USING LITERATURE ABOUT EVIL TO LEAD STUDENTS TOWARDS THE GOOD

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ABSTRACT

Evil is a complex entity, a category of reasoning that is both interesting and challenging to researchers. Over the past half century, there have been many studies on the roots of evil and solutions to prevent and limit evil. However, the highlighted measures such as punishment, detention and re-education are just efforts to approach the consequences of the problem. In fact, in many countries today, the situation of school violence is still complicated and tends to increase. It is necessary to promote the search for prevention and early intervention solutions to help students be immune to evil. My article is an attempt to approach that aim. The article examines the meanings of the literature on evil and proposes some principles and measures to use it as an attractive and insightful educational tool to help prevent students' instincts from evil. The primary research questions include: Should we pay attention to teach students about the evil mentioned in the literary text? If yes, what do we teach and how much? Is writing about evil good or bad for educating students away from evil? How does the obsession with evil in literature guide and inspire students to go toward the good?

Keywords:

Introduction

If Psychology is often referred to as the "most mysterious" and "darkest" science of all sciences, "Evil" is one of the most mysterious and darkest elements in the human's inner world. Evil has been an important research content, a "difficult knowledge" (Kessel, C., 2019, p.1) of many sciences such as theology, philosophy, psychology, education, genetics, neuroscience, sociology. Over the past decades, there have been many studies on the roots of evil, proposing solutions to prevent and limit evil from the perspective of political institutions, social power, family, education, social community and the resistance of good instincts in every human being (e.g Kekes, J., 2005; Staub, E., 2015; Kessel, 2019). However, in many countries nowadays, the violence in general and school violence in particular is still complicated and tends to increase (Osofsky, J.D., 1997, 2018; Staub, 2015; Committee of Culture, Education for Youth, Adolescents and Children, National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2019). Experimental researches of psychologists show that, although children today have higher and higher IQ, their EQ has decreased: they are easy to be lonely, depressed, angry, stubborn, more nervous, worried, impulsive and aggressive (Goleman, D., 1998). This dangerous paradox exists throughout the world. Many governments, have strengthened measures of management, punishment, detention and re-education. These measures are nonetheless an attempt to access and address the consequences of the problem. I agree with Staub's (2015) point of view that we need to emphasize the search for prevention and early intervention solutions to help students be immune to evil while they always have to live in a social environment which is full of interwoven relationships and always goes along with both good and evil. This article is an attempt to approach that aim. The paper examines the meaning of the literature on evil and proposes some principles and ways to use literature on evil as an attractive and insightful educational tool to help prevent students' instincts from evil.

As a mirror that reflects life, Evil and Good are almost paralleled subjects in human discoveries of literature and other types of art. Many literary texts written about evil have been chosen to be taught in secondary schools. Therefore, many questions of concern and skepticism have been posed: Should we pay attention to teach students about the evil mentioned in the literary text? If yes, what do we teach and how much? Is writing about evil good or bad for educating students away from evil? How does the obsession with evil in literature guide and inspire students to go toward the good? In other words, Miller, A.G. (2004), sees the above questions "fair questions to ask, however, and their answers should be sought" (p.xi). In my opinion, the above questions need to be answered in a grounded manner if literary texts written about evil are an essential part and cannot be removed from schools. Those are the questions I ask and look for answers in this article.

What is Evil? Is it possible to replace the concept of Evil with Bad, Wrong or lack of Empathy?

The reflection on evil has been through centuries of historical journey. Theologians, philosophers, and scientists have asked fundamental questions such as: What is evil? Is evil an existential being or is it just something metaphysical? Is evil an entity in opposition to good or is it just a "lack of goodness", or "lack of empathy" in human? Is Evil in the category of morality, social morality or just a "mechanism of survival" in the evolution of nature? ...

There are hundreds of definitions of evil but Kessel (2019) indicates "It is no easy task to try to define what evil might be" (p.2). Theologians, St. Augustine (354-430) says that evil is metaphysical, non-being, "Evil has no positive nature; but the loss of good has received the name "evil" (The City of God, XI, CHAP. 9). This idea is advocated by Cohen, S.B. (2011), psychopathology professor of the University of Cambridge, who say

that "evil" is an "unscientific" term, it should be replaced by the concept of "empathy erosion", because "Unlike the concept of evil, empathy has explanatory power" (p.6). While Clendinnen, I. (1999) and Cole, P. (2006) argued that evil is a useless concept, we should give up and replace the concept of bad and wrong, Kekes (2005) asserts that there must be a clear distinction between evil and bad and wrong because evil implies far beyond evil, expressing "the most basic and most serious of our moral problems" (p.xi).

