

# LITERATURE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON HUMAN LIFE

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## ABSTRACT

It is transparent that literature shows versatile dimension and deals with every aspect of life more or less. It is to be mentioned that the viewpoint of grasping and the degree of infusing in the conscience of the same literary work can be different in case of different people from different social, political, cultural, economic or intellectual background. There is a lot of stimulating ingredients in literature that can influence life. One has to grab that accordingly. So the main objective of the present research study is to briefly analyze the literature and its impact and influence on human life. As an educative source, literature plays a significant part in human life. Literature works with direct or implied moral. A great deal of examples can be drawn from different genres. So literature is an emphatic force of education.

Philosophical thoughts are considered as the most ancient pensive creativity. Literature has different types, oral literature, written literature, scientific literature, technical literature. It performs different functions at different levels. Literature and life of a society reflect upon each other. Life moulds literature of a society and literature reflects the real pattern of any society. So after the sequential elapse of time, it is proved that, literature definitely has profound sway upon life to a large extent. Literature influences us and makes us understand the every walk of life. Narratives, in particular, inspire empathy and give people a new perspective on their lives and the lives of others.

## II. LITERATURE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON HUMAN LIFE

Literature grows out of life, reacts upon life and fed by life. Generally we can say that everything in print is literature. But this would be a very vague description of literature. Broadly speaking, “literature” is used to describe anything from creative writing to more technical or scientific works, but the term is most commonly used to refer to works of the creative imagination, including works of drama, essays, fiction and nonfiction. Any work of art in which the emotional content predominates is literature. Literature is the expression of written words. Literature is distinct from all other arts. It has no medium of its own. Many mixed forms of literature exist in it.

Despite the definitions given above, I feel that literature is beyond these definitions, it is more than what we see and perceive. Its boundaries cross our lives, our traditions, culture, social relations, national unity and a lot more. It serves as a reflection of reality, a product of art, and window to an ideology, everything that happens within a society can be written, recorded in, and learned from the piece of literature. Whether it be poetry or prose, literature provides insight, knowledge, or wisdom, and emotion towards the person who partakes it entirely. Our life is manifested in the form of literature. It is an embodiment of words based on human tragedies,

desires, and feelings. It cultivates wonders, inspires a generation and feeds information. Even though it is dynamic, endless, multi-dimensional, literature contributes significant purpose to world we live in.

The world today is ever-changing. Never before has life been so chaotic and challenging for all. Life before literature was practical and predictable, but in present day, literature has expanded into countless libraries and into minds of many as the gateway for comprehension and curiosity of the human mind and the world around them. Literature is of great importance and is studied upon as it provides the ability to connect human relationships, and define what is right and what is wrong. Literature is the foundation of life. It places an emphasis on many topics from human tragedies to tales of ever popular search for love. While it is physically written in words, these words come alive in the imagination of the mind, and its ability to comprehend the complexity or simplicity of the text. Literature enables the people to see through the lenses of others, and sometimes even inanimate objects; therefore it becomes a looking glass into the world as others view. It is a journey that is inscribed in pages, and powered by the imagination of the reader. Ultimately, literature has provided a gateway to teach the reader about life experiences from even the saddest stories to the most joyful ones that will touch their hearts.

With the ability to see the world with a pair of fresh eyes, it triggers the readers to reflect upon their own lives. Reading a material that is reliable to the reader may teach them morals and encourage them to practice good judgment. This can be proven through public school systems, where the books that are emphasized the most tend to have a moral-teaching purpose behind the story. Progressively, as people grow older, they explore other genres of books, ones that propel them towards curiosity of the subject, and the overall book. Reading and being given the keys to the literature world prepares individuals from an early to discover the true importance of literature: being able to comprehend and understand situations from different perspectives.

Literature teaches us how to live. Through literature reader visits different places, experiences events, meets people, listens to them, feels their joys and sorrows. It takes years to acquire so much wisdom that a single book of literary merit instills in a reader. Literature mirrors the society and its mannerisms. Because of Charles Dickens we can experience the ‘Hard Time’ of the Victorian England without going through a detailed historical study. The fact based education system, the fractured human relationships, the Smokey polluted towns, the ill-effects of industrial revolution, the misery of laborers, the mercenary instincts of men and the flawed legal system of the land can be judged and perceived through literature.

The primary use of literature in ancient settings was to pass down customs, traditions, beliefs and feelings to the younger generations. In more recent centuries, literature has taken on a more comprehensive role of mirroring society in order for human to study themselves and understand the underlying truths common to all people. For students, studying literature is a critical component in education, as it teaches students to see themselves reflected in art. This allows people to learn about life from the perspectives of another. Identity-based literature teaches the readers what life is like for others, helping them to be more understanding and respectful of those around them.

