

Literature and its Role in Modern Society



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Abstract:

The Literature has been a finer reflection of the society. It depicts the ails and goods of the society and creates the path for correction. In literature, we find the portraits of human life through some characters of what they say, act and react as a part of the society. Literature serves many other roles in society today. It cultivates empathy and theory of mind, defamiliarize reality, reflect on human nature, and enacts social change. The society has been developed and evolved by keeping the view of fulfilling human needs in different aspects to ensure a proper balance in all the events however, in literature, the author tries to present the imaginative picture or real incident in multiple ways. In this paper, it has been represented that both literature and society are complementary to each other and they cannot be read in separation.

Keywords: Literature, Society, Defamiliarize, Portray, Evolve, Vessle

Introduction:

Literature permits us to understand the rational movements and ideas that pervaded a particular culture at particular time. Literature has had a major impact on the development of society. The literal meaning of literature is the art or picturesque way of the society in written work in different forms. It may be poetry, prose, novel, fiction, verses, stories, plays etc which may be based on illusions or may be based on the real information of the society. A society is a place where a group of people are living with likeminded or unlikeminded values, norms and principles. In any society, people have different relations

with each other on the basis of their own values, beliefs and set standard of patterns of lives with their shared cultural attributes.

Literature is significant in life as it connects everyone with greater truths and incidents in a society. Literature provides a platform for people to testify their thoughts and experiences in a way which are accessible to others, through fictionalized versions of the incidents. The literature is a medium which depicts the most about the goods and ills of the society and its study improves the knowledge among the readers about the incidents happening around them. Literature has always been with the society and in modern society it is with the pace in day to day life of human beings. The first encounter of literature we get from the schools through which majority of people pass. To understand the messages and themes open many ways to understand the nature of the society where literature works as the vessel.

Literature:

People have different understanding on literature and have different perspectives to read it. Everything which is there at degree level seems to be literary on the basis of cover book or on the basis of name of the author of the book. The reality is something is different from what we perceive about literature as a demarcation. In literature, the texts may be different from different contexts but the most important question arises that “what is literature”? Largely, what we call “literature” is frequently a subjective value assessment, like literary tastes which will change according to the reader. Etymologically, literature is based with letters, though not everything that is written down in any form is literature. As a classification, it doesn't really have any firm boundary lines.

The poet Shelley wanted to include some legislative statutes of parliaments under poetry because they created order and harmony out of disorder. It has been established by many previous theories in this field that for a work to be called literature must display excellence in form and style, literature holds language and uses in an artistic way soothing to the readers. Terry Eagleton goes some way towards a definition of literature and its relationship to language: “Literature transforms and intensifies ordinary language,

deviates systematically from everyday speech”. Therefore, literature is an art which is portrayed through human abilities by giving it a language.

Literature has always had a foremost impact on the development of society. It has fashioned civilizations in periodical time frames, changed political thought line and systems and exposed many issues of the society like injustice, cultural values, polygamy, regimens etc. Literature gives us a detailed foretaste of human experiences, which allow us to connect on certain foundation of desire and emotion. However, just as it has constructed societies, the writings and works of certain writers have degraded societies of their most prehistoric shape. Literature enriches through elements such as authentic material, language in use and aesthetic representation of the spoken language, as well as language and cultural enrichment. It is with this last element that literature opens the door that leads to a wider and closer look on the culture where the target language is spoken.

There are three main ways of moving towards finding a finer definition of literature which are relativism, subjectivism and agnosticism. With relativism, there are no value distinctions in literature; anything may be called good literature. Subjectivism, as the term implies, means that all theories of literary value are subjective, and that literary evaluation is a purely personal matter. Agnosticism follows from subjectivism, though it argues that though there may be real distinctions in literary value, our subjective value systems prevent us from knowing anything about the real values.

Role of Literature

Literature has manyfolded roles in the society which has driven the beliefs, values, culture, traditions and structure of the society. Literature serves as a gateway to learning of the past and expanding the knowledge and understanding of the world. An example would be William Shakespeare’s stories & sonnets where each one is meant to be reflective of human nature and character – both the good and the bad. Some of the great literary works like the Bible, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, among others, provide society with the

guiding doctrine of life. Works by poets like Homer, Plato, Sappho, Horace , W.B. Yeats, John Keats, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and William Blake, among others, are mirrors of timeless presentation of the society picture. They have always thrown entertainment along with reality of the society. Many works in literature establish a strong connect with their audience through the stories they narrate or the message they carry. The salient role of the literature in the society may be seen in following lines.

It helps in understanding the life through its literary power and poetic narrations. It helps the reader to review different facets of life closely. Literature can change one's perspective towards life in its different forms. Autobiographies, biographies, real life stories of the authors and other good values inspire the readers in multifold ways. Such works give the masses an insight into the lives of eminent people, and also serve as a bible of ideals.

Literature serves as a solid base of information through its different forms of work to the general masses. Ongoing developments in the fields of science and technology are documented so that the world can know about them. Several ancient scriptures relating stories of human evolution and narratives of human life in those times, have been of tremendous help to mankind. Thus, literature has always served as an authentic source of information.

Reading the literatures given in the form of history, anthropology, sociology or religious studies helps in providing a trend of learning about cultures and beliefs other than our own culture and belief. It allows mankind to understand and experience these other past systems of living and other worlds. We get a view of the inside looking out, a personal view and insight into the minds and reasoning of others through their texts.

The different kinds of literature like poems, essays, novels, or short stories, helps human beings to address human nature and conditions which affect the humanity. These may be

the need for growth, success, failures, opportunities or need of friends, family & others or the goodness, illness, empathy & sympathy or perfection but one thing is sure in all of them that human beings learn lots of things out of them for their own life and have wider approach for life. Literature teaches to live life to the fullest.

Conclusion

Society is the face for representing culture, value and traditions of the people living in the society and is reflected by their attributes of beliefs, values and code of conduct whether in similarities or in disparities. Literature plays an instrumental role in shaping and teaching the people living in the society at large. Understanding the concept how literature motivates the individuals and how reflective it may be for them which needs to be given more attention and consideration. Moreover, the role of literature can be vital in those countries where citizens suffer dictatorship and/or censorship: censors sometimes ignore - or underestimate or do not understand- the power of literature. Hence, literature does not bring only transformation in the society but also provides a base for understanding the parable issues of the society.

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