, Cancer Man asks them if they wish to bargain for their lives (episode *Memento Mori* and *My Struggle part 3* and 4).

Secondly, in *Talitha Cumi*, where Jeremiah Smith is included in the episode as a goodhearted alien, Cancer Man informs him how he is dying of cancer. Due to his illness, he threatens the secrecy of the aliens' colonization and vaccine by releasing Smith. The whole release was a trade. Smith, who was able to heal other people, then cures Cancer Man's cancer in exchange for freedom. Although Cancer Man presents himself as someone who is willing to sacrifice anything for the sake of the survival of Mankind, he is a selfish liar. Even his own wife was sacrificed to experiments, but never him himself. A true hero would not try to avoid pain as much as possible. More selfishness is found in his dialogue with agent Spender in the episode *The End*.

Spender: «*You said you had information*».

Cancer Man: «*Control the board. Know which men to sacrifice and when*».

Spender: «*I don't know what you're talking about*».

Cancer Man: «*Don't become part of someone else's cause or crusade. Pursue your own self-interest – Always*».

This conversation shows Machiavellianism. A personality trait where someone is so focused on their own interests that they are willing to manipulate, deceive and exploit others to achieve their goals. Cancer Man's motivation is also closely related to narcissism.

Thirdly and connected to narcissism, is the highly problematic part of his personality and the enjoyment of evil deeds. Cancer Man takes pleasure in having power over others. At the end of *Musing of a Cigarette Smoking Man*, he sits on a roof pointing a sniper rifle towards Frohike, saying: «*I can kill you whenever I please, but not today*» In other words, he holds another person's life in his hands. In season nine's last episode, *The Truth*, there is a similar mentality:

Cancer Man: «*Leaves me to tell you what Mulder's afraid of*», Agent Scully.

Mulder: «*Come on, let's go*».

Cancer Man: «*It's a scary story. Want to come sit on my lap?*»

Scully: «*You don't scare me*».

Cancer Man: «*My story's scared every president since Truman in '47*».

Fourthly, Cancer Man differs from Eichmann because he himself carries out murders. There are merciless executions of those who stand in his way. This is well illustrated when he tries to murder his own son. All are executed in order to keep secrets. In the season 6-episode *One Son*, Cancer Man's son, Jeffery Spender supports Mulder and Scully in their pursuit of the truth. Cancer Man is disappointed and shoots his own son in cold blood. At this point, he crosses the line between being an unpleasant man to becoming an evil villain.

My examples in points one to four above all serve to illustrate that Cancer Man enjoys being evil. Cancer Man represents this sadistic type of evil. Most likely a similar kind of evil as with the Utøya far-right terrorist.

Sadistic action occurs often when a narcissist suffers from an injury to their self-esteem (Vetlesen 2016:31). Cancer Man chuckles when people are in pain. The Utøya far-right terrorist, a handsome blond man with an «ordinary» background, heavily armed, walked towards the youngsters. Telling them to come closer «*You will be safe with me. I'm a cop*». Reassured by his uniform, many of them began to move towards him. Then he shouted, «*You all must die!*». Survivors heard the man shooting and laughing (Buruma 2015. *One of Us, the story of Brevik*, book review of Åsne Seierstad).

I would not like to speculate as to what it was that caused the terrorist's actions. We are not in his head. Then we would require a psychiatric statement combined with social, political and ethical theoretical framework. Still it is worthwhile to raise the following general question: Do some people obtain satisfaction from hurting others? (Kekes 2005, Baumeister 1997, Steiner 1997, Vetlesen 2016).

9.4) The roots of “evil in itself”

An «evil for its own sake»-perspective seems to be downplayed by Arendt and Bauman. After all, harm-inflicting behavior is viewed as universal components of human nature. From an evolutionary point of view, we have the capacity for both good and evil (Miller 2016:4). Perhaps it is too frightening to recognize that «evil for its own sake» occasionally is a part of our reality. This account captures a concept of evil often presented in fictional characters. The creator of *The X-Files*, Chris Carter, was truly inspired by the movie *Silence of the Lambs* (Mooney 2017:23-24). In this movie, the intelligent doctor Hannibal Lecter has no reason for doing what he does, killing people without any remorse. Poverty, madness, abuse, idealism, fanaticism, social pressure or banality of evil are not adequate explanatory variables for his evil actions. Doctor Hannibal explains his evil acts with the following statement: "*Nothing made me happen. I happened..*" Evil seems to be a rational choice Lecter made all by himself. On the one hand, a typical bad guy movie profile thrilling the audience. On the other hand, a real human being joyfully inflicting suffering on his fellow citizens. Why do some people do this? It makes no sense. What are the roots of this type of evil? Perhaps some of the “evil monsters” in *The X-files* could provide us with some answers.