Another point of importance: has literature a function or functions? In his *Primer for critics*, Boas gaily expounds a pluralism of interests and corresponding types criticism; and at the end of his *Use of Poetry and Use of Criticism*, Eliot sadly, or at least wearily, insists on “variety of poetry” and the variety of things the kinds of

poetry may do at various times. But these are exceptions. To take art or literature or poetry seriously is, ordinarily at least, to attribute to it some use proper to itself. Considering Arnold's view that poetry could supersede religion and philosophy, Eliot writes, "nothing in this world or the text is a substitute for anything else . . ." <sup>1</sup> That is no real category of value has a real equivalent. There are no substitutes. In practice, literature can obviously take the place of many things—of travel or sojourn in foreign lands, of direct experience, various lives and it can be used by the historian as a social document.

Long before human civilization started in this world, stories were found among the constellations, beneath the depths of the oceans, and within the woodland realm. Long before language was invented, stories were told and engraved upon stone tablets and walls carvings. Long before human began to know how to read and write with the words that our ancestors created, literature already existed. Literature is the foundation of humanity's cultures, beliefs and traditions. **It serves as a reflection of reality, a product of art, and a window to an ideology.**

Literature is also a tool for the foundation of religion. *The Holy Bible*, one of the oldest written scriptures, is compilation of tales, beliefs, and accounts that teach about Christianity. Within a span of more than a thousand years from the Prophet Moses to the Apostle Paul, Bible was written by numerous authors believed to be inspired by God's divine wisdom and tried to explain about the mysteries of life as well as setting rules for one's personal faith. The same goes with *Quran* for Muslims, *Torah* for Jews, and *Bhagavad Gita*, *Ramamyana* and *Vedas* for the Hindus. Literature explains human values. The works of Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle (the most famous Greek Philosophers) contain virtues that promote perfection to a society if only human being have the willingness to uphold and practice them.

Among the arts, literature, specially, seems also to claim "truth" through the view of life which every artistically coherent work possesses. The philosopher or critic must think some of these "views" truer than others but any mature philosophy of life must have some measure of truth, at any event it lays claim to it. The truth of literature, as we are now considering it, seems to be the truth in literature—the philosophy which exists, in systematic conceptual form, outside of literature but may be applied to or illustrated by or embodied in literature. Eliot's view of poetry in its relation to "truth" seems essentially of this sort. Truth is the province of systematic thinkers; and artists are not thinkers, though they may try to be if there is no philosophies whose work they can suitably assimilate. <sup>2</sup>

Literature is an instrument of revolution. Political turmoil, societal injustice, and genocidal conquest can all be ended and resolved in the form of literature. A writer can be a warrior with his words as his weapon. He can be a revolutionist by writing literary pieces that exploits corruption in his fellow countrymen. Literature in the present generation still exists as an expression of art, a source of knowledge, and an instrument of entertainment. Books are being read seriously by readers who crave for information and recreationally by those who are passionate in exploring their imagination. Literature kindles new ideas. It gives voice to the people who want to express their opinions about certain things in life, whether it be in politics, health, religion, and like that. Literature is the heart of songs, rhythm, and harmonious pieces that give message and inspiration to people.

Literature has a great importance in the development and exposition of inner realities of the societies. Much the most common approach to the relations of literature and society is the study of works of literature as social

document, as assumed pictures of social reality. It cannot be doubted that some kind of social picture can be abstracted from literature. Indeed, this has been one of the earliest uses to which literature has been put by systematic students. Thomas Warton, the first real historian of English poetry, argued that literature has the “peculiar merit of faithfully recording the features of the times, and of preserving the most picturesque and expressive representation of manners”;<sup>3</sup> and to him and many of his antiquarian successors, literature was primarily a treasury of costumes and customs, a source book for the history of civilization, especially of chivalric and its decline.

Literature has a deep and direct link with human life and its realities. It is a vague concept that literature is something which has only an abstract significance and that literature is totally divorced from life. And equally vague is the concept that literature is a dweller of the land of fancy and imagination. It is more than this. As a matter of fact, life and literature are two separate things. A creative literature grows out of the real situations and events of life and life without a creative and constructive literature, has no inner significance. Literature is one of the trails blazed by human through, alone. After the needs of daily life are satisfied, man follows the lead of curiosity and explores the mysteries of life. The passion for knowledge, the desire to understand life and make oneself at home in the universe has perennial spring in human nature.

Culture is transmitted to new generations, through education, but is known and learned by other cultures. Literature allows us to transmit the profound meaning of a determinate culture, its stereotypes, archetypes and collective in conscience, creating the possibility of social change through a critic that is able to act into the subliminal world of emotions. Ethical emotions or ethical feelings are new matters of study that deserve to be centre of researches and specialized scientific studies. Furthermore, literature offers a different form of learning rather than just providing information; it requires us to experience, to participate. Works of literature are not just about human issues; the power of literature is that it makes issues come alive for the reader.

