

Cyntoia Brown

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Understanding World's Good and Evil

What is good or evil? Is a question that for a long time has given philosophers sleepless nights trying to answer it. Good has always been defined as anything an individual does to help other individuals, while evil is the act of harming others. The assumption that people are innately good or evil is perilous, based on how the world operates. In many instances, an individual's character is defined based on what he does in a particular circumstance. The flexibility in character that people possess can sometimes represent good or evil. If they act evilly, they can always be redeemed, and everything goes on as usual. Therefore, the nature of human beings is one that is not easily understood as far as William Blake's book *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* is concerned. But that ideology is contradicted by John Milton, who believes that good can never be evil and evil can never be good no matter the circumstance, as stated in his book *Paradise Lost*. The two books have conflict ideologies concerning good and evil, and the world as it is providing a perfect ground to explore them. Therefore, the paper will focus on investigating the concepts of good and Evil and relate them to the books.

The act of always putting others' needs before yours, not being self-centered, being compassionate, sympathetic, honest and trustworthy expresses what being good is all about. The acts of celebrities such as Oprah Winfrey's and the Late Mother Teresa among many others define what it means to be good. These individuals put aside their needs to be of service to the people and ensure that they are happy regardless of their ethnicity, belief, religion or race. Their

service to humanity, their acts of selflessness and being committed to doing good no matter the circumstance is articulated in Milton's book, *The Paradise Lost that seeks distinguish what is good or evil*. On the other hand, evil is the opposite of the absence of good, and it is motivated by fear, and its manifestation is through violence and division. Thus the book *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* regards evil as abundance, desire, energy, action, and freedom, all of which are recipes for violence and division. Our egocentric impulses often make one to make everything about himself while disregarding others' welfare, and sometimes the acts of this same individual can change do depict those of saint like Jesus. The good and evil depicted by the individual is what is in the world, and they marry to keep the world moving, as Blake depicts. As such, evil is self-centered, while good is selfless.

It has always been said that all the suffering in the world is a result of the sin that Adam and Eve did in the garden of Eden, and if it were not for that, sin would not have entered the world. Sin is evil, and by committing it, it invites God's wrath, as portrayed in Milton's book. Despite that, evil continues to roam the Earth, and through mercy for his people, he has allowed good to litter every corner of this planet, and these are contraries that have to be there for human existence. The fall of man from the garden necessitated all these, and since God knew that life had to go on, he gave his precious creature the ability to choose between good or evil. Inasmuch as he has allowed mankind to, he warns of a one-way ticket to eternity during judgment for those who chose to do evil, whereby he promises them Tartarus (hell). For those that chose to do good, he will welcome them into the kingdom of heaven, whereby he will reward them. Those in hell will be rewarded with punishments and tortures castigated by their father, Satan. Blake believes that this has restricted many Christians from enjoying freedom and embracing poverty, which is evil.

Going to hell has always created fear among many, especially the Christians who would rather suffer on Earth than miss heaven. These Christians believe that through their good deeds, they will inherit the kingdom of God and enjoy life to eternity. Blake doesn't share such thoughts about heaven as Milton does. Based on his tour to hell and heaven, Blake confirmed that hell is not full of torment but rather a place where people think freely and can delight and revel in the full experience of existence. He gets the opportunity of dining with the prophets who tell him how foolishly religious leaders and philosophers convince the Christians to believe in the misinterpreted truth about heaven and hell. He thus acknowledges that poverty and suffering have filled the Earth because of humans' stodginess and fearful imaginations embracing evil as part of life. He saw people frowning in heaven, and bored individuals who wished for freedom, and the angels are dull and easily annoyed. Blake argues that the eternal fire not to burn sinners, but a portrayal of energy, and he talks about "walking among the fires of hell delighted with enjoyment..." Inasmuch as that is the case, Milton believes that no matter how many people are convinced with Blake's idea, still good will triumph over evil thanks to the ability of reasoning that God has blessed everyone with.

Religion is good, but many of those administering it are evil. Religious doctrines emphasize the need to recognize God as the almighty being, and thus nobody should be quick to judge; judgment belongs to him alone. The doctrines emphasize the need to dwell together as brothers and sisters and not to despise anyone or discriminate. These were the doctrines that Blake grew knowing but religion's marriage with authority and how the new church gave allegiance to the Kings and Queens. He believed that the people, many of who were languishing in poverty, malnourished, and dying in multitudes due to strange diseases and hunger, were enslaved by the monarchy and the church. He points out that religious authority made people

forget that God resided in them and not a religious authority. Blake's dissent for the church were not misplaced, and thus why one can truly appreciate his bitterness towards religion or Christianity that Milton emphasized much on the defeat of Satan but turned a blind eye on discrimination and oppression of others. Trusting in the bible even was difficult since it was corrupted to serve the needs of the leaders and the wealthy, and due to ignorance, he saw it prudent to start rebuking the gospel. The same still happens today, Christians remove tithe and offering for God's work, but a church leader embezzles it.

Obedying God's word and commandments is good but defying them is evil. God's creation of a woman was for companionship and through marriage procreate and populate the Earth. God commands that women are supposed to submit to their husbands who have power over them, and that was how it was even in traditional societies. Milton disputed this fact in the book, where he ascertains that the relationship between Adam and Eve was one based on mutual dependence and not hierarchy domination. As such, this was evil, and it does not differ much from Blake's thoughts on marriage. According to Blake, marriage should not there since it brings restrictions on desire and freedom to choose whoever one likes at any time. His arguments suggested that man and woman differ in nature and faults Noah's ark pairing. Blake suggests that instead of pairing in nature, they should have been paired in desire, and this would ensure that one lives the rest of his life with the one he loves. Blake's idea is good in the sense it seeks to prevent divorce and encourage stay together.

In conclusion, good and evil in the world is anchored on two things; reason and imagination. Knowing why things are the way they are and imagination of the consequences suppose these things are changed. According to Milton, good and evil define how the world is, and understanding them best is if one is Christian who only knows about doing good and

anything other than that is evil. But, the universe is not only filled with Christians; there are people also of different faiths who believe that heaven and hell always marry to facilitate the continuation of life.

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