A typical «evil in itself» evildoer is Luther Lee Boggs in *Beyond Sea*. Boggs, a scary murderer, has come into contact with Mulder and Scully due to a kidnapping of a young couple. They are looking for a «sick» man dressed as a police officer, but they cannot find the right suspect.

Boggs claims to have psychic revelations about the kidnapping and has offered to help the police in return for a permanent pardon from his death penalty. The agents use a serial killer to catch a serial killer. Throughout the episode, Boggs seems to be a monster of a man. Mulder stated that: «*Some killers are products of society. Some act out past abuses. Boggs kills because he likes it*».

By this statement, Mulder has defined «evil in itself». Boggs himself expresses the idea that he kills because it thrills him. He was sentenced to death because he killed his whole family, and their pets. The man shows no remorse. The only feeling expressed is his own fear of dying in prison. Despite his horrible record, some would not label him a monster. There are good reasons for avoiding this term. It is inaccurate and has been politically and socially misused. How many times have people we may dislike been exposed to the monster term?

Professor in Ethics, Paul Leer Salvesen, has interviewed murderers when working on his PhD degree. Throughout his research or when working as a prison priest he claims not having seen purely evil men. However, as he demonstrates, evil actions do exist (Leer-Salvesen and Hammerlin 2014:113-114). This seems reasonable. A one hundred percent monster of «evil in itself» does not exist.

In the 2008 *X-Files* movie *I Want To Believe*, Mulder and Scully investigate a case where an FBI agent has disappeared. They need help from Father Joe who claims to be having psychic visions related to the disappearance. The priest may not be credible because of his criminal past as a convicted pedophile. Scully, a devoted Catholic, now working in a children's hospital, cannot stand the man. She clearly sees him as a monster. As the movie develops, Father Joe turns out to be more than a monster. The movie illustrates the complexity of Mankind. Even in the worst of us, there is something good. Father Joe has punished himself by castration at the age of twenty-six in order to kill his appetite for young boys. Despite Scully labelling him an attention-seeking monster, he comes across as a sympathetic man. He shows remorse and truly wants to help the police in solving the case.

Throughout our lives, we may have to make difficult choices between good and evil. Father Joe did a monstrous act when sexually assaulting small boys. However, he is no monster. To put it in Primo Levi's words «*The man has our face*» (Cole 2006:179). Nonetheless, turning it the other way around can also be problematic. «Violent men are normal» can also represent a false reasoning.

Philosophers such as Lars Fredrik Svendsen, Hannah Arendt, and Phillip Zimbardo strongly emphasize «the normality of evil». When claiming, «people who apply torture are ordinary, normal people» (Svendsen 2013:156-157), they should be more academically nuanced. We must not underestimate the fact that some people «enjoy being evil» (Vetlesen 2016:135, McGinn 1997:62 Kekes 2005:196). Evil has functioned as entertainment during history. Hunting wild animals or letting them fight humans to survive, was introduced during the Roman Empire. In the Colosseum, a hundred days of games were held in 80 AD. Over fifty thousand spectators enjoyed the bloody competitions. Even capital punishment such as hanging and beheading, offered to the public as a warning, was partly regarded as bread and circus. Capital punishment that lasted longer, such as stoning, resulted in a greater public spectacle. In modern times, we witness violence through mass media entertainment (Prot, Anderson, Saleem, Groves 2016:119).

Most likely, quite a few blow off steam through media violence, a modern replacement for historical Colosseum-like violence. Baumeister (1997) states that hurting someone gets easier over time as we become used to it, and that people in general enjoy watching others suffer in popular media. Baumeister has a point. You can search YouTube for videos of people breaking bones and spending hours watching senseless pain entertainment. Alternatively, you can watch horror movies where «evil in itself» is the norm. Men like Hannibal Lecter and Cancer Man are not alone in conducting «evil in itself».

There are numerous historical examples of «evil in itself». Evil has its roots in the imperfection of Adam and Eve. Evil as enjoyment is also connected to war. The amount of this type of evil surprised me when doing during this study. In *An Intimate History of Killing*, the author Jonna Bourke refers to soldiers glorifying the killing of people. In the Vietnam War, the soldiers found their M-60 machine guns as attractive as a medieval sword (Bourke 1999:3). The main argument given is that the structure of war encourages pleasure in killing and that people can, and often do, become enthusiastic killers without becoming brutalized. Some of the soldiers experienced joy and laughter when killing others. It was not «me» being slaughtered (Bourke 1999:361-65).

Colin McGinn gives this evil a terrifying face in *Ethics, Evil and Fiction* (1997). According to the British philosopher, evil personalities will maximize the pain of others as a way of maximizing their own pleasure. Some people have hedonistic dispositions.