Critics of evil as something metaphysical and non-being, trials, criminologists, and psychiatrists not only assert that evil is an entity that exists, but also give eloquent evidences of human cruelty consciously. For example, barbaric medical experiments were performed on the human bodies of the Nazis (Thomas, L., 1993; Clendinnen, I., 1999; Cohen, 2011, p.2, 4); similar inhumane science experiments of the Unit 731 - the prison and war research center of the Imperial Japanese Army during World War II; mass massacres, frighteningly fragmented murders in News of many countries in the world today. While many scientists support the idea of the need to perform horrific animal experiments to understand the human body's response and develop medicines, animal-loving organizations are in an indignant rage because they think these are cruel, inhumane and unnecessary actions, because we have many other ways than to take the lives of animals.

While the US government declared attacking Iraq to "bring freedom and democracy to the Middle East", the American writer Pinter (who won Nobel Prize for Literature in 2005) called it "a bandit act, an act of blatant state terrorism, demonstrating absolute contempt for the concept of international law" (p.8). While Soviet state media was proud to report that Soviet soldiers were "helping the Afghan people build socialism", a Belarus female writer Alexievich, S. (who was raised in Russian culture, and won the Nobel Prize in literature in 2015) who returned from the Afghan battlefield called them "murderers." This is because she witnessed the Soviet rocket that turned Afghanistan into "an Afghan cemetery", and there were children who kept toys with their mouths because both of their hands had been cut off and "an old Afghan woman was shouting", "The cry wasn't human or animal" (p.13, 14).

Thus, Evil is not metaphysical but an existential, vivid and extremely complex entity. Evil has connotation meaning beyond "Bad" or "Wrong" (Kekes, 2005). The history of discussion about evil shows us that evil is an elastic category, without clear boundaries, historical and ever changing. However, from an educational perspective, in my opinion, we should help students distinguish evil in two areas: 1) evil is in the natural category, not from human intentions or actions; 2) evil belongs to the moral category, stemming from the moral agents of human. In the scope of reading and teaching literature in schools, I think that it is necessary to guide students to identify and focus on the evil in the category of morality.

In the ethical category, according to Parsons (1998), evil is "a malicious disregard for others" (Kessel, 2019, p.6). According to Singer, M.G. (2004), (2004), the concept of evil refers to the most vile, morally despicable actions, characters, and events (p.185). According to Bataille, G. (2012), once people violate rules and prohibitions formed in an organized society, they are more or less regarded as bearing the traits of Evil, and "pure evil is when the murderer, besides his own interests, takes pleasure in seeing the beating" (p.29). In the concept of Kekes (2005), an evil act is a combination of three elements "the malevolent motivation of the evildoers; the serious excusive harm caused by their actions; and the lack of morally acceptable excuse for the actions" (p.2).

In this article, I conceive and use the concept of "evil" with the meaning that malevolent words and behaviors and actions of human are contrary to ethical morality and contrary to ethical standards recognized by mankind, causing suffering and disaster to others.

Should it be better to talk about evil or should it be quiet? What is the root of evil? Should our students learn about evil?

"Evil has a cold, horrifying purity" (Carlisle, C., 2012, Evil, part 1); people often use the concept of evil when they cannot provide a thorough explanation of why a criminal act is committed (Cole, 2006). Therefore, the debate of whether we should or should not explain evil has not ended. Basic questions have been and are still being asked: Does evil have a root in human instincts or be born of God? Did political power or social circumstances give rise to evil? Should it be better to talk about evil or should it be quiet? Should we sow into the pure and honest soul of students the knowledge of evil? If yes, what for?

While Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) and some philosophers agreed that we should be quiet about what we cannot talk about, Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) and other philosophers declared: the true subject of philosophy is what is "unthought" and even unthinkable. While Augustine said that the attempt to explain evil is a sign of a failure to understand the nature of evil, the French poet Lautreamont perceives that "Man is perfect" and noted that "fighting evil" means "giving it too much honor" (Bataille, 2012, p.20); Many scientists affirm that human evil is the most important thing to explain, but not other sufferings (Carlisle, 2012).

