

GOOD & EVIL : SOURCES OF and moralities

A central goal of most religions is to account for evil: to propose a source for it and to enjoin us to either fight it or come to terms with it. The best known accounts of evil are religious, and they entail irrational rituals to fight or avoid it, ~~judgment~~ ~~and~~ ~~that~~ ~~such~~ ~~beliefs~~ ~~are~~ ~~at~~ ~~variance~~ ~~with~~ ~~science~~ and that such practices have not been shown effective, except occasionally as means for consolation. We need a ^{secular} scientific account of the source of evil, and we should summon the resources of science-based technology to ~~to~~ minimize evil.

We start by noting that evil, just as good ^{ness}, is a property inherent in uncounted processes involving all biospecies. Think of natural calamities ^{and natural selection.} ~~x~~ Second, humans, due to their greater brain power, ~~are~~ the greatest evil-doers and also the greatest potential good-makers on earth. Third, brain capacity, by itself, is morally neutral: whether an original brain will devote itself to evil ^{or good} ~~causes~~ ~~a~~ ~~good~~ ~~causes~~ depends critically on the moral education it has received. An intelligent brain may engage in evil or good scheming according as its aims are antisocial or prosocial. Shorter: humans — unlike other animals — learn and unlearn to do evil deeds just as they learn to do good deeds.

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