McGinn labels them «monsters such as sadists, child abusers, rapists» (McGinn 1997: 62).

John Kekes uses a similar term when he applies «moral monsters» when referring to this type of evildoers (Kekes 2005:174).

Kekes and McGinn are trying to give some answers to the roots of «evil in itself». Both seems to argue that evil is part of what it means to human. Some people have little tolerance for boredom. They seek excitement in order to avoid it. We can all become bored at times. It does not have be evil at all. Waiting in an airport, listening to political discussions, hearing our old father telling the same story all over again or accepting the day as a «nothing to-do-day». Despite of its normality, boredom can be dangerous to some. Boredom is closely related to apathy. In *American Psycho*, book and movie, the character Bateman has it all. He is fit, good-looking, lives well and has a great job as an investment banker. Nevertheless, Bateman is a bored killer living in a shallow, materialistic world. With the combination of a narcissistic personality disorder and a no core character, he seeks violence as a thrill.

In the episode *One Breath*, we are introduced to a similar phenomenon. Once Dana Scully, most likely aged 10-12 years old, was in the woods in autumn. For her birthday, Dana's brothers gave her a BB gun and they showed her how to use it. Their father had told them only to shoot at cans, but out in the woods they found a garter snake. The boys began shooting. Wanting to fit in with her brothers, Dana also shot at the snake. It squirmed wildly, fighting for its life. The snake began to bleed. When she realized what she had done, Dana began to cry. She felt guilty. Although afraid of snakes, Dana held the reptile, but the snake died in her hands.

This is a highly interesting story of «evil in itself» in *The X-Files*. Why did they hurt the innocent snake? Some understanding is found in our Judeo-Christian belief and cultural view of snakes. Although these factors affect the outcome of the violence, my main explanation is found in getting a «kick» or excitement out of doing this. In other words, «evil for its own sake». It should also be noted that Dana Scully felt remorse, while the boys were still laughing. People's dispositions for evil actions seem to differ. This is a story about small children, which could easily be transferred to the adult world. It can be especially dangerous if evil is motivated by a lust for power. McGinn seems more than willing to look to power as an explanation. It is hard to disagree, because power is one of the explanations of sadism as well. When hurting you, I gain power over you. Pain can be a force of stimulation because it is more powerful than pleasure.

People do not value their lives as much if they are in pain. For instance, when in great pain, some people beg the evildoer to end their lives. You disrupt the value structure of the victim (McGinn 1997:77). Perhaps the sadist is a weak person lacking persuasive power or charm. He then uses sadism to make up for the only way he is able to receive the victim's full attention. It is after all easier to be feared than loved.

We return to *The X-Files* and Cancer Man. This seems to be in accordance with his evil image. He is focused on power-based evil for its own sake and is a cold man who gets a kick out of hurting people. In the episode *Terma*, he smiles when the Well-Manicured Man's girlfriend is killed by a hitman. He seeks a kick rendering people helpless by destroying their freedom so that they must give up their lives. It seems like he is trying to convert people from having a pro-life into having an anti-life conviction (Mc Ginn 1997:81). To be an efficient sadist, he needs some empathy in order to understand his victims' weaknesses. Sadistic people like Cancer Man will most likely take little pleasure in objectifying another human being. He does not fit into Bauman's evil typology. He seeks no distance or dehumanization. On the contrary, it is the individuality he wants to break down. In *The X-Files*, Cancer Man is acutely aware of the fact that Mulder misses his sister and that Scully fights against cancer. He uses their weaknesses to manipulate them.

The most striking example of his lust for power is established in the last episode in season 9, *The Truth*. At the end of the episode, he tells Mulder with joy in his eyes: *«My power comes from telling you. Seeing your powerlessness, hearing it. They wanted to kill you. I protected you all these years, waiting for this moment. To see you broken, afraid. Now you can die»*

We should not underestimate this face of evil. Even Augustine did a teenage prank stealing pears. He wrote:

«We carried off a huge load of pears, not to eat ourselves, but to dump out to the hogs, after barely tasting some of them ourselves. Doing this pleased us all the more because it was forbidden. Such was my heart, O God, such was my heart—which thou didst pity even in that bottomless pit. Behold, now let my heart confess to thee what it was seeking there, when I was being gratuitously wanton, having no inducement to evil but the evil itself.

Augustine seemed to have no other motive than «a desire to do wrong». The pears were not stolen for their beauty, taste or as food. No, *"I loved my fall (into sin),"* he writes in Confession 2 (*The Confessions of Saint Augustine*, translated by E.B Pusey 1914)

9.5) The expression «evil in itself»: weaknesses and strengths

When writing this thesis, I realized some complications with the «evil in itself» perspective. I will provide four arguments against this type of evil. Firstly, if gaining pleasure is the standard for what is evil or not, then an evildoer who does not find any enjoyment, is no evil person. There is no reason to assume that the crusaders, Robespierre, Mulder, those with a cosmological worldview, Pol Pot, a lying government or Eichmann found joy in their violence. Moreover, they all have evil features.

