

Literature: An Escape into Life

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Abstract

Art though useful has been persistently questioned and re-questioned by its innumerable atheists. Naturally, every art is under a pragmatic study undertaken by the scholars continuously. Hence, some scholars have unveiled the pros of art while some have revealed the cons of art. Some have aesthetically enjoyed it while some have scientifically censured it. The present paper has thrown light on the constructive aspects of art in general and literature in specific. Literature being a fine art spontaneously serves human life by enhancing the qualities of it. It refines our experience and bestows us heavenly bliss hardly found on the earth. It frees us from the shackles of dry reality. Hence, with the wings of imagination, every sensitive individual soars high in the sky and sings like a skylark. Naturally, to look at the bright side of literature is the need of today. The present paper strives to bring into limelight the continuous serving role of literature in human life.

Key Words: Art, Literature, Aestheticism, Dulce & Utile

Human life is a compassionate creation by the Almighty. It is an aesthetic outcome of His love for His creation. Naturally, being the intention innate and instinctive, the party other than the creation and the Creator is persistently surprised by the fathom and height, length and width, diversity and uniformity, miniaturization and magnificence of the whole creation. God sees Himself in His creation. George Herbert, the saint of metaphysical poetry, rightly appraises God's compassion for His creation as:

When God at first made man,
Having a glass of blessings standing
by;
Let us (said he) pour on him all we
can;
Let the world's riches dispersed lie,
Contract into a span (Ramji Lal 163)

The creation of God is quite majestic. It has both the smallest among the smallest and the biggest among the biggest. All types of diversity in life always surprise the onlooker of it. It has the peak of cruelty as well as the paragon of innocence. Hence, John Keats has rightly revealed the splendor and dignity of the Creator in his poem "The Tyger":

Tyger, tyger burning bright
In the forests of night (Keats, 187)

The poet is thoroughly astonished by the fusion of vigor and violence in the tiger. If the creation is so hostile, it is better not to imagine the brutality of the Creator Himself. It is the fact that every creation is inferior before the superior Creator.

Life is vivid and vibrant, straight and curvilinear, beautiful and ugly, vast and small, generous and miser, and so on. The

list of the qualities of life is quite innumerable and never ending. Naturally, the span of every human being is quite so short that no one can thoroughly sense and understand the whole life during his or her quite limited tenure.

Literature being the imaginative reconstruction of life has persistently possessed almost all the qualities of life. It is an aesthetic reflection of life. However, literature being based on the wings of imagination, every atheist of literary creation from Plato to the present, has made charges against the 'dulce and utile' reflection of life. Literature is an escape from life. It is a mere mirror image which fails to prove its utility in the world of everyday life. Hence, to be after literature is to be after an enticing mirage which compels us to run fast for it but does not slake our thirsty throat? It is an illusion which drags us away from the authentic challenges in real life. It teaches us to build invisible castles in an invisible air which cannot give any type of shelter to its creator.

However, in reality, literature is not distinct and distant from life. It is an escape into life. Hence, Prof. Krushnanath rightly opines,

साहित्य का आपने आप में मूल्य है, साधन मात्र नहीं साध्य है!..... साहित्य में भावनाओंको व्यक्त करने की, पकड़ने की शक्ति है. (नारायण, मिश्रा ९२-९३)

Literature is an aesthetic incarnation of life. It serves human life by delighting it spontaneously, beautifying it sweetly and educating it morally. रा. ग. जाधव in his article 'साहित्य आणि समाज' rightly views the place of art in life as:

“विविध प्रकारच्या कलात्मक आविष्कारातून सुस्थिर होत जाणाऱ्या सौंदर्य व्यवस्था प्रत्येक जिवंत व प्रगमनशील समाजात आढळून येतात.” (कोतापल्ले, शिंदे, तुकडिचे, १११)

Literature, being a fine art drags us from our dry and dull life and pushes us into a more new, useful and delightful world of literary images more real and useful than the plain facts in reality.

It strives to pacify the needs of head and heart of every sensitive reader. It makes the real life both endurable and enhancing. It boosts the beautiful bliss in life. Hence, literature allows every poet to reveal all types of his emotions through his literary creation. Wordsworth in his poem 'Rainbow' utters:

“My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky.” (Quiller-Couch, 607)

Literature generates all the constructive qualities which enrich and enhance the beauty and hospitality of life. It reinforces and refines the drab factual life. It moulds the unbearable into bearable.

Life in art is persistently permanent. It is not transitory like the life in reality. Keats in his poem "Ode on a Grecian Urn" reveals the everlasting sweetness of the melodies in art as:

“Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard,
Are sweeter....” (Bowra 140)

Literature will last till the edge of doom. It soars high in the sky and equally pierces deep into the soil. It reaches to the ultimate bottom of life and eventually flies high to

the zenith of the sky. It makes us laugh and similarly initiates us to shade our tears. Hence, P.B. Shelley in his poem 'Ode to the West Wind' unveils his pangs of sorrow as:

Oh. Lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon thee thorns of life! I bleed!
(Jalal 130)

Literature is the fine fusion of the qualities of good and evil, delight and distress. It preaches us to behave as human with all the species on the earth. S.T. Coleridge rightly says in his poem 'Rime of Ancient Mariner' as:

He prayeth well who loveth best
All things both great and small
(Quiller-Couch, 649)

Literature educates us for the constructive qualities in life. It makes us conscious of the destructive elements in both nature and its inhabitants. It teaches us the moral principles of life. In short, it holds mirror to us. It throws light on the relationships among individuals. It reveals our anticipation from our Almighty as Sarojini Naidu in her poem 'Village Song' yarns for invisible help:

Unless Thou succor my footsteps and
guide me,
Ram Re Ram! I shall die! (Prasad &
Singh 23)

Literature assists all of them who are in search of a helping hand. From the experience reflected into it, every parent can constructively mould the future of their children. Polonius in 'Hamlet' symbolizes the parents who desire to develop the conduct of their children. He guides his son Laerets as to how to behave in a foreign region as:

Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportioned thought his
act.

Be thou familiar, but by no means
vulgar.

Those friends thou hast, and their
adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops
of steel;

But do not dull thy palm with
entertainment

Of each new-hatch'd, unfledged
comrade. Beware

Of entrance to a quarrel, but being in,
Bear't that the opposed may beware
of thee.

Give every man thy ear, but few thy
voice;

Take each man's censure, but reserve
thy judgment.

Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not express'd in fancy; rich, not
gaudy;

For the apparel oft proclaims the man,
Neither a borrower nor a lender be;
For loan oft loses both itself and
friend,

And borrowing dulls the edge of
husbandry. (Turner, 34)

Literature generates optimism in the minds of every human being. It strengthens our determination to be firm and not to accept failure in life. Tennyson's Ulysses ends with the determination which strengthens both life and its inhabitants:

'To strive, to seek, to find and not to
yield.' (Ghosh, Khandelwal 134)

Literature nurtures every single feeling of us. It allows us to express all sorts of emotions. It makes the drab life quite easy to

live in. On the wings of imagination, we are free to build our castle in air. S. T. Coleridge in his poem 'Kubla Khan' utters:

I build that dome in air
That sunny dome! Those caves of ice
(Kulkarni 29)

Hence, literature serves life by all means. It is not an escape from life but an escape into life. Dr. S.C. Mundra precisely refers lines from Byron's 'Don Juan' to underscore the very form and function of literature as:

My poem is epic and is meant to be
Divided in twelve books, each book
containing

With love and war. (Mundra, 278)

In short, in spite of all the charges against art and literature, it has been proved that literature is persistently in the service of human being of transforming the intolerable hell into a blissful heaven.

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