

LITERATURE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Sometimes literature is regarded as a subject that must be in avoidance position. On the other hand, there are some advantages of studying literature; it assists students to acquire a habit of observation, a sensitivity to the unsaid but implied, an ability to step outside of the student own perspective to understand the perceptions of others.

Key words: literature, studying literature, advantages.

INTRODUCTION

Escaping into the world created by a good book of literature has got to be one of the most satisfying experiences one can have—what a great way to step outside one's own space and time. Literature gives us a window on the worlds and cultures of authors who, like us, experienced or experience life's richness and pain, but who, perhaps unlike us, have noticed the moments we overlook in our hurry to move on.

Reading literature won't by itself make a student a better person; *by itself*, it certainly won't get the student a job. But it can help the student to acquire a habit of observation, a sensitivity to the unsaid but implied, an ability to step outside of the student own perspective to understand the perceptions of others.

This paper is written to give a glance of literature to students who are interested in studying literature. It's hoped that after reading this paper the students will be encouraged to take literature as their major because some students think that literature is a subject that must be in avoidance position.

A. WHAT IS LITERATURE?

Literature, like any art form, engages the reader in a complex set of Emotional, symbolic, moral, intellectual and social considerations. Literature uses the normal means of communication -- language, images, symbols, codes, stories -- but uses them with more complexity and subtlety than is normal in everyday communication. We use the word *Literature*, in a broad sense, to mean compositions that tell stories, dramatize situations, and analyze and advocate ideas (Roberts: 1999). In general, literature is anything written or printed; whereas in specific term, literature is defined as a permanent writing which express and communicates thoughts, feeling, and attitudes toward life and the world (William *via* Superman: 1999).

What the writer has listed below are a number of suggestions as to how literature works for us, presented as theses; they are tentative -- open to challenge and change -- and not exclusive. The writer goal is to give the readers a sense of how one can begin to conceptualize why, aside from the fact that it might be fun, one can profit from the reading and study of literature. In the case of literature, as with any art form, reading and study are closely allied: the more one learns how literature works, the more open one is to the effects that it can have -- one gains competency as a reader, and literature becomes richer and more engaging for one.

1. The Representation or reflection of reality

According to this argument literature is "mimetic," that is to say, re-presents 'reality', 'nature', or 'the way things are'. It portrays moral and other experiences. The writer views texts as grounded in reality: produced in historical times and places, composed by real people, taking on lives as material objects when they are

printed and published, embodying actions that can be employed for good or for evil. Human experience is affective and symbolic; literature, which uses affect and symbol, can represent it as we genuinely experience and imagine it.

2. The 'ideology' or 'world-view'

Literature re-presents and explores the way in which the world is viewed and experienced by people in that society or social group: that is, it tells us a great deal about how the world is actually understood by the society to which the artist belongs, understood not only intellectually but symbolically and emotionally. Because of its imaginative and technical richness and its expressive power, literature is a very effective way of understanding a culture of a particular time, or of a particular class, or social or ethnic group. Thus literature can let us understand how diverse times, cultures and classes are different, and how they are the same. Without this understanding of the range of human experience in its continuities and possibilities we live in a claustrophobic world in which we cannot make meaningful discriminations.

Because of this relation between literature and social experience we can use literature not only to understand the past and other cultures and classes (and therefore to understand ourselves), but to critique as well -- that is, we can analyze causes and effects and we can evaluate social change, social values and so forth.

3. The cultural code.

Human experience is 'coded': that is, we have systems of signs which establish meanings and relationships. Our clothes are coded, for instance -- we can tell social class, personal tastes and so forth from the kind of clothes people wear. In fact our whole environment and all our actions are coded: everything we do that has meaning only has meaning because it conforms to codes. The argument is made that literature uses codes more densely, subtlety and complexly than other communication modes: again, this is one of the things that makes art. If we can master the use of codes of literature, we have considerably more control over the codes of everyday life. This is a large part of what makes people with a liberal education such good performers in professional roles: they are able to communicate and analyze, and they tend to be 'flexible' -- that is, to be able to make adaptations in behaviour and conception in order to better meet their goals.

4. The language.

This paper holds that our ability to conceptualize, analyze and to some extent to feel is dependent on our ability to use language accurately, freshly and complexly. A function of literature is to use the means of communication in precise and effective ways, and to engage oneself in literature is to engage oneself in a continuing process of refining one's capacities to use language and one's sensibilities to good language use.

5. The subjectivity.

In the view of this paper the individual is a socially constructed subject: we have social roles which dictate how we feel and how we act -- as men or women, as children, parents, friends, as outsiders or insiders, and so forth. Literature models and examines such 'subject positions', and allows us imaginatively to enter subject positions we might not otherwise occupy. Literature also allows us to examine the nature of and the integration of our subjectivities, or the subject positions we occupy, more critically -- this is what might be called a moral effect of literature, as we can develop a sense of a self which is more able to respond to the possibilities the world has for us and more able to deal with the limitations that society and chance and nurture place on us.

B. THE ADVANTAGES OF STUDYING LITERATURE

Reading literature won't by itself make you a better person; *by itself*, it certainly won't get you a job. But it can help you to acquire a habit of observation, a sensitivity to the unsaid but implied, an ability to step outside of your own perspective to understand the perceptions of others. And these skills *will* help you to get you a job--and to advance once you have that job--because the abilities to analyze complex situations, to communicate with and to understand others, and to think creatively *are* valued by employers. Reading literature for its challenges and consolations is not just a past time, but an activity that will serve you well in any job, including life itself.

The advantages of studying literature give contribution to the personal growth and development. It will help the students to face their future not only in their career but also in their personal life in relation with themselves, their family, their society and even the whole humanity.

Reading literature helps the students to understand the culture behind the works, because literary works are created by the writer who has social and cultural background. The literary works portray moral and other experiences. The writer views texts as grounded in reality.

C. CONCLUSION

There are some advantages of studying literature. Yet Reading literature won't by itself make you a better person; *by itself*, it certainly won't get you a job. But it can help you to acquire a habit of observation, a sensitivity to the unsaid but implied, an ability to step outside of your own perspective to understand the perceptions of others. And these skills *will* help you to get you a job--and to advance once you have that job--because the abilities to analyze complex situations, to communicate with and to understand others, and to think creatively *are* valued by employers. Reading literature for its challenges and consolations is not just a past time, but an activity that will serve you well in any job, including life itself.

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