Secondly, if gaining pleasure was the key explanation to all evil, it would be too narrow. Evil takes on many forms, sadism is one of them. We can reach the same conclusion by turning the argument around. If the victim enjoys any pain suffered by his perpetrator, then the victim is also evil. This cannot be true because the victim has done nothing wrong actively. There is a huge difference between feeling anger and doing painful acts in anger. Thirdly, I object to the logical value of «evil in itself». It is widely known that explaining a phenomenon by referring to the same phenomenon is fruitless. If people are poor, you cannot explain their poverty by claiming, «They are poor, because they are poor». The same applies to explanations of awful behavior:

*Why does the evil Cancer Man order murders, even on his own family?

Answer = Because he is evil

Logically, a circular argument makes no sense at all. An overall explanation that people are evil because they are evil is too simplistic.

Fourthly, a conventional understanding of «evil in itself» is challenged by recent research. The question of the credibility of pure evil is explored in a 10-year survey on prisoners (murderers) in the USA. The researchers discovered moral emotions such as shame, guilt and capacity for self-control among the inmates. Many of them were described as normal men. They feel tension, remorse and regret over the bad things they have done» (Tangney, Blalock, Folk 2016:299-300). The survey demonstrates that the large majority of incarcerated offenders are not evil psychopaths (Tangney, Blalock, Folk 2016:313). Already back in 1991 professor Paul Leer-Salvensen had a similar finding in his PhD named «*Humans and Punishment*».

In interviewing 13 murders in Norwegian prisons they all showed sign of remorse. They also accepted their punishment. None of the men were blaming the victims (Leer Salvesen 1991:56-57).

Despite these four objections, it would be unwise, to ignore «evil in itself». Alternatively, to explain evil merely as an absence of reason. Or indeed to characterize evil murderers as «normal people» without providing any empirical studies. What is regarded as normal? In the study mentioned above, most of the inmates are not what we would label as evil, however we should not fail to observe that the survey states that 20 percent of prisoners have shallow emotions, an anti-social style and problems with empathizing with others (Tangney, Blalock, Folk 2016:299). Not all murderers are like «you» and «me».

Anyone in the same circumstances might do the same. However, some of us are more likely to follow orders. What we do also depends on our personal history and experiences (Tangney, Blalock, Folk 2016:202). Often, there can be more behind evil acts than an obligation to follow orders, or normality. One is pleasure. However, if you have no pleasure in creating harm, are you not evil then? A murderer killing people without getting any «kick» is according to «evil in itself» not evil. This makes no sense. Harming people without pleasure is also evil. Banality or instrumental evil covers this perspective.

The variety of what people take pleasure in is surprising. Why expose fellow human beings to pain? Pain and joy have different meanings to different individuals. Some enjoy sitting on a couch eating chips in front of the TV. Others prefer running marathons. Some like the art of Push Wagner, and some find it ugly. People have desires they need to satisfy. From this perspective, some find pleasure in inflicting pain on others (Vetlesen 2016:115).

In cases of rape and murder, there is a tendency where the perpetrator avoids face to face contact with the victims (Bauman 1989, Levinas 1991). Still, this is not an absolute. Some people find a thrill in seeing the other person suffering (McGinn 1997:77-78). The logic runs like this: «I see you suffer; I do not have pain. I am a happy man». Perpetrators have often constructed perfectly legitimate reasons for their violence (Shermer 2004:81). They would rarely label themselves as sadists. However, there are exceptions. As Cancer Man states in the episode *My Struggle 3*: » *I'm not a bad man. More a practical man. I have taken certain gifts I was given and made good men great*». Taking the evildoers at face value, we may risk overlooking the real motivation (Vetlesen 2016:136). Not all human motivation is aimed at producing the good in oneself or others, despite the utopianism of some great thinkers.

While some regard evil as a media constructed myth (Cole 2006), others argue that movie monsters, such as Frankenstein, represent some deep psychological truth about us. A myth has some truth to it though (McGinn 1997:144). In addition to this, «evil for its own sake» was a part of the ordinary Nazi guards' behavior (Baron-Cohen 2011:9). The term Schadenfreude also fits into this way of thinking about evil. In *The X-Files* episode *The Blessing*, Cancer Man clarifies his evil position: «*You can kill a man, but you can't kill what he stands for... Not unless you first break his spirit. That's a beautiful thing to see*».

