

## Literature

### Unit 3.4 Humility (Essays)

### Class 12 English Exercise

*Yoval Noah Harari*

#### ***Understanding the text***

**Answer the following questions.**

**a. Describe the claim of the Chinese nationalists about human history.**

**Answer:** Chinese nationalists claim that history began with the Yellow Emperor and the Xia and Shang dynasties. They believe that anything that was accomplished by other rulers like westerners, Muslims or Indians is a bit imitation of Chinese achievement.

**b. What do pious Muslims believe about human history?**

**Answer:** Pious Muslims believe that all history follows the Quran. All the history before Prophet Muhammad was mostly meaningless and all history after that following Quran's revelation revolves around the Muslim ummah.

**c. What did the Aztecs firmly believe about the universe?**

**Answer:** The Aztecs firmly believed about the universe that annual sacrifice is the reason behind the existence of the universe. Without annual sacrifice, the sun wouldn't rise and the whole cosmos would collapse.

**d. What, according to the essay, are the universal human abilities?**

**Answer:** According to the essay, the universal human abilities are art, creativity, spirituality and mortality.

**e. How are the basic yoga postures derived from the shape of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet?**

**Answer:** The basic yoga postures derived from the shape of letters of the Hebrew alphabet as the yoga posture Tuladandasana imitates the letter 'daled', Trikonasana imitated the form of the Hebrew letter 'aleph' and so on.

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## **Reference to the context**

**a. How do Hindu nationalists refute the Chinese claim that human history began with the Yellow Emperor and the Xia and Shang dynasties? Who do you agree with, and why?**

**Answer:** Hindu nationalists refute the Chinese claim that humans began with the Yellow Emperor and the Xia and Shang dynasties by claiming that Indian sages developed the theory of planes and nuclear weapons long before Plato, Confucius or Einstein and the Wright brothers.

In the Hindu holy books of Hindus, different evidence of discoveries and inventions are found long before any scientists proved them. Hinduism is found to be the oldest religion in the world according to various scientific as well as archaeological studies. Thus I agree with the Hindu nationalists over Chinese claims through different evidence that was found in Hinduism.

**b. The author has dealt with a controversial debate on human history. Why do you think history has been a major contested issue in the present world?**

**Answer:** The essay ‘Humility’ written by Yuval Noah Harari is about the different controversies about human history. The essay presents the thoughts and people’s beliefs in human history according to their religion.

In my opinion, history has been a major contested issue in the present world due to egoism. I would like to call egoism the supremacy of their belief in their religion only rather than understanding others. Most individuals believe that their religion is the oldest and they are the centre of the universe. They believe that their culture is superior to all others. According to them, everything originated from their culture. So because of egoism human history has been a major contested issue. The author wishes to remove a sense of superiority and domination from humanity.

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## Reference beyond the text

a. Write a short essay on The Conflicting History of Human Civilization.

Answer:

### The Conflicting History of Human Civilization

When we talk about the History of Human Civilization, we never cease to claim the civilization we belong to is the first and the most important. We are under the veil of superiority and mastery of our own race. Our nature is that we want to put ourselves at the centre of the world. We find the same ego in the people who belong to civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Maya, India, China, Rome, Greece and Persia. Such is in the case of religions either Abrahamic or Indian.

Many Greeks claim that history began in Athens, Sparta, Alexandria or Constantinople. Chinese retort this claim and admit that history began during Yellow Emperor, Xia and Shan Dynasties. They further claim that the inventions of Westerns, Muslims or Indians are pale replicas of Chinese inventions. Hindus boast that all the modern inventions of science date back to their civilization. Even rockets, missiles and atomic theories were invented by ancient sages in Indian subcontinents. Muslims on the other hand credit the Prophet Muhammad and the Quran to be the first ones. Turkish, Iranian and Egyptian nationalists argue that their nations were the fountainhead and preserver the purity of Islam before Muhammad and the Quran. British, French, German, American, Russian, Japanese claim that they achieved spectacular achievement and uplifted humans from barbarous and immoral ignorance. Aztecs firmly believe that their sacrifice is the cause of preventing the disintegration of the universe. Even Jews claim credit for the important inventions of the world. Even they say yoga postures were invented by Abraham. The postures of yoga were derived from the Hebrew alphabet. Even the claim that the study of holy scriptures by Jewish rabbis is the main cause to stop the annihilation of this universe.

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In fact, all these claims are false. Such claims are the products of egotism and racism. Instead, these religions or civilizations, the first humans colonized the world, and domesticated plants and animals. It is only a crass egotism to ascribe to them a more recent place and times. Morality, art, spirituality, creativity are universal human abilities embedded in human DNA. We don't like to criticize one's own people, culture, religion, customs. Instead, we glorify them. We lack modesty. This is the main cause of conflicts among human civilizations.

**b. The author claims, “Since it is more polite to criticize one’s own people than to criticize foreigners.” Do you agree to his claim? Give your reasons.**

**Answer:** In the essay “Humility” the author Harari claims that it is polite to criticize one’s own people than to criticize foreigners. I agree with his claim because if we criticize foreigners the conflict arises. People are very much obsessed with their own history and civilization. They don’t want to listen to people who belong to another religion and community criticize their own religion and community. We blindly believe what is said or written about our culture, religion and civilization. How foolish people are when they believe that the existence of this universe depends on human sacrifice and reading of holy scriptures. No one knows how long this universe has been existing and it is merely a crass egotism to say the human sacrifice and reading of holy scripture prevents this cosmos to be annihilated. If missiles and rockets were developed by ancient sages, humans could have been landed on the moon thousands of years ago. If we criticize such things being foreigners, it will result in a clash between two groups of people. If we want to correct us, we must find out loopholes in our civilization by ourselves.

## THE END

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