While Cole (2006, p.21); Held (2001, p.107) is concerned that the use of the term "Evil" may be harmful or dangerous when used incorrectly or in an inappropriate political context, leading to a risk of war and conflict; Card (2010) argues that "If the likelihood of the ideological abuse of a concept were sufficient reason to abandon the concept, we should probably abandon all normative concepts, certainly "right" and "wrong." (p.15). And while theorists still debate whether or not to talk about evil, in reality, evil is still happening every day, around us: War is still going on; catastrophic attacks, killings and massacres are meticulously planned; killing "techniques" are increasingly being "renovated." "Man has put a lot of thought into how best to kill other men" (Alexievich, 2015, p.12). New types of drugs are becoming more and more intense on the physical and human nature of young people; methods and arguments justifying murder become more creative. However, those are only the evil that our concerns can reach. Moreover, there are "completely new" and "invisible" risks that people are facing, according to Alexievich (2015). They are not politics or tanks but an invisible risk of the disappearance of habitats that we are not ready to perceive (p. 15, 16). Carlisle (2012) wonders: "There is something unfathomable about evil: it appears to be a deep, impenetrable darkness that resists the light of reason" (Evil, part 1). Carlisle's anxiety is also our fear, combined with our torment and our desire to understand evil. Therefore, I agree with the views of Kekes and Card who say that ignoring evil is more dangerous than trying to explain and understand it. This is because only by understanding evil, we can find its roots and prevent it in the future (Kekes, 1990; Card, 2002, 2010).

The root of evil is also an endless topic of discussion. Confucius (551–479 BC), Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) and many other theorists perceive that people are naturally good but the pressure of life, social circumstances, and educational environment have made them evil; Augustine and Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) interpret evil as a consequence of freedom; Plato, Hsun Tzu (316 BC-237 BC), Friedrich Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud argue that evil is one of the original human instincts, "because in one's nature there is barbarism that can restore our cruelty" (Nietzsche, 2006, p.20).

Shifting the focus to consider the root of evil from the personality of the individual to the political and social side, the Jewish female philosopher - Arendt, H. (1963), who had run away from fascism twice, the author of "A Report on the Banality of Evil" asserts: there are crimes that can only be committed by a huge bureaucracy, using government resources. Similarly, psychology professor Zimbardo, P. (1971), after conducting a

"Stanford prison experiment" on the psychological effects of being a prisoner and a prison guard from the Psychology Department, Stanford University, California in 1971 came to the conclusion: the existence of institutions with rigid social roles, the legalization of violence (prison) led to the situation that good or ordinary people could handle cruel. The scary thing is, although humans are very proactive in controlling this experiment, somehow, in the end, "they are also victims of the experiment." This view is endorsed by many writers and researchers who argue that dictatorships in the world are huge machines for spreading crimes to innocent people around the world (Printer, 2005; Alexievich, 2015; Dyland, B. - won Nobel prize in Literature in 2017; Kekes, 2005; Kessel, 2019). Carlisle (2012) added: "A delicious taste of freedom and power when given the opportunity to go undercover", communicating in safe anonymity is also an opportunity for crime to emerge. Carlisle (2012) confirms that the development of science and technology, the 4.0 industrial revolution and contemporary social life have given rise to more favorable conditions for evil to appear than before (Evil, part 4). This is also a dangerous paradox in our time.

Many recent researchers, from different perspectives, have provided explanations for the root of evil (e.g Kekes 2005, Grossman, Lt.Col.D. & Degaetano, G. 2009; Osofsky, 1997, 2018). Kekes (2005) explained and arranged the roots of evil into four groups: "external and internal causes of evil"; "Active and passive causes of evil" (p.136, 137). The explanations are getting more multidimensional and deeper. However, the discussion of the roots of evil has not stopped there.

Thus, the history of the debate on evil shows that each new result in explaining evil continues to raise new questions that make us watch and reflect more closely and constantly on it. Even so, the process of searching for answers, discussions, experiments and practices of thinkers as well as scientists and art works from the past have helped us expand the dimensions of identification and reflection on an entity with full of mystery and darkness that is evil.

Researchers' debates and our experiences of life let us realize that the root of evil is extremely diverse: human instinct, the indispensable rule of survival - "survival mechanisms" in naturally, the political and military dictatorship, the impact of the social environment, the education of the family and the self-education of each person. It also means that although we do not expect but the presence of evil in this life is inevitable. If evil and violence are increasingly affecting both adults and children (Osofsky, 1997, 2018), our students need to be taught to know about evil according to certain educational goals and principles. As Kessel (2019) says, in the educational context, "Evil might seem like a strange choice to explore options for better relations with each other" (p.1).