Harm can be an end in itself. This raises thought-provoking philosophical questions: If good actions are a goal in themselves, why not also evil? What possible benefits come from pure evil? Pain for the sake of inflicting pain? Can happiness exist without other people's misfortune? Can good subsist without evil? Alternatively, is evil nothing at all?

What if men like Hitler and Cancer Man had succeeded in their desired work as a painter and as a writer, respectively? As alluring as this perspective may seem, it wrongfully suggests that every man is an island. Individuals have the opportunity to choose, but they normally take structure into consideration (Bauman 1989). A man can never run away from his background, family, friends, social network, job, culture or the state (Berger and Luckman 1966/2015). Cancer Man grows up in an environment of distrust with his father being executed as a Russian spy. Depending on the context, maybe more of us can become evildoers. Who is to say otherwise? Raised in a free, democratic society like Norway, how do any of us know how we might react to a totalitarian regime or strong structural demands, in a time of war or crisis?

9.6) Summary Chapter 9

Cancer Man represents mainly two different kinds of evil. In one way, he is comparable to Adolf Eichmann and Hannah Arendt's case study of evil banality. He has nothing else than his job in life. Always dressed in a black governmental suit, Cancer Man does his duty. Often without thinking or asking questions. He is a loyal instrument of the evil state. In one episode, he warns his hitman Krycek with "*You have no rights, only orders to be carried out*" (*The Beginning*). Cancer Man appears to have little respect for individuality. He sees men as weak and corrupt (*In Musing of a Cigarette Smoking Man*). He is a lonely man, without no center or core, living an empty life. As with Eichmann, he is involved in ethnical cleaning and is lying all the time. But, Cancer Man also differs from Eichmann. Cancer Man represents John Kekes' "evil in itself" perspective. Eichmann would never have killed anyone himself.

Cancer Man does so. Several episodes deal with Cancer Man's enjoyment in being evil. When people are in pain, he smiles (*Terma*). Sometimes he chuckles. Evil gives him a "kick". He seeks to dominate his victims by inflicting pain. "Break his spirit. That's a beautiful thing to see" is one statement given (*The Blessing*)

By including empirical observations in *The X-Files*, it can be argued that Arendt and Bauman fail to recognize human features such as aggression, envy, seeking pleasure, revenge, boredom, self-love and ambition. While some think it is shocking to discover that some evildoers are normal men, I think differently. It is frightening if some do evil because of «evil in itself». This kind of evil (pure) is unlike the forms of evil dealt with so far. It differs from instrumental evil (to gain something), dangerous idealism (wish something), the stupid banality evil (doing your duty without thinking) and the evil structure and lies within a government. However, evil in itself has weaknesses; mainly there are four of them described in this chapter. For instance, are you not evil if you do not get a kick of doing a harmful act? Despite four objections and the fact that Cancer Man is a fictional character, "evil in itself" appears to be present in history and our society today (from Colosseum to computer violence). We have the ability to choose good because it promotes well-being, but also evil because it is evil. There are "moral monsters" out there, seeking to hurt other human beings (Kekes 2005:174).

CHAPTER 10, SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

10.1) Summary

When the show first appeared in the `90s I saw *The X-files* purely as entertainment. Having recently reexamined the series with a more scholarly approach new perspectives have come to light. My research question has been this: There are different aspects of evil in *The X-Files*. What characterizes the different faces of evil in *The X-Files* analyzed in terms of the philosophy of evil by Hannah Arendt, Lars Fredrik Svendsen, John Kekes and Zygmunt Bauman?

By applying four different typologies of evil, multiple drives behind various evil acts stand out. By applying theory in combination with applied ethics it has been possible to raise specific philosophical questions in relation to the evil. Is the state evil? Is Mulder evil? Is the Cancer Man evil? And what kind of evil do they represent?

Evil, is a controversial term to apply. It can be misused as in propaganda in the unethical labelling of an enemy. However, does this not support the claim that man has an inherent fascination with evil? It clearly does. Evil is an enduring, never-ending problem for Mankind. Arguably, John Kekes gives one of the most comprehensive definitions of evil. He observes that evil is:

«Serious (motivated) harm that causes fatal or lasting physical injury, as do murder, torture and mutilation. It could also be nonphysical such as loss of love and honor. In addition, destroying happiness. But also a desire to create harm and take a delight in causing it (Kekes 2005:1-3).

As most definitions, it has its weaknesses. In this case, it ignores the point that evil is more than motivational acts. People also act without thinking. Still, to me, it was the best definition because it recognizes the fact that evil is not just about «stealing some pears» (Augustin). Evil is morally wrong, sinful and wicked acts.

My research is a modest contribution to the ethical and philosophical debate about evil. Movies and TV- shows are more than entertainment. They provide us with cultural references. We should not underestimate the power of movies as a source of information about evil. As shown in the analysis chapters 7 to 9, *The X-files* is a TV-show that contains a substantial amount of ethical debates in relation to evil.

