

LIFE AND LITERATURE: ‘A STUDY ON LITERARY WORKS WITH REFERENCE TO SELECTED WRITERS’

NEENA. K. FRANCIS

Assistant Professor, Department of English,
Bharathiar University Arts and Science College, Gudalur, Tamil Nadu

ABSTRACT

Literature and life has an interconnection that cannot be broken. Literature is a reflection of life as a portrayal of the brilliance of a literary artist. The literary artist can structure the society with her/his genius literary technique, as the excellence of the literary work evolves in the mind. The personality and ideas of the writer echo in her/his writings. The philosophies portrayed amaze the society of all times, thus leaving an imprint on the minds of the readers with her/his varied thoughts. Thus, literature is relevant at all times, growing into a treasure house of learning that has examples for all walks of life and always shines bright as a guiding light.

Literature is a mixture of real and imaginary characters and societies, which function to establish an ideal and moral world. Keats designed his own imaginary world, whereas Wordsworth's discourses approve that he is a worshiper of nature. One common aspect of all the great masters of literature was that all were touched by human suffering. Bacon, John Milton, William Shakespeare, John Keats, Shelley, Valmiki, Kalidas and Socrates have always been motivated to sympathize with the pathetic state-of-affairs of human life in their respective era. Accordingly, literature intellectually and emotionally educates man through various languages. In conclusion, life is literature and literature is life.

KEYWORDS: Correlated, Personality, Imaginary, Pathetic

INTRODUCTION

Literature and life are closely associated with each other. Their interconnection is intimate and vital. Literature reflects the thoughts of an individual regarding social life through language. Literature may be perceived as an extension of sociology, philosophy, religion or psychology, and these further substantiate the value of literature. It also instructs humankind from time-to-time, helping them acquire knowledge or religious or moral instruction directly. The themes in literature vary from a social problem or political revolution to a religious movement; it could also illustrate an individual's passion, problem or fantasy. The characters are meant to teach as well as to entertain. Books help us to relate with real life, power and universal influence. Although some consider that literature must have perfection of form, deeming it to be the most significant aspect, others value it only for its human significance. Literature must emerge as a reflection of life and must be woven by life's influences and characters. Its value depends on how well it captures the essence of life and paints it for all to see.

At one time, the most profound aspect of life was believed to be the eternal sources of life. The concept of God, as well as moral virtues, was assumed as eternal. However, experience and a wider knowledge of the inconsistencies of social life have shaken man's faith, who is now questioning the validity of the unchangeableness of such concepts. Consequently,

in modern times, our comprehension of the elements of literature does not depend on this doctrine of eternal truths. Rather, we attempt to comprehend the forces influencing these social changes. Therefore, the worth of literature is assessed by its capability to articulate the transforming scenarios of social life. Great literature always perceives these subtle changes and contemplates on these truths of life, which are known to revolutionize social life. Literature is most promising because of its universal nature. Its illustration of a particular society of a particular community is relevant to society as a whole or in its entirety. This is the reason why people are more enticed by the written word in literature than the spoken word, which may not reach all men.

LIFE AND LITERATURE

Literature is a mirror to the world that existed when it was produced or written. It provides knowledge on the lifestyles, skill, culture and language that existed in that era. In addition, it is a true and actual record of the social, economic, political and religious scenarios of that time. The literary man is bound to be have an impact by the events and incidents of the society in which she/he live. Her/his writings reveal various incidents that occurred during their lifetime. As these authors are in close quarters with the events of their time, their texts usually replicate the situations faithfully. The author presents the temperaments of the human mind in that era either in the form of appreciation or as bitter criticism.

History is grounded on the facts, and therefore is fashioned after the real incidents of life. Literature depicts the real and ideal. It emphasizes what ought to be rather than what it is. Literature uncovers beauty and truth of an idea. History chronologically and photographically depicts the events of a particular age. Literature is not a history, but in every creative literature, the truth of art is a part and parcel of this medium. Milton's Paradise Lost, Tulsi's Ram Charitmanas and Mahabharata may be considered as books related to social facts, but they also teach us ideals through them. The ideals are the truth of art. These great books not only describe what they are but also deliver truthful description of what ought to be. Such portrayals increase their worth, making them masterpieces in literature.

A literary artist's thoughts, emotions, sentiments and passions are molded by the society. A man of creativity cannot remain immune to the social events in the region. They also uphold the attitudes and spirit of their period. These influences are manifested in their works. However, the work of a critic is unique. Her/his work is not influenced by the society but rather by the work of a literary artist. The critic usually tends to stay disassociated from the affinities of his age. The quality of literature is attributed to the excellence of the mind that creates it. The literary works reveal the personality of the writer. A powerful literary artist has a commanding influence on the society of his time. The philosophies portrayed amaze the society of all times, thus leaving an imprint on the minds of the readers with her/his varied thoughts. Thus, literature is relevant at all times, growing into a treasure house of learning that has examples for all walks of life and always shines bright as a guiding light. Such an author becomes the representative artist of his era.

KAMALA DAS

Kamala Das is currently one of the three most prominent Indian poets writing in English, the other two being Nissim Ezekiel and Ramanujan. Her poetry displays all aspects of herself, particularly about her passionate desire for love, her emotional attachment and her disappointment on being to realize such a relationship. In her poem, 'My Grandmother's House', Kamala Das shares her memories of her ancestral home and her dead grandmother. This poem declares her confession of the occurring circumstances and associates her present broken state with the unconditional love by her grandmother.