If the heart of literature is its exploration of human experience, consideration of the formal and aesthetic properties of a work of literature must be secondary to consider of the social values and ethical dilemmas presented by the work. Bertolt Brecht once said he didn't want people to leave his plays thinking about the theatre, he wanted them to leave his plays thinking about the world. In like fashion, our student wants to use literature to think about the world, not just to think about the formal aspects of literature.

Literature reflects the various experiences, ideas, passions of human beings in their daily life that express on several forms and styles of literary works. Since literature directly derives from human life, it can increase our knowledge and experience about human problems includes values, morals, cultures and human interests. After reading a literary work, the reader may get a certain impression of what he/she has read. As a product of human culture literature has its own functions. Literature has two functions. The first is literature of power. Literature of power means that the function of literature as power is to move the heart and mind of the readers. The second is literature of knowledge. Literature of knowledge has the function to teach.

Literature also functions to contribute several of human lives. In education program, literature may give significant contribution for students' development and knowledge. The contribution of literature in education covers intrinsic values and extrinsic values. The intrinsic values are the reward of a lifetime of wide reading recognizable in truly literate person while the intrinsic values facilitate the development of language skills and

knowledge. The relation between literature and society is usually discussed by starting with the phrase, derived from De Bonald that “literature is an expression of society.” But what does this axiom means? If it assumes that literature at any given time, mirrors the current social situation “correctly,” it is false; it is commonplace, trite, and vague if it means only that literature depicts some aspects of social reality.<sup>4</sup>

Used as a social document, literature can be made to yield the outlines of social history. Chaucer and Langland preserve two views of fourteenth century society. The prologue to the *Canterbury Tales* was early seen to offer an almost complete survey of social types. Shakespeare, in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Ben Jonson in several plays, and Thomas Deloney seem to tell us something about the Elizabethan middle class. Addison, Smollett, and Fielding depict the new bourgeoisie of the eighteenth century; Jane Austen, the country gentry and country parsons early in the nineteenth century.

Many literary texts such as poem, song lyric, and short story are used in language teaching. There are some factors of using literature in language teaching in terms of linguistic, cultural, and personal growth. Linguistically, literary texts offer a range of genuine texts in a variety of registers, styles and text-types at many level of difficulty. Literary texts provide a very real sense the vehicle for culture. The literature can put obviously be put in different terms, those of symbolic or meaningful relations: of consistency, harmony, coherence, congruence, structural identity, stylistic analogy, or with whatever term we want to designate the integration of culture and interrelationship among the different activities of men. Sorokin, who has analyzed the various possibilities clearly,<sup>5</sup> has concluded that the degree of integration varies from society to society.

The study of the economic basis of literature and of the social status of the writer is inextricably bound up with a study of the audience he addresses and upon which he is dependent financially.<sup>6</sup> even the aristocratic patron is an audience and frequently an exciting audience, requiring not only personal adulation but also conformity to the conventions of his class. In even earlier society, in the group where folk poetry flourishes, the dependence of the author on the audience is even greater: his work will not be transmitted unless it pleases immediately. The role of audience in the theatre is at least, as tangible.

The study and practice of literature is cumulative, building a culture’s identity over time. From the philosophy and epic poetry of ancient Greece sprang the canon of western literature. Each successive period of history produced distinct literary works reflective of the spirit of the times but also containing elements of preceding epochs. Medieval literature incorporates the tenets of Christianity, whereas literature of Renaissance and Enlightenment responded to advance in art and science.

### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. G. Boas, *primer for Critics*, Baltimore, 1937; T.S. Eliot, *Use of Poetry*, Cambridge, Mass, 1933, P.113, 155.
2. Eliot, *Selected Essays*, New York, 1932, pp. 115: the particular essay is “Shakespeare and Stoicism of Seneca.” “The poet who ‘thinks,’” writes Eliot, “is merely the poet who can express the emotional equivalent of thought.... All great poetry gives the illusion of a view of life. When we enter into the world of Homer, of Sophocles, or Virgil, or Dante, or Shakespeare, we incline to believe that we are apprehending something that can be expressed intellectually; for every precise emotion tends towards intellectual formulation.”
3. Thomas Warton, *History English Poetry*, London, 1774, Vol. I, p.1.

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4. On De Bonald, of. Horatio Smith, "Relativism in Bonald's Literary Doctrine," *Modern Philology*, XXXII (1934), PP. 193.
5. P.A. Sorokin, *Fluctuations of forms of Art, Social and Cultural Dynamics*, Vol. I, New York, 1937, especially chapter I.
6. Alfred A. Harbage, *Shakespeare's Audience*, New York, 1941; R.J. Allen, *The Clubs of Augustan London*, Cambridge, Mass., 1933.