Themes like governmental lies and withholding of information, terrorism, cloning, unethical science, evil banality, evil enjoyment, and dangerous idealism are all vital parts of the show's storyline.

10.2) Conclusion

Even though my findings are not that groundbreaking, I have learned quite a lot during this scientific process and made some general observations about the different faces of evil. I have not been able to discuss the «true nature of evil», but by utilizing a wide range of theory, I have managed to uncover some varieties of evil in the series. This research has examined typologies of evil by recognized researchers/philosophers such as Hannah Arendt (banality of evil), Lars Fredrik Svendsen (evil idealism), John Kekes (“evil in itself”) and Zygmunt Bauman (instrumental evil). I have investigated these typologies up against the empirical evil outcome in *The X-files*. After seeing and analyzing the show three times, some major evil themes are prominent. These are:

*Evil government and science.

*Evil idealism.

*Evil Cancer Man.

Each of these three has their own characteristic expressions of evil. How can these be connected to the typologies? The first one, «Evil Government and evil science», appears to be closely related to instrumental evil. A state can be evil since it is a large organization with a power monopoly. The government has a great deal of power and cannot be trusted in *The X-files*. The government covers up secrets by creating alternative stories, which is very relevant in today's media landscape. In *The X-files*, multiple episodes are about the state intimidating people into silence. These X-files episodes are inspired by true events in US history. Different experiments, Vietnam, Watergate, Iran-Contras and Iraq in 2003 lurk in the background. One important finding is that *The X-files* is not created in a vacuum. The show emerges from a context of distrust in government.

In my analysis, I discuss whether it is evil to mislead the public. Withholding information can be defended if it is about saving lives. It is good being lied to if it creates happiness in the shorter run. *The X-files* narrative does not take place in times of peace.

There is a hidden war. In this storyline aliens and the Syndicate (a shadow government) are secretly invading us. Perhaps we need a strong leader to guide us? However, if the leaders are only concerned with self-interest, this is highly problematic. In this case, the government promotes negative paternalism. The government has a platonic and hobbistic negative view of mankind's ability to be rational. For instance, the government withholds information about a virus to avoid mass panic, but also to save themselves. The practical man/problem solver Cancer Man argues: «*Men never can be free because we are too weak, worthless and corrupt*» (episode *Talitha Cum*).

In *The X-files*, the government is not pure evil, or “evil in itself.” John Kekes` definition with “taking delight in harm and causing pain” is not reflected here. The state`s evil is more instrumental. Evil can be seen as a tool to gain something. In this case to promote stability, safety and control. Evil can also be an instrument to achieve some other purpose. Selfish aims are present. As suggested by Kant and Bentham, a lack of public discussion is problematic. The episode *Pine Bluff*, which is about testing out a virus on innocent people, suggests that publicity is required for democracy to combat evil.

Maybe the government in *The X-files* thinks it is doing the right thing. However, in fact, they are hurting people by applying brute force. The government is evil, according to Kekes` definition (first part): it is “harmful and destroys happiness.” Most likely, the evildoers do not see themselves as evil in this case. Perhaps they even see themselves as the good ones (Svendsen 2013:35).

Instrumental evil is further elaborated on in terms of “evil science.” Here dehumanizing seems to be a central part of the evil acts. The Second World War and Nazi experiments inspire a lot of the focus on evil science in the show. The scientists in the show are portrayed as evil. Multiple episodes are also critical towards technology going wrong, such as cloning, the internet, drones and smartphones.

One message given by *The X-files* is that science, taking a Foucauldian perspective, is covering up the abuse of power. Nazi science was a tool for promoting a totalitarian society (Arendt 1951/2017:438). In *The X-files*, cloning and research go wrong. The show suggests that it is evil to tamper with nature or try to control it. *The X-files* can be connected to Bauman`s claim that Holocaust happened because we were embracing “perceived

rationality”, efficiency and cold science instead of feelings and direct human contact (Bauman 1989:143). The consequences of trying to control nature with rationality were devastating.

Cold science turns people into objects. They are sacrificed in the name of rational progress. People are dehumanized and used as guinea pigs. In *The X-files*, as in Nazi Germany, the evil scientists are covering up their action by using bureaucratic words such as «selection», «transfer» or «merchandise». In the show, «unworthy people» are either exposed to experiments or end up in mass graves. Witness Katyn and Srebrenica. In the episode 731, one of the test subjects proclaimed: «*We are being treated like garbage*».