Does literature have a right and is allowed to write about evil?

Does literature have a right and is allowed to write about evil? Is literature written about evil supports evil? Is literature about evil guilty or innocent? These are also basic questions to ask when discussing literature and evil. In specific aspects and situations, in my opinion, Nietzsche's view is somewhat extreme when it comes to conclude that suffering and tragedy as intrinsic to life. However, in that situation, he is exactly right when he asserted that one of the purposes of myth, art and religion is to interpret suffering, to make it meaningful, so that people can endure suffering. This view has been confirmed by many writers. For example, when being asked "Why do you always write about tragedy?", Alexievich (2015) answered "Because that's how we live" (p.15). As an art form, literature has contributed an important part in the journey to find the meaning of/in suffering, helping people to have more motivation to step up from the abyss of life.

If evil is an indispensable part of life, and if "man always carries with him two needs at once, one towards God, one towards Satan" (Charles Pierre Baudelaire, French poet) and if this life is a strange "marriage" between "heaven and hell" (the poet "The Marriage of

Heaven and Hell" by William Blake, English poet), literature cannot fail to mention the Evil in the discoveries of human nature. Literature is like a "mirror moving along the path of life" (Stendhal, French writer). From the raw material of reality, literature can create "a more wonderful, more durable and more realistic new world than the one existing in the eyes of a person" (Todorov, 2010, p.58). Semiotics Eco, U. (2004) confirms: "The world of literature inspires the certainty that there are some unquestionable assumptions, and that literature therefore offers us a model, however fictitious of truth" (p.7); and "one of the principle functions of literature lies in these lessons about fate and death" (p.15). With the mission of saving mankind and their souls, literature cannot just be a cloud of five colors wandering in the air. To have a meaning and a place in life, literature must engage in the human realm, radiate into the soul and the body in order to see both the "sacred and the mundane" in human in order to help human save, free themselves and love towards Truth - Good - Beauty. French writer André Gide (awarded the 1947 Nobel Prize in Literature) makes a very good statement when he proclaims: The great mistake is to find a way to put life outside the work. Writers always desire to write about good things, but obscure truths, evil while the suffering of people is really a strong motivation for them to write. While declaring the relationship between "Art, Truth & Politics", Printer (2005) admitted: "A writer's life is a highly vulnerable, almost naked activity", "find no shelter, no protection - unless you lie" (p.11). But the writer chose that mission, the mission "to define the real truth of our lives and our societies" to "restoring what is so nearly lost to us - the dignity of man" (p.12).

Thus, literature on evil is also about an intrinsic to life aspect, about a part of human hidden in darkness. Descriptions, projections of evil in literature help us to be aware of ourselves, or about hidden corners that we have not seen ourselves. Literature written about evil does not mean literature on the side of evil. In "Literature and the Evil", Bataille (2012) defines the boundary to identify literature about evil, that is when the writer writes about things outside the framework of the rational world of "taboo". The evil rises above the conventional ethical notion while belonging to another frame of reference, as Emily Brontë says by experiencing the abyss of evil with courage, she can "understand the evil to the end" from which "to maintain moral purity" (Bataille, 2012, p.25).

Of course, like the violent media and games, the literature on evil is not "innocent". In a certain sense, "literature is like breaking the moral line, it is even dangerous" (Bataille, 2012, p.40). This is because the description of how to do evil in a literary work is at risk of "drawing the path for the deer to run". However, the important issue does not come from the writers and the text, but from the readers and the actions. Therefore, in my opinion, the great task of Language Arts teachers is to teach students how to read, how to respond; guide students to make meanings and "using"/"apply" literature into their real life situations so that literature about evil becomes an educational tool for the fear of evil and the impulse of good directions for students.

Is literature about evil a good way to educate students to avoid evil?

"Evil is cruel" (Alexievich, 2015), we cannot eliminate it so the best thing we can do is "Facing Evil", preventing it and minimize its harm (Kekes 2005). For children, we wish them "to be inoculated against it" (Alexievich, 2015) from family, school and good social environment but not from court, reeducation camp or prison. In this context, "moral imaginations" (Kekes 2005) and even "evil situations" are assumed to be effective educational tools. The strength of literature is that it is possible to provide a lot of "evil imaginations" and "moral imaginations" for students to experience and then make a choice for themselves in a positive manner to deal with the same situation in the future.

