



Dr. Blosa Science

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The Science Foundation College
Uganda East Africa
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+256 778 633 682, 753 802709
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Comprehension story 9

Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow, using your own words wherever possible.

As is usual in any romantic theory, we find names of Byron conspicuous. The Byronic hero in his successive metamorphoses has filled- and also written- more books than the tongue can tell. He is volcanic, extreme in all things, magnificent in sin. He adored of women (or, conversely he is misunderstood and betrayed by women and retire into loft isolation and the pageant of his bleeding heart). With the help of modern psychology he has developed complexes and neuroses. At times, to be sure, he evinces a spasmodic and spectacular goodness, but is a manifestation of his superb energy and must never, according to the theory, be confused with the goodness of good people. 05

Early in the nineteenth Century, this theory got tangles up with Napoleon and also with far-reaching consequences, with German philosophy. Students of history of philosophy point to doctrines of Fichte. From this source come the Superman, the Master Race, Prussianism, and Hitler. Until there was an actual outbreak in war, we did not resent this kind of thing because the ideas were not very different from ones that we had been brought up on. Not many of us were fooled by Hitler as a person. A bad egg if ever there was one. Yet there was something comic about him, we are such a good-natured people that we find it hard to realize that funny things can be dangerous. 15 20

Furthermore, we saw that Hitler and his friends had energy, and we rather admired them for it. We didn't blame them for not wanting to be bullied. We were inclined to discount the stories of domestic terrorism. Even

after the war began in Europe, we felt a certain respect for Prussian competence and efficiency. We were genuinely confused by the romantic theory of evil. The thing that awoke us up was not the badness of the egg but the terrific consequences of the things that particular egg did. When the war is over, unless I missed my guess, we are likely to be again misled into the same confusion of values

There is still a third modern theory of evil, and this I shall call the scientific theory. According to this, there is no such thing as sin. Human beings are merely very complicated mechanisms, and they are what they are because of the regular operation of heredity and environment, economic law, vitamin deficiency, hypertrophy of the glands, or whatever else you happen to believe in. Hitler is a paranoiac, and the whole German nation is suffering from a secondary, or induced, paranoia. Exponents of this theory remind us that science doesn't judge; it only explains. You can't blame Hitler for being paranoiac any more than you blame poison ivy for being poisonous. Someday science will tell us what to do about it, but what if that day doesn't come soon enough?

Here are three ways of looking at the evil in human nature – the sentimental, the romantic, and the scientific. Each one of them has qualities that commend it to the American temperament. Our good heartedness makes us like the first; our energy and independence incline us to the second; everything that is scientific in our education and training prepares us for the third. The fact that they are often contradictory doesn't worry us. Whatever our characteristic American virtues are, logic isn't one of them. We share with other English-speaking people a genius for living happily with contradictions, anomalies, and compromises. And where does it all get us?

Let me return momentarily to Milton. Far be it from me say that he knew all the answers, but he knew some of them. He knew that ambition leads to cruelty and terror; he knew that the human race can be saved only by goodness, the goodness of God in man. He knew that the forces of Hell are real and are everywhere and always. He saw them in his imagination, surging and seething and boiling up onto this earth. Theologies, to be sure, are transitory, far more transitory than poetry. So far as *Paradise Lost* is purely

theological, it may be obsolete, but as an analysis of good and evil, it teaches a lesson that still need to learn. Over the theology of the poem towers Satan, incarnate evil, the arch fiend, the destroyer, and on his head sits horror plumed 60

I should like to finish this with a noble peroration on the splendours of American goodness, secure in its native right and triumphant over evils in all its forms; but I shall be on much safer ground if I merely sum up what I have said already. Taking us by and large, we have a considerable faith in goodness and good people. That faith is probably greater than we realize, and in this respect we are lucky, because a faith in the goodness of men is the one thing that democracy cannot do without. Beyond that we are entangled in a lot of familiar notion about good and evil, accepting now one and now another, never following any of them to logical conclusion. We can get through this war, I am sure, on our faith in ourselves and our native goodness. It is after the war that we are going to run into trouble. Shall we look at Germany as a nation of beautiful souls, temporarily misled in their emotions but presently to return to an idyllic existence of Beethoven, beer, and Grimm's fairy tale? Or as a Byronic hero-nation, magnificent in sin, romantic in its defiant energy, and then tragic in its defeat? Or as the victim of an unfortunate environment, needing merely a treatment in international economic therapy? 65 70 75