In the poem, the poet recalls the fact that she now lives in another city, which is very far from her grandmother's house. The reminiscences of her ancestral house sadden her. She is dejected and brokenhearted. The intensity of her emotions is depicted in written form as ellipses. Now, living in another city, another life, her heart yearns to go back. She is aware that she cannot retrieve the past, but she wants to go back home and peep through its windows and bring back a handful of darkness – sad and painful memories – which she would then be her constant companion, as a souvenir of her past happiness. However, she is so engrossed in her thoughts that she is unable to advance with her thoughts as is indicated by the ellipses (dots). Grief and anguish engulf the poet. She compares her hunger for love as a beggar going from door-to-door pleading for love in small change. Marriage is unable to fulfill her need for love and approval; she remains unsatisfied and approaches strangers for love, if only in small quantity. However, she fails to acquire it even in small change or coins. Her appetite for love remains unsatisfied, and there is a big vacuum in her life; her constant searches fail to satiate her desires. The image she sees in the window connects the past and the present. It denotes the desire of the poet for a nostalgic peep into her past to revive her dreams and aspirations.

I who have lost

My way and beg now at strangers' doors to

Receive love, at least in small change? (My Grandmother's House)

This poem of Kamala Das reflects an interface of life in literature and evokes the readers mind to the realities of life.

THE HOLY BIBLE

The influence of the Bible on Western literature is impossible to ignore. Shakespeare alone refers to the Bible more than a thousand times. Authors and poets such as John Milton, Charles Dickens, Matthew Arnold, William Wordsworth, Mark Twain, Robert Frost and Emily Dickinson shaped their literature with references and metaphors from the Bible. The Holy Bible has an impact on the language we speak, the laws we endorse, the names we keep, the metaphors we use and the similes we illustrate for emphasis in our daily communications. Even those who haven't read the Bible know it. Its stories, psalms, phrases and proverbs have become a part and parcel of our daily lives. It is a book that mirrors the circumstances in life more than any other. Although the Bible is a religious text, it is a work of literature. In fact, it is a literary masterpiece. The Bible is unique for sheer diversity of form and content, for creativity, for affective power and for the way in which it keeps springing surprises on us. It is not simply a good book; it is the best. The Bible has varied literary qualities — its narrative genres, its stylistic forms, its poetry and prose. There needn't be any religious orientation to understand the literary aspects of the Bible. One can read it as a novel and explore its world, understand its characters and follow its interesting stories.

“The events as told in the Scriptures have a value quite apart from their religious significance: a value as literature. They tell of mankind's experience at its most moving and most memorable in words that go beyond mere chronicle: words that strike the heart and light up the vision.” — Paul Roche, *The Bible's Greatest Stories*

HELEN KELLER

Helen Keller was a very intelligent woman who was afflicted by blindness at an early age in life. Her disabilities set in at eighteen months. However, as she grew older, she refused to let her inability defeat her. In 1933, Keller wrote an

essay entitled, 'Three Days To See'. In this article, Keller conveys her dreams on what she would like to see if she were given sight for three days. She also expresses her thoughts on how it would be like if others lose their sight for three days. The opening statement of Keller's article reads, 'I have often thought it would be a blessing if each human being were stricken blind and deaf for a few days at some time during his early adult life. Darkness would make him more appreciative of sight; silence would teach him the joys of sound'. This statement alone is sufficient to make us ponder on how the journey would be like. Keller is engulfed by darkness every day of her life. Keller portrayal of her personal experience changes our entire outlook towards life. Her literary piece melts our heart touches us in amazing ways.

'Sometimes I have thought it would be an excellent rule to live each day as if we should die tomorrow. Such an attitude would emphasize sharply the values of life. We should live each day with a gentleness, a vigor, and a keenness of appreciation which are often lost when time stretches before us in the constant panorama of more days and months and years to come' (Helen Keller).

CONCLUSIONS

Literature is a mixture of real and imaginary characters and societies, which function to establish an ideal and moral world. Keats designed his own imaginary world, whereas Wordsworth's discourses approve that he is a worshiper of nature. One common aspect of all the great masters of literature was that all were touched by human suffering. Bacon, John Milton, William Shakespeare, John Keats, Shelley, Valmiki, Kalidas and Socrates have always been motivated to sympathize with the pathetic state-of-affairs of human life in their respective era. Consequently, literature aims at educating man through various devices of language, technique and theme. It also imparts knowledge regarding the rules of nature and the truths of human existence.

Literature and life are interconnected. They are inseparable. Literature is a reflection of life. The literary artist can structure the society with her/his genius literary technique. It is the written document of life that passes from generation to generation, and, therefore, literature cannot be excluded from life. In conclusion, life is literature and literature is life.

REFERENCES

1. Clogan, Paul Maurice. *Literary Theory*. Totowa: Rowman & Littlefield, 1989. Print.
2. *The Holy Bible*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992. Print.
3. Keller, Helen. *Three Days to See*. Nanjing: Yilin, 2012. Print.
4. Miles, Dudley H., Christine M. Keck, Clarence Stratton, Robert C. Pooley, and Edwin Greenlaw. *Literature, and Life*. Chicago: Scott, Foresman, 1947. Print.
5. "'My Grandmother's House' by Kamala Das: Summary and Analysis." "My Grandmother's House' by Kamala Das: Summary and Analysis. N.p., n.d. Web. 28 Feb. 2017.