The X-files episodes about evil science are based upon real events, such as the Tuskegee experiment, infecting criminals with syphilis, and Operation Paper Clip, which gave former Nazi criminals freedom in exchange for their services. This evil science can be classified as instrumental. Much of it is about either progress or making money. As Victor Klemperer stated in the episode *Paper Clip*: “*Progress demands sacrifice.*” In some episodes, large pharmaceutical companies are testing viruses and illnesses on people. As with Nazi Germany, there is a cooperation between big commercial enterprises and science. In the X-files movie *I Want to Believe*, scientists, all out to sell human organs, kill people. Instrumental evil by Bauman may justify many evil acts, but it is too narrow an understanding of evil to fully appreciate *The X-files*. My next analysis chapter dealt with Fox Mulder. A different form of evil is presented, the idealistic one. The outcome of this type turned out to be a bit shocking.

After analyzing the show, I discovered that the «protagonist» Mulder, in fact, ends up hurting many people. Perhaps not that surprising? Previous research, as given in my method chapter, has proven that even the hero could display evil features. There is a thin line between good and evil as terms. Numerous good people, even Mulder`s own family members, die because of his quest for the truth. By Kekes`definition, Mulder is evil. Because of his blind idealism, people die around him. This is reminiscent of dangerous idealism associated with Pol Pot, Lenin and Robespierre. Harm is often written off as a price worth paying. Agent Mulder is comparable to the French revolutionary leader Robespierre. Both regard «the great cause» as more important than individuals. This instrumental evil is hardly intentional. Yes, we are rational beings, doing bad things because it benefits us, even when we are aware that it is causing pain.

But this time evil seems to be a means to an end, or a by-product of their goals. Evil is unintended consequences. In life, there are effects, which we cannot control or had not expected at all. A strong belief and dualistic worldview can promote evil actions. Both Mulder and Robespierre thought they had higher ethical standards than the rest. Research shows that people often see themselves as better than they really are (Dunning 2016:251). Some have a false self-pride personality. Several times Scully is critical of Mulder's idealism, but he simply ignores people around him.

Idealistic evil goes deep into the storyline with violence connected to terrorism, evil sacrifice, and those with a cosmological worldview. The latter is about seeing the world as a conflict between higher forces of good versus evil. From this point of view, the battle is not against fellow men, it is against the devil. It is «us» versus «them». *The X-files* displays a great deal of cosmological evil idealism. The aliens are evil and collaborate with a shadow government to colonize the planet. Moreover, in the episodes 1 to 4 *My Struggle*, the government starts to spread a virus that destroys our DNA systems, all in order to «wipe out the trash» and «clean the earth». A Nazi-like purity mentality is promoted. As Lars Fredrik Svendsen stresses, evil idealism is a dangerous path to follow. If you believe «I know what is best» and impose it on others, and in doing so hurt them, it may be a vicious act (Svendsen 2013:123-25).

The expression «the road to hell is paved with good intentions» appropriately describes this attitude. Still, the theory of idealistic evil is a bit confusing. If good also is evil, what is good then? Does it depend on the Zeitgeist? What is regarded as good or not, depends perhaps on who has the power to define good and evil? Questions like these should have been answered more thoroughly by Svendsen. Still, Mulder's passion prevents him from seeing the truth.

The next face of evil is quite different: Cancer Man and his evil appears to be a combination of Hannah Arendt's evil banality and John Kekes' "evil in itself." In *The X-files*, Cancer Man, the show's spooky character, is comparable to Adolf Eichmann. His expression of evil is loyal and banal, well known from Hannah Arendt's research. As with Eichmann, Cancer Man is a governmental servant, «a doer» for the government. A man obsessed with doing his duty. A cold bureaucrat without a core, a «cog in a machinery». These two seem to misunderstand Kant's categorical imperative. Eichmann and Cancer Man view human beings as means to an end, not as an end in themselves.

Some of Hannah Arendt's research is a bit inaccurate in my opinion. Perhaps both Eichmann and Cancer Man expressed more than banality of evil. They can also be seen as rational

personalities with calculating minds. Eichmann was looking for personal advantages (Kekes 2005:179). So was Cancer Man. In other words, instrumental evil must also be included here. Evil banality is a bit reductionistic as an explanation of evil. Lack of empathy is also the problematic part with Eichmann (Vetlesen 2005:60-61). The same should be said about Cancer Man. Most likely both Eichmann and Cancer Man had multiple motivations for doing evil. Both servants may have been motivated by duty, promotion, lust, desire or simply the pleasure of hurting others. Nevertheless, Cancer Man seems to differ from Eichmann in his sheer «enjoyment of being evil». It is a sad fact that some people seem to enjoy evil acts.