Or shall we really get down to the roots of good and evil and wrestle with our theories until we bring them into some kind of working conformity, not only with one another but with fact? 80

Questions

- (a) Suggest a suitable title for the passage (02 marks)
- (b) What does the author mean by the following expressions
- (i) "Funny things can be dangerous." (line 20) (03 marks)
 - (ii) "' living happily with contradiction'"? (line 48-49) (03marks)
- (c) In not more than 100 words, summarize the theories of evil inhuman nature (12marks)

(d) Explain the meaning of the following words and phrases as used in the passage, using your own words wherever possible

- | | | |
|--------|----------------------------------|------------|
| (i) | conspicuous (line 02) | (02 marks) |
| (ii) | lofty isolation (line 05) | (02 marks) |
| (iii) | domestic terrorism (line 23) | (02 marks) |
| (iv) | complicated mechanisms (line 32) | (02 marks) |
| (v) | temperament (line 43) | (02 marks) |
| (vi) | obsolete (line 57) | (02 marks) |
| (vii) | familiar notion (line 68) | (02 marks) |
| (viii) | defiant energy (line 75) | (02 marks) |
| (ix) | economic therapy (line 76 - 77) | (02 marks) |
| (x) | working conformity. (line 79-80) | (02 marks) |
| | | (20 marks) |

Spellings, Punctuation and Grammatical Expression (SPGE) (10 marks)

Suggests answers

(a) Suggest a suitable title for the passage (02 marks)

The evil of human nature

Theories of evil of human nature

(b) What does the author mean by the following expressions

(i) "Funny things can be dangerous." (line 20) (03 marks)

- Amusing situations can be risky
- Amusing things can have undesirable consequences

(ii) "living happily with contradiction"? (line 48-49) (03marks)

- Being able to Live together peacefully irrespective of our differences
- Not mindful about things or situations which are not in line with what we expect or believe in or cherish.

(c) In not more than 100 words, summarize the theories of evil inhuman nature (12marks)

THE THEORIES OF EVIL IN HUMAN NATURE

The theories of evil in human nature are given as sentimental, romantic and scientific. A sentimental theory evil suggests wickedness is caused from strong emotions or having faith in goodness of man and good people. Romantic theory of evil suggests wickedness associated with mania and paranoia. While scientific theory of evil is due to hereditary, vitamin deficiencies, hypertrophy of gland and disease conditions.

(d) Explain the meaning of the following words and phrases as used in the passage, using you own words wherever possible

(i) conspicuous (line 02) (02 marks)

easily noticeable/obvious/common/outstanding

(ii) lofty isolation (line 05) (02 marks)

arrogant

(iii) domestic terrorism (line 23) (02 marks)

internal violence

(iv) complicated mechanisms (line 32) (02 marks)

complex machines/ complex beings/difficult to understand

(v) temperament (line 43) (02 marks)

- | | | |
|--------|--|------------|
| | personality/nature/character/disposition | |
| (vi) | obsolete (line 57) | (02 marks) |
| | outdated/old-fashioned/backward | |
| (vii) | familiar notion (line 68) | (02 marks) |
| | common belief/everyday ideas/usual theme | |
| (viii) | defiant energy (line 75) | (02 marks) |
| | rebellious drives/stubborn force/ | |
| (ix) | economic therapy (line 76 - 77) | (02 marks) |
| | financial solutions/aid/remedies | |
| (x) | working conformity. (line 79-80) | (02 marks) |
| | common understanding/in agreement/compliance/harmony | |

Spellings, Punctuation and Grammatical Expression (SPGE) (10 marks)

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Thanks

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