Literature is more likely to create an obsession with evil than other types of art. For example, if characters in paintings only touch the appearance of evil; theatrical and

cinematic characters are limited in space, gestures, actions and inner monologues, literature is really "a clear expression of evil" (Bataille, 2012, p. 18). With endless verbal material, diverse narrative art, rich inner monologues and unlimited imagination, literature can be described, projected, meticulously illuminated, and realize the hidden, dark, "transgressions" in the human soul into slow-moving movies in front of readers' eyes. The words and symbols of evil in literature are deeply rooted in readers' mind, helping them to visualize, reflect and contemplate evil more specifically. When theorists appear powerless to fully comprehend evil, writers' vivid descriptions, and fascinating experiences, contemplations, reflections and forecasts of human condition are useful data for discussions about theory of evil. In fact, many writers have overcome ordinary social ethical barriers to write on topics that are considered "transgressions" such as the desire to destroy, the desire for revenge, "the triviality" of evil, "sadism, lust to speak out the truths of the human entity, broadening the dimensions of reflection on humanity. For example, while we still wonder why a man can wield a knife to slash at someone else even after the victim is dead, we should read Bao Ninh's The Sorrow of War: A Novel of Northern Vietnam (1996), the most haunting novel about Vietnam War, we will understand why people can act so barbaric at times. The "scenes of wild killing," "filial piety" and "ferocious blood" of soldiers on both sides of the battlefield are described in this novel to help us realize that it is the impasse of circumstances (sword-and-gun battles) and the desire to avenge the deaths of their former comrades that made people in certain moments act out of humanity. Therefore, if we agree that our students need to learn to know evil, literature is really an insightful and profound educational tool. The next important question to ask is: To what extent should we teach students about evil?

In Vietnam, although there are dozens of literary works on the topic of war for national defense taught in the curriculum of Language Arts subject, one that thoroughly reflects the severity of war to humanity and Vietnamese people like The Sorrow of War: A Novel of Northern Vietnam has not appeared. The Vietnamese government is concerned that the effects of war crimes as well as the political stance of pessimistic figures in the work will negatively affect young people. Meanwhile, Professor Laichen Sun, Professor of History at California State University, Fullerton, in a research lecture on "International Impact of The Sorrow of War: A Novel of Northern Vietnam novel" in Hanoi on July 15, 2019 said that after reading the novel, he was very touched and this work changed his way of teaching history. During more than 10 years of teaching, in his lessons he always asked students to read this work to better understand Vietnam's history, the devastation of war, the horrors of war to hate war and nurture a love for peace (University of Social Sciences and Humanities, VNU Hanoi, 2019). Similarly, in the past few years, there have been many debates in Vietnam about whether to keep or remove Chi Pheo, a short story by Nam Cao from the curriculum of Language Arts subject (grade 11), because in this work there are some passages depicting Chi Pheo's raping Thi No, slitting his face with a tantrum, killing Ba Kien with a knife and committing suicide. Opponents suggest that the negative and violent actions of Chi Pheo easily encourage similar actions among readers - students. Supporters argue: Chi Pheo represents the good and the evil of each person, and the important issue is that the reader always sees his desire to live beyond adversity, his desire to be an honest person throughout the work (Le Thi Thanh Tam, 2017).

Chi Pheo by Nam Cao is one of the masterpieces of Vietnamese literature that truly reflects the tragic fate of Vietnamese peasants under French colonialism and Vietnamese feudalism in the 1930s. -1945. Using a masterful art of psychological analysis, the work focuses on the process of the character Chi Pheo being alienated from an honest person to become the "devil" of Vu Dai village. The work also shows Chi Pheo's strong desire to return to an honest person. Killing the evil chief Ba Kien and committing suicide is the deadlock solution that Chi Pheo chose, but also a way to express his break with the evil person. In my opinion, this is still an excellent work in many aspects to choose to teach at high school level in Vietnam. This is because the important issue is how teachers exploit the negativity and violence in this work to help students stay away from bad thoughts,

crimes and make positive choices for situations, preparing for real-life adversities they may come across.

