

The Abuse of Evil: The Corruption of Politics and Religion since 9/11 (Themes for the 21st Century)

Richard J. Bernstein

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Since 9/11 politicians, preachers, conservatives and the media are all speaking about evil. In the past the dicourse about evil in our religious, philosophic and literary traditions has provoked thinking, questioning and inquiry. But today the appeal to evil is being used as a political tool to obscure compex issues, block serious thinking and stifle public discussion and debate.

We are now confronting a clash of mentalities, not a clash of civilisations. One mentality is drawn to absolutes, moral certainties, and simplistic dichotomies of good and evil. The other seriously questions an appeal to absolutes in politics and criticizes the simplistic division of the world into the forces of evil and the forces of good.

In *The Abuse of Evil* Bernstein challenges the claim that without an appeal to absolutes, we lack the grounds for acting decisively in fighting our enemies. The post 9/11 abuse of evil corrupts both democratic politics and religion. The stakes are high in this clash of mentalities in shaping how we think and act in the world today - and in the future.



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