Researchers/philosophers such as Svendsen, Arendt and Bauman have overlooked sadism as a vital part of evil acts. On the one hand, almost every ordinary man can do evil. For Arendt, the Eichmann trial revealed that in order to commit evil, one does not necessarily have to have evil motives. In Bauman`s view an instrumental rational logic has not violence, but efficiency as the main objective. Svendsen thinks “demonic evil” is a false media construction (Svendsen 2013:35). But are all people who apply torture normal? These three scholars have no room for “evil in itself” (sadism) in their explanation. Evil is also a product of sadistic personalities. This is empirically present by several occasions in the show. Cancer Man smiles, laughs and seems to take delight in hurting others. This type of evil is commonly carried out by those who get a «kick out» of hurting their fellow man (Kekes 2005, Baumeister 1997, Vetlesen 2016). One could object by arguing that, «these are stereotypical movie bad guys».

Nevertheless, they are also present in history as well as in our everyday lives. From the history of Rome`s Colosseum and public flogging to computer violence games, as well as children torturing animals, evil for “its own sake” has been and still is present. Violence has been and still is entertainment for many people. This kind of evil is highly dangerous. It differs from instrumental evil (gaining something), dangerous idealism (wishing something), and the stupid banality of evil (doing your duty without thinking). Cancer Man appears to be envious of and feels hatred towards other people`s success. He was after all a failure as a writer and as a family man. He seems to be bored, stuck in an empty life, and he fills the gap with the stimulation of hurting people. In Cancer Man`s eyes, pain can be a force of stimulation because for him it is more powerful than pleasure. With this perspective, Cancer Man makes one think of John Kekes`study of the bored killer John Allan (Kekes 2005:103-05). When people are in great pain, they beg the evildoer to end their lives. This gives him the ultimate control (McGinn 1997:77).

Cancer Man gets a kick out of hurting other people. The most striking example of his lust for power is established in the last episode of season 9, *The Truth*. At the end of the episode, he tells Mulder with joy in his eyes:

«My power comes from telling you. Seeing your powerlessness, hearing it. They wanted to kill you. I protected you all these years, waiting for this moment. To see you broken, afraid. Now you can die».

Cancer Man is like a hunter searching for his victims' weaknesses. He takes pleasure in gaining their confidence before finally breaking their individuality. His aim is not to dehumanize people. He uses Mulder's weakness, the loss of his sister, to manipulate him. Examining *The X-files*, with contemporary history as a backdrop, we may well underestimate this type of evil. Most likely, we are doing so because we are supposed to be rational beings. John Kekes' has a solid point criticizing the idealistic and naïve enlightenment legacy (Kekes 2005:6). Not many of us are rational creatures around the clock, though. Even Augustine admitted that they had no other motive for stealing pears than a desire to do wrong (confession). Scully did the same when she was hurting a snake as a child.

On the other hand, "evil in itself" has its weaknesses. Evil takes many forms. Sadism is only one. I doubt that Mulder or Robespierre took pleasure in doing evil. Mankind is complex. A lot of research claims that monsters do not exist. Evil action does. Even the worst of us have some good qualities. The pedophile priest in the X-files movie *I Want to Believe* illustrates this. Most evildoers feel anger, shame and remorse (Leer Salvesen 1991, Tangney, Blalock, Folk 2016:313).

Still, we must not ignore that one motivation behind evil acts is pleasure. The variety of what people take pleasure in is surprising. Some find beauty in inflicting pain (Vetlesen 2016:115). Along the lines of - "I see you suffer; -I do not have pain. I am the lucky and happy one". Despite people being affected by their environment, evil is also a conscious choice. Some are forced to be evil because of the context, yet some simply choose it actively.

Some final comments are needed to conclude this research. As we have seen, many of *The X-files* episodes are primarily fiction, but they are not pure fairytales, nor are they simply banal commercial entertainment. Multiple episodes are inspired by real events. This means that the evil portrayed in various disguises is more complex than that exercised by the

stereotypical movie monster. Movies are entertainment, but they are more than that. It is also value and norm communication (Gripsrud 2006, Davis 2015).

My task has been to research a successful TV show and its specific perception of evil, leaning on published academic work far more comprehensive than this one on the general subject of evil. One weakness for which I am responsible is the fact that this research is mainly based on theory, not so much on “out in the field” empirical material. Is it too far removed from ordinary people’s everyday life to teach us anything about the faces of evil? On the one hand, I can conclude that evil has mainly four faces with their various and identifiable characteristics reflected in *The X-files*. These are evil banality, instrumental state evil, evil idealism and “evil in itself.” All these faces are analyzed in a societal context.

I cannot conclude that knowledge of these four typologies, together with empirical discoveries in this particular show, are applicable in other settings in society. Nor can I expect that the finer nuances of various kinds of evil are grasp by the average viewer. Nevertheless, it is to be hoped that this thesis is useful as a small contribution to the large research material about evil. Perhaps further studies, with their findings, can indicate to what extent points made in this research on aspects of a tv-show is of relevance to society.

Appendix,

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