Thus, literature on evil can be a good tool to educate students' skills to control negative emotions if teachers know how to lead and organize discussions. Through characters and situations in literary works, teachers need to help students identify and distinguish which thoughts and actions are crimes and "taboo". In order for students to identify and distinguish these, teachers must guide students to identify the values, moral standards of humanity in general; and that of nation in particular. For example, these are the 12 core values of the twenty-first century people that need to be respected and protected according to Tillman, D. (2007) including: Peace, Respect, Love, Tolerance, Honesty, Modesty, Cooperation, Happiness, Responsibility, Simplicity, Freedom and Solidarity. Identifying evil and these basic values are the foundation to help students keep their thoughts and actions away from evil, then gradually develop themselves and contribute to building a sustainable civilized human life.

In terms of content and degree, in my opinion, depending on the characteristics of age, cognitive capacity of the subject and each specific situation, we can determine the content and level of description of evil to educate students. For kindergartners, as Kessel (2019) indicates, the program should only provide simple insights into evil through fairy tales' characters or short stories that match the children's simple understanding of goodness and evil, good and bad. At Primary school, although students are older but their hearts are still immature, innocent and are at an early stage of the process of forming personalities; The ability to analyze, resonate and generalize is still limited. Therefore, meticulously describing the evil in literature as it happened in real life will easily lead to emotional trauma in the children. With this fairy age, old stories and comics on the topic of Good - Evil will still be appropriate and effective educational tools. In Vietnam, it is reasonable to cut off the ending of revenge in fairy tale Tam Cam (Cinderella's version in Vietnam) when teaching this fairy tale at primary school.

For junior high school and high school, though students do not want, they have many experiences related to evil in life, on movies, or games. When they have been able to analyze the nature, causes and consequences of an incident, it is necessary to teach students more about the manifestations of cruel thoughts and actions. However, in my opinion, the description of criminal acts is not the focus but only the means and background knowledge to direct students to more essential things. It is necessary for students to focus on discussing the roots of criminal thoughts and actions; their consequences such as destruction, distortion of nature, panic, suffering, despair, distortion of the soul and deformation of human humanity. From deep awareness of the causes and consequences of evil, students need to be focused on teaching how to resist instinct to touch evil, to find ways to prevent, limit and escape from evil. Literature about evil is generally a reagent to help student-readers realize their instincts, and with the guidance of teachers, it will turn into a vaccine to evil.

How can the obsession with evil in literature lead and inspire students to go toward the good?

If literature about evil is both meaningful and guilty, how can the obsession with evil in literature always draw students towards good? How can the experiences of evil in literature not negatively affect the student readers themselves? Although there has been much research on evil, "The task addressing the notion of evil is challenging" for teachers (Kessel, 2019, p.6). In order to overcome these difficulties when the experiences of evil in literature negatively affects the students' souls, I recommend some suggestions of teaching principles and tactics which might be helpful for teaching students about evil through literature.

Help students to clearly delimit the boundary between Good and Evil

While theorists continue to debate the elastic boundary between good and evil, from an educational perspective, for the age of students who are shaping personality and shaping values, in my opinion, the first importance is that teachers need to help students identify and delineate the boundary between good and evil. Students should be taught that harming or causing suffering to others, even enemies on the battlefield, for any purpose or reason is an act of "breaking the boundaries" or is not encouraged. Writers, with their strong empathy, explain these situations and suggest how to behave in a human way. For example, the situation of saving or not saving, killing or not killing his enemies when he is injured is a type of typical situation in war that writers often suggest us ways of thinking and applying according to human moral standards. For example, Alexievich (2015) suggests one situation as followed: During a battle, a Russian medic pulled a wounded soldier into a shell crater, and only then noticed that he was a German. His leg was broken and he was bleeding. He was the enemy! What to do? Her own guys were dying up above! But she bandaged the German and crawled out again. She dragged in a Russian soldier who had lost consciousness. When he came to, he wanted to kill the German, and when the German came to, he grabbed a machine gun and wanted to kill the Russian. "I'd slap one of them, and then the other. Our legs were all covered in blood," she remembered. "The blood was all mixed together" (p.9).

Only with one detail "Our legs were all covered in blood," "The blood was all mixed together", the writer implies (also students need to learn) that in this situation, the pain and suffering of him must be put on the first priority for action, it is not politics that matters. At the same time, controlling our harm to the enemies is also a way to prevent us from destroying our own humanity.

