

Example of freedom from evil essay

[Philosophy](#), [Freedom](#)



Introduction

The world 'evil' in general terms refers to profound immorality. Evil usually goes hand in hand with religion and thus, it becomes very hard to talk about evil without making reference to religion. The world's major religions have varying definitions of evil, particular in regards to its root causes and motives. However, these religions generally agree that evil is composed of unbalanced behaviour elements that include: selfishness, neglect, expediency and ignorance (Drees 2003). The aim of this paper is to explore the concept of evil in great detail and show that it is virtually impossible for the world to be ever free from evil.

The world that we currently live is no short of evil. The amount of human pain and misery in the world is incalculable. Most of the world's evil emanates from man's own inhumanity to his fellow man (Upanishads WLT, I, 374). This is actually referred to as moral evil and is defined by the elements of unbalanced behaviour stated before. However, there is another type of evil that emanates from natural causes, and this is the suffering that is usually brought about by natural disasters such as earthquakes, tornadoes, floods and diseases like smallpox, cancer, polio, leukemia amongst others. This concept of natural evil has often been used to question the existence of a supreme being (Neiman, 2002).

One common argument that is often drawn is why a Supreme Being who is said to be omniscient, omnibenevolent and omnipotent (The New Testament: C&V, I, 139) would allow evil acts to prevail in the world. The Christian religion particularly attributes God with all these aspects but goes on to state that he is not the creator of evil and that in him there is "no darkness at

all". Hebblethwaite (1976) asks if he indeed exists, why he allows so much human pain and suffering?

There is no time in history that the world was ever free from evil (Kelly and Messina, 2002). So the question that has been in many scholars and indeed people's mind is whether it is possible for the world to be ever free from evil.

In *World Literature and Thought, Vol 1: the Ancient Worlds*, the authors present an anthology of historical, philosophical and literary selections that draw a lot of diversity from the world's major civilizations. The most famous of these selections include the Upanishads, the Life of Buddha the Diamond Sutra and finally the Christian's Old and New Testaments. The publication is full of works rich in expressionism and thoughts drawn from some of the world's major civilizations. Using these works, it is possible to explore the question of whether evil can ever be fully eliminated from the world.

One thing that stands out from these texts is that all the major world's civilizations had a consensus that everybody has been granted with free will. Free will refers to the ability to make choices without external influence or pressure, whether from fellow beings, a Supreme Being or inanimate objects. Free will is indeed one of the factors that directly contribute to evil. Free will gives individuals the capability to make personal choices and decisions, and some of these may be evil in nature (Trueblood 1957). As long as human beings continue having free will it is virtually impossible to eliminate evil from the world. It is common knowledge that freedom is good for everyone. However, as long as this freedom of mind exists without limits, then the risk of human beings and indeed other worldly objects in the world freely causing evil will continue to hover around.

Another major reason why the world cannot be fully free from evil is because of the varying definitions of evil that exist in the world today. In *Culture and Values*, the authors, L. S. Cunningham and J. J. Reich explore the varying definitions of evil that exist cultures around the world. For example, in the Upanishads which actually a series of Indian philosophical texts) recorded in *Culture and Values* (pg 348), evil is actually viewed as a duality of good and it is stated that the two cannot exist without each other. These sentiments are shared by the Buddhist religion as recorded *The Life of Buddha* (WLT, I, 380-398)

Another argument that comes into play in this discussion about evil in the world is the claim that the best world is the one that contains a little evil, usually known as “ soul building evil” (Upanishads: C&V, I, 348). It is claimed that this little amount of evil essentially helps us to be better people. If the world became free of all evil or if evil was completely eliminated from the world, the world would be filled with individuals having weaker characters. The world is actually made better by people having good characters. The amount of good added to the world by the existence of people with weaker characters far exceeds the amount of bad or evil that is required to bring about the weak character (Nietzsche and Faber, 1998).

In simple terms, it means that for the world to be a better place and for it to be filled with people with strong character, a small amount of evil is needed (*The Life of Buddha*, WLT, I, 380-398). For example, let us consider the following character traits; compassion, bravery and charity. These are character traits that have been existent in the world for many years as shown in the two text readings, that is, *World Literature and Thought*, Vol 1:

the Ancient Worlds and Culture and Values. These are character traits that are good in nature. However, it is not logically possible for these character traits to exist without the presence of evil. It is evil that in fact defines evil. For instance, the tarot of bravery requires one to hang in there in times of hardship (an evil).

Both religion and culture converge at a common point when it comes to definition of what is moral or immoral (The Diamond Sutra: WLT, I, 395). Although there might exist exceptions where religion disagree with culture, the basic definition of what is evil remains unmovable. Comparing the antique and modern religious and cultural setups it is unmistakable that the world will never be free from evil. During ancient times too much weight was attached to religion and cultural standards and a digression would result to severe punishment such as being a pariah. According to Geisler (1978) this is conceivably the reason why immorality and evil during ancient time was not as unbridled as the situation stands at the moment.

However, with the current level of independence and liberty of thought in the contemporary world, we expect evil to thrive and persist (Upanishads: C&V, I, 350). There are copious illustrations that exemplify how this emancipation of thought has been abused by human race.

It is gospel true that there is nowhere in religion or culture that same sex marriage, lesbianism or gay relationships have space. However, Philpott (2006) states that the modern world has abused the freedom that every individual is enjoying to make such practices seem a norm. Human race has used their liberty to challenge the long living standards that define the

relationship between a man and a woman. This is just but one paradigm of how evil is deeply entrenched in the inner hub of our civilization.

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