

The justification of evil heroes in movies based on shawshank redemption

[Entertainment](#), [Movie](#)



The figure of the “hero” has been treated in many ways, but almost always from the same point of view; a hero is that person who performs an extraordinary and beneficial feat for others, this hero perform good actions to protect and to benefit the innocents. But what separates those good actions to evil actions? How far can the hero go so as not to cross that line that divides “good” from “evil”? That line possibly does not exist, therefore, a hero can remain as a hero even if his feats to protect and benefit the innocents were achieved under evil actions.

The end justifies the means, sometimes the line that separates the hero from the villain is a very thin line. This defines the condition of the acts according to whether they are useful or not for humanity, putting a hypothetical greater good before any other value: it is utilitarianism, or the end justifies the means. People put the benefit of others in need above their own moral values; and they are willing to sacrifice these moral values in exchange for the good of other people. Niki Marvin shows how the end justifies the means in a scene in *The Shawshank Redemption*, where Andy Dufresne does evil actions to get benefits for the prison and his comrades. Andy pointed out that he was an honest person “The funny thing is on the outside I was an honest man. Straight as an arrow; I had to come to prison to be a crook” but he sacrificed his integrity for the good of the prisoners without expecting something in return “I don’t run the scams Red, I just process the profits. Fine line, maybe, but I also built that library and used it to help a dozen guys get their high school diploma.” This demonstrates how by doing evil actions people are still heroes, doing evil actions are not necessary bad, if these actions are against people that cause cruelty and against a corrupt system

which torture and abuse of others without reason. Indeed, the end justifies the means when the heroes are not looking for their own benefits or to raise their self-esteem. Sometimes heroes through evil actions help to grow a better society and to change a system that is not fair with the weakest and unprotected people.

Heroes are the ones that question authority of a corrupted system, they do actions that for the society are considered evil, for example not following the rules in that society, just to be able to change that corrupted system. These heroes are rebels that cause chaos in the systems, to achieve their goal to help the ones in need and changing that cruelty. Zimbardo explain this concept of how a real hero challenges authority to change a system “ Their acts could be considered heroic, but they cannot be considered heroes because they never acted to changing the whole abusive system by bringing other dissidents on board”. A real hero is not just the one that does heroic actions by himself, but is the one that disobeys authority to change the whole corrupt system. For doing that the hero leaves a precedent that the people involved and affected in that corrupt system see and then these people decided to follow that hero, and together they fight against that unfair treatment.

Challenging authority for the hero sometimes means the sacrifice of their own lives or their freedom. They do not care if they receive punishments in exchange for their actions “ Andy got two weeks in the hole for that little stunt.” Heroes are willing to risk their liberty and lives, to obtain the good of the ones they considered their people. Real heroes can commit evil actions

questioning authority and disobeying the established rules of that cruel system. Heroes challenge systems when they see that these are being cruel with people that cannot defend themselves. The affected people do not have the power to fight against that system, and those who have power take advantage of it to mistreat others, there is when the heroes decided to be the first to challenge that system leaving a precedent that people will follow. Doing something evil as violating the rules of the society like Andy did in the prison, by locking a guard and disobeying that authority, it was a heroic act by the people he helped, because for these evil actions he allowed the prisoners to feel human again. Just like in the movie, in real life the society have this kind of heroes; that by doing evil actions such as violating rules, and challenging authority they are able to change a whole cruel system. For some people these heroes maybe look like rebels that does not obey rules and just commit evil actions, but for the people that is directly affected for the corrupt system these rebels that disobey that authority are important heroes.