Similarly, at the end of the fairy tale of Tam Cam (Cinderella's version in Vietnam, taught in Language Art curriculum of grade 10 in Vietnam), the character of Ms. Tam, who was very gentle, took revenge on her stepmother and step-sister very cruelly. Most high school teachers in Vietnam have been instructed by the Literature Grade 10 Teacher Handbook, to emphasize that Ms. Tam is "a symbol of goodness" and so they avoid discussing her retaliation or admitting her action is appropriate when showing the ancients' dream of justice in which evil must be properly punished. This imposing teaching style has encountered the hidden opposition of the majority of Vietnamese students. In my opinion, on the ethical and educational stance, students need to be taught to realize that Tam's cruel revenge need to be condemned. Ms. Tam cannot be "a symbol of goodness" if she has such cruel revenge. After that, the teacher can guide students to discuss the story of a fairy tale or the ancients' dream in which evil must be punished.

Thus, through situations and actions related to evil and literary villains, teachers need to help students exchange and discuss their ideas to be aware of what thoughts and actions are suitable for moral standards of human; on the contrary, the thoughts and actions that cause harm and suffering to others are condemned by the community and society. Definitely, as stated by Lautreamont: "We are free to do good", but "We are not free to do evil" (Bataille, 2012, p.20). We should not start from political stance, or disguise in poetic art of the work to evade or explain evil in an imposed and contrary manner to the values system of mankind.

Sow in soul of students the belief of the power and immortality of Goodness

Beliefs have the power to create and the power to destroy (Tony Robbins). Evil, psychologically, has a direct cause from "unhappy combination of pride and fear" (Kierkegaard); or merely fear, or evildoers are trying to escape their fear by hurting another person so that the victim will feel scared instead of themselves (Alford, C.F, 1997, p.3,12). When experiencing evil, the belief in the power of good will help people

overcome fear and thus conquer evil. Therefore, teaching students how to use the belief in the immortality of goodness to deal with "fear" and overcome it is also a teacher's task. Through literature, teachers need to lead students to realize that, no matter how serious the evil is, even sometimes evil seems to overwhelm good, in the end, humans' goodness has an intense vitality. Through literature, teachers must sow in students' hearts the belief of the power and immortality of goodness. With the inexhaustible power of words, many literary works have told us about the power of good in a profound way. Writers, including those who "patiently talk about evil" like Emily Brontë, Michelet, Sade, Dostoevsky, Thomas Harris or Bao Ninh, have their utmost aspirations to affirm people despite corruption. Good is and will revive from the ashes. Teachers should guide students to recognize the secret and intense aspirations of the characters and writers through words, details, actions, symbols, voices in works. Students need to be inspired about the immortality of goodness in literature to have more motivation to go to the Good.

Help student to step out of his/her position and take positions of others to experience and empathize

It is not a coincidence that Cohen (2011) wants to replace the concept of "Evil" with the category "lack of empathy". Empathy, according to Golman (1998), is not simply sympathy but the ability to recognize emotional signals, understand the feelings, needs, and prospects of others; care, and support their abilities; nurture relationships and harmonize with different types of people in life and work (p.37). Because of the lack of empathy and understanding of the situation, the soul, the desire of others, it is easy for people to generate abusive thoughts and actions. Therefore, it is necessary to gradually fill in "the lack of empathy", to make "the evolution of altruism", to develop "reciprocal altruism", to resolve crimes in this world (Barber, N., 2004). Via subjects, teachers should guide and build an environment for students to step out of their positions, stand in the position of others to experience their physical and mental pain in order to empathize. By doing this, students prevent one's instincts from evil. Reading and teaching literature is an ideal opportunity for these empathetic experiences because the source of literary work is empathy which is the author's deep feeling about life and people. Literary works are a treasure of life which provides students with a chance to experience cohabitation. In Literature lectures, teachers should make opportunities for students to play the role of others, to put themselves in adversity, to experience situations related to evil to help them check if they are in such adversity, they can uphold the moral principles or norms or they will violate the "taboos", "transgressions". Understanding oneself is an essential condition to empathize with others. When you empathize with others and are selfless, the acts of abuse will be minimized and prevented. While discussing and evaluating literary characters, teachers can allow students to visualize and imagine themselves in a situation where their characters are about to violate moral limits in order to make decisions of how to deal with the character. Teachers should let students make questions, role-play exercises, such as If I'm a A. character, how will I act? Why? Suppose you were in situation B., how would you handle it? These activities will be able to gradually improve students' empathy.

