

Exploring Social and Cultural Values in Contemporary Literature

Dr. Alka Dutt¹

¹ Amity University

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Abstract

Paper aims to explore effect of society and cultural norms on minds of contemporary writers. Through literary writings students understand how world moves forward through interdependency. Writers writing in realistic stream try to touch upon facts and not on assumptions. They observe real life characters in a society set up and do not write what comes as historical truth. Complex behaviour can be seen in complex writings of contemporary writings. Man being a social animal loves to live life without adhering to age old traditions that gave strength to inner make up of one's character. Literature reflects negative and positive side of modern man. What is dealt with in Social Sciences, the same is pored out in words by poets, dramatists and novelists. Non literary writers like Jared Diamond emphasize upon effect of land topography on man's thinking process and not history or society that is all around him. Contemporary world is full of hardships. Examples from literary texts can support one to deal with these hardships. Examples would be taken from works written after World War 11 that fall under contemporary literature. Couple of books would be touched upon under the lens of socioeconomic, socio-political and socio-religious aspects as values take shape from all that a person undergoes and all that is around him and these are just few things that affect a personality.

Index terms—

1 Introduction

© 2020 Global Journals individuals crave for love and affection. They yearn for sense of belonging. This is not only human yearning, all living things move towards those who accept them as their own. Children grow up in a healthy manner when surrounded by loving family members. Simple living does not call for materialistic things to make life worthy and fulsome. Today lot of research is going on to balance modern lifestyle of people with emotional upheavals that crop up due to it. According to Audrey Osler, Social Science helps people in understanding what new technology can do for them. Negativity of technology can be best understood and dealt with proper knowledge that comes out as effort of social scientists from all streams of studies.

While subjects under Humanities and Social Sciences are almost same, slight difference makes sense as to what these two streams deal with. While Humanities take up critical approach and analytical approach, Social Sciences come with scientific approach in the subjects. There is more of philosophy in Humanities. Promoters of liberal arts in ancient Greece The more placid rhythms of rural life elude him as much as does an ability to observe and record the delicacies of a flower or the contours of a working landscape. Although he readily recognised the Romantic conventions of seeing nature as the inspirer and the regenerator, few of Nature's voices echo directly in his novels. As a writer of fiction, Dickens generally remained distinctly unawed by its phenomena.

Dickens writings can be viewed as works that cry out for a better world amidst chaos of new scientific inventions. Coming up of industries had created a dismal world as is very much apparent through novels of this great writer. Today advancement in every field of science be it nanotechnology or medical, is impacting life of man. Role of social scientists is crucial in helping man make the right choice in shaping a future for himself.

Lot of work is being done by interdisciplinary teams of social scientists to promote human welfare. They try to find out all that hinders social advancement and economic advancement. These scientists look out for a way to balance modern lifestyle by being actively in touch with social service agencies, funding agencies, government institutions and UN organizations. They influence economists, strategists, teachers, programme officers, planners and media among many others with their analysis of all that is causing hurdles to human happiness.

II.

Dystopian World of Huxley

On one hand we have social scientists that are identifying problems that endanger well being of man; on the other we have writers commenting upon all that exists that is psychologically hazardous for future societies. Aldous Leonard Huxley, English writer of 20 th C, a humanist and philosopher, came up with his great work, Brave New World. The novel explores how technology dehumanizes. Society reflected by the writer is futuristic society that eliminates natural birth of babies. Here babies grow in bottles through genetic engineering. Today man is by choice a person who is materialistic; but society of Brave New World is programmed to be one through biological manipulation and psychological conditioning, here there is no old age, disease, poverty, war or unhappiness. Free will of man is put down by sinister runners of World State. Here new technology is a tool to generate happy state of mind by taking away all natural emotions that are nectar of life. According to the ruler of this new world, Mustapha, "you can't make tragedies without social instability. The world's stable now. People are happy; they get what they want, and they never want what they can't get." While Social Science is finding out way and means to raise children in a happy and contented society where learning is more effective and where each child gets to express his views to his parents and mentors, children of Brave New World are conditioned to "love all" without any natural emotions. Creator of this world has not role to play in this scientific world, as he is not required to deal with any revolutions, unhappiness, old age problems, and other problems that occur time to time in a natural world. Huxley's book shows modern man who is undergoing crisis of lost individual identity of this fast-paced world. While Social Science explores world of finance to come up with solutions to unstable economy at individual level, citizens of Huxley's novel just need to work and be productive, shop, travel and spend money to be happy. Writer of Das Kapital (1867), Karl Marx, would have been horrified at this new method of production. Mustafa say that passive man will only feel "Universal happiness" and exposing man to inspired questions like as to "Why he exists?" would only lead him to become restless and useless for World State. Technology by Palanese of Island is used to benefit society. Hydroelectricity by them is not rejected as promotional tool of industrialization. They make use of it to store surplus for fresh food items. This in turn gives boost to good nutritional diet and also lessens the fear of food shortage. Social geographers from University of Sheffield, emphasize upon good eating habits that would make them healthy and fit enough to cope up with old age. Sports sociologists too advice good diet plan as sports are strenuous. Today nanotechnology is a boon to food industry as conventional packaging is replaced and this allows for long life of packed food. It allows consumer to identify contaminated food items. Research has revealed that people have been eating food with nanoscale components for generations. More varieties of food offering improvised taste and texture are coming up for consumers. Food industry is revolutionized with each new finding of Nanotechnology.

III.

Utopian Thinking

Workings of mind can be traced through Social Sciences. Criminology and psychology can be seen at work in above mentioned works. According to Julie Harrower's Applying Psychology to Crime, "Criminology attempts to integrate the potential contributions of a wide range of disciplines in order to study criminal behaviour and legal issues." Literary minds have been attempting for ages to know what preoccupies the mind of a murderer. Retreat into the Mind: Victorian Poetry and the Rise of Psychiatry by Ekbert Faas talks about the issue in great detail. According to him, "murder, or the attempt at it, is the second most stereotypical event found in the history English Literature." Shakespearean plays can be explored for psychological murderers. De Quincey supports this attempt as he says a murderer's mind should be psychologically probed and analysed.

His essay "On the knocking at the Gate in Macbeth" (1823) is worth reading as it also comes with a casestudy. Psycho by Robert Bloch is fictional novel that comes with horrific tale. Bates, the protagonist, is identified with dissociative identity disorder as he victimizes clients to his motel under the guise of his own mother. The man had undergone a terrible phase of life. His father had deserted him and the mother at an early age.

Conclusion

Interdisciplinary study allows students to be addressed in a profitable manner. This approach to learning allows enhancement in knowledge as students of literature get to know about other disciplines, cultural methods of critique and ideologies. Synthesis of different ideas takes place and promotes critical thinking. New understanding is reached when multidisciplinary approach is taken up by educational institutions. Here normal study boundaries are crossed over to pave way for new paths. Best out of other subjects is combined with subject in hand. As

101 human beings, we are all in some manner interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary. Universal patterns can be
identified through all fields of study by passionate readers that in turn lead to good comprehension of the text.

Figure 1:

IV.

Figure 2:

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