Heroism is a word that can be defined in base of the own perspective of the people in a determinate culture, and in which part of the story these people are; if they are in the side that the hero helps or in the side that the hero attack to get the benefit of his people. This hero can be seen as a hero or as a villain, depending on the culture definition that the people have about heroism. Zimbardo states “ This means that definitions of heroism are always culture-bound and time bound.” What this means is that for some people some actions will be seen them as heroic, but for others those same

actions are considered evil; depending on the definition that their culture has about what is a hero. The line between good and bad it does not really exist for a hero. Because by evil action he can still be a hero in the eyes of the people he helps, but he will be a villain from the people that the hero hurts by committing those evil actions. Back to the time the bravery of a hero was defined by the number of people they kill in war. This definition of hero in the old times was in a big scale and in more cruelty than today, more cruelty and more murders that person committed, more considered as a hero he was for the people of his time. But this reward of killing people to be considered a hero, not change a lot on these days. Soldiers today still received honors for attacking the enemy in wars, and for the number of enemies these soldiers kill with the evil actions. Killing is bad under the eyes of the society, and it is considered an evil action, but killing the enemy in war has a different meaning than in society, because killing in war is considered a heroic action. For the nation in which these soldiers belong, they are considered heroes, but for the nation that these soldiers attack they are considered evil.

The different perspectives of heroism depend on the situation where the hero committed his actions this can be evil actions or good actions depending on the people that are involved in that situation. Some actions of a hero can be seeing as heroism, but for the side of the people that are being affected for the hero's actions, those actions are just evil, Zimbardo put an example of how heroism cannot be seeing has heroism, but instead as an evil act, and show two perspectives on this matter. “Puppeteers enact the legend of Alexander the Great before children in remote villages of

Turkey. In the towns where his command posts were set up and his soldiers intermarried with villagers, Alexander is a great hero, but in towns that were simply conquered on his relentless quest to rule the known world, Alexander is portrayed as a great villain, more than a thousand years after his death” A hero can be evil for the people he helps, but for the people this hero, confront and attack to finish something that on his eyes was cruel, he is just a villain. This demonstrated how heroes could be still considered heroes, even when for some people these actions are evil.

People have a misunderstanding that heroes are just the ones that do not committed evil actions at all, and this statement can be right in some individuals that the situation force them to be heroes at that moment. They are few heroes in the world that do not commit evil actions, and this thought about heroes is totally right in certain situations. For example, the heroes that save lives in an accident, or the heroes that in a shooting sacrifice their own lives to protect the children in a school. But the reality is that there are some heroes that still are heroes by commit evil actions in this world. A hero is not always the one that committed good actions by shooting flowers, sometimes they have to committed evil actions for the common good.

Zimbardo states, “ This twenty-three-year-old West Point graduate volunteered to go hunting for Japanese snipers where the fighting was most intense. With grenades, a rifle, submachine gun, and bayonet, Nininger killed many Japanese soldiers single-handedly in intense close combat, and kept fighting although repeatedly wounded. Only after he had destroyed, an enemy bunked did he collapse and die. His heroism earned him the Medal of

Honor, posthumously, the first given in that war” Sometimes people cannot stand for their moral values to avoid cruel actions, because by doing this they could cooperate with the extermination of his own people.

Indeed, people can be considered good, with high moral values that are unbreakable, for example when they have a rule of nonviolence with any specie in the world. These people are considered good people, but this does not mean that they are heroes; because even with their nonviolence rule they are not changing the world. Who is more a hero, a person that sees a rape of a child and attack and hurt the rapist to save the child? Or the person that stands in their moral values of nonviolence, and ignore the situation? Zimbardo states “ The decisive question for each of us is whether to act in help of others, to prevent harm to others, or not to act at all”. Heroes are the ones that sacrifice their own beliefs to help others; surely the answer to the question is that the one who physically attacked the rapist is the hero instead of the one that ignore the situation to continue with his integrity of nonviolence. Hurting other person is considered evil in the society, but this person that attacks that rapist is considered a hero, not the one that refuses to attack because they are violating moral principles as physical damage, stealing, and murders.

The true heroes are not great people whose lives inspire, nor saints who does everything right, the true heroes are people who are willing to give everything to protect the innocent even if it means hurting other people and committed evil actions. Heroes that committed evil actions are not necessary bad people, because they are looking for the good of the ones in need. They

look for the benefit of those innocents that cannot stand by themselves, therefore heroes can be still be called heroes, despite their evil actions.