Create an environment for students to practice their behaviours according to moral principles and social standards

The effect that comes from the experience of evil often has two sides: positive and negative. Aristotle explained the influences of repetitive actions: Men come to be builders, for instance, by building, and harp players by playing the harp. In the same way, by doing just acts we come to be just; by doing self-controlled acts, we come to be self-controlled; and by doing brave acts, we become brave. Researchers in experiments also prove that "Children, who experience violence in early life may be more likely to experience victimization in interactions with their peers" (Osofsky, 2018, p.20).

Zimbardo (1971) with his experiments in prisons confirms that when people repeat actions of evils many times, they familiarize themselves with evil and their path to evil is shortened while they get far away from the good. Literature – "a vivid expression of evil: is not innocent (Bataille, 2012, p.18). The descriptions of Harris, T. (1991) about the murderous talent of the character Lecter in novel Silence of The Lambs make readers both creepy, terrified, and attractive; both of these cause horrifying images and expand the understanding of the "taboo". Therefore, in order to limit the negative impact of evil experiences on the readers themselves - students, instead of practicing evil acts, teachers should guide student to practice acts of behaviors based on ethical principles. The practice of crimes by students must be carefully considered in terms of level, target, form and object. For example, having students play the role of a stepmother (Tam Cam faire tale) to retell and practice meticulously details of the slaughtering of the character Tam (as the way some Vietnamese teachers of Langguage Arts used to do) is easy to become counter-educational.

Through reading comprehension, teachers should build an environment for students to exchange and share their feelings and thoughts about adversity in the work honestly and frankly; design exercises and situations for students to contact real-life situations, experience practicing behaviors in a smart and standard manner.
Types of questions and exercises that should not be encouraged include:
     - Can you imagine / play (the villain) recounting your actions (crimes)?
     - Please describe the action (crime) of the character (evil)? ...
     In contrast, the types of questions and exercises that should be encouraged are:
     - Does this situation (crime) make you think of images or similar incidents you have encountered, heard or witnessed?
     - What are your feelings and comments about the actions of the characters (evil)?
     - In your opinion, who will be affected or negatively affected by that action (crime)? What is the degree of influence and the consequences of its impact?
     - In your opinion, where does the cause of this action (crime) come from?
     - What can we do to remedy the consequences of this (crime)?
     - What do we need to do to prevent this situation from happening? ...
     Through dialogue, debate, teachers need to help students realize that crime and punishment are two sides of the same coin. Crime can happen very quickly, but the consequences of evil are terrible. Similarly, the punishment (torment, hurt, punishment) for that villain will persist for the rest of his life, such as the constant anguish that the character Raskolnikov experiences in the novel Crime and Punishment by Dostoevsky F. (2001). The consequences of evil can befall anyone's head, including innocent people. Therefore, it is the responsibility of everyone, every student to take care of, recognize and act to contribute to preventing, resisting and fighting evil.
Conclusion

Evil is a complex theoretical category, reality around us but difficult to comprehend. Evil is rooted in human instincts, but education is a decisive factor in a child's personal development. Like a mirror that reflects life, with unlimited verbal ability and imagination, literature describes and interprets evil in a specific, profound and haunting way. Reading these texts, readers have the opportunity to better understand himself/herself, and become more aware of the dimensions of humanity, then find the meaning of suffering to gain more support from mistakes and abyss of life. Therefore, teachers should to exploit fully the strengths of literature in preventing early student's instinct towards evil as well as helping students control negative emotions and actions that may arise in their life in the future.

However, literature writes about evil as a double-edged sword, it both warns and attracts students. Therefore, teaching students about evil must depend on their ages and to a certain extent. In particular, it is necessary to put the focus of the discussion on evil in the text on the causes and consequences of evil and solutions to prevent evil. In addition, to

build value system and personality for young people, teachers need to help students clearly identify the boundaries between evil and good, what is allowed and taboo on the basis of morality and ethics of human society. In addition, through literature lessons, teachers need to create an environment for students to step out of their position, stand in the position of others to experience, understand and empathize. By doing this, they are able to regularly practice behaviors based on ethical standards and value systems in order to create good behaviors. They will have strong belief in goodness and resilience to always choose to go towards the good side of the world which always accompanies both the good and the evil.

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