

Does literature reflect society or does society reflect literature?



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Consequently, society and literature reflect one another, because literature is made into reality everyday and history is constantly repeating and adapting new and better ways, along with various styles.

With it being the twenty-first century, literature does indeed impact society and its diverse culture, though not many acknowledge it. Literature is calm, but every piece of work is full of twists and turns. Literature is the written works, unpublished and published, of a particular topic. When it comes to writing, just as it comes to life, there are no guidelines. From love to politics, society lives how they choose. Everyone wants to be best of the best, but where do these extraordinary ideas come from? Literature creates various ideas and influences. The power of words are crucial and also has a huge influence of societal outlook. There are five main types of literature Poetry, Drama, Prose, Nonfiction, and Media. Every aspect of literature is reflected into society for many purposes. Everyone may not use it the same, yet it may not be viewed as the same perspective to create an alliance. No one thinks exactly alike, sometimes partially, but never exactly alike. Society and literature tend to mirror one another. Without one, you can not have the other. Life is not a fairytale, but dreams do come true. More importantly, many people are inspired by other people's words. Erich Fromm said, "Greed is a bottomless pit which exhausts the person in an endless effort to satisfy the need without ever reaching satisfaction." Clearly no one can be perfect, but with a positive mindset of endless ideas, one can come close. The shaping of our generation is a result of current and past literature. It formulates morals, values, and attitudes towards our surroundings. Every now-and-then, it is time for a change, a fresh start. Reading between the

lines is what defines society, not the obvious. Society is rapidly changing, seeking new ways to take on life. “ Inside each of us, there is the seed of both good and evil. It’s a constant struggle as to which one will win. And one cannot exist without the other”(Eric Burdon) Likewise, these new ways could not be a reality without literature.

The power of literature shapes society into a reality. No one can break free of the influence of their generation. The world is continually changing, and minds are steadily opening up to new ideas. Literature is the voice of the world, the voice for those who do not or can not speak up. The expression of thoughts, virtuous or pessimistic, is told through literature. Influencing and opening many minds, literature creates the unthinkable and likewise speaks for the unheard and untold. “ Every man takes the limits of his own field of vision for the limits of the world.” (Arthur Schopenhauer) Life is what you make it, when you have a dream, chase it, but the inspiration came from somewhere. With most people, every idea is unique, besides the fact that their inspiration came from some form of literature. The sky is the limit and society is always setting new standards for others to compete against. On the other hand, the world is viewed on multiple aspects and counterparts. To dream of something, yet surprisingly it is not what it makes out to be shows life is what you as an individual make it in society. In the story *On Seeing England for the First Time* , Kincaid, envisions seeing England after she sees a map of England. She thought it was magical and could not wait to see it. “ No one I knew had ever been to England, or should I say no one I knew had ever been and returned tell me about it” (Kincaid) Although society gets inspiration from literary art, there is no definite picture of it, only how one

imagines it. Not to mention, things change, because society is not made to think one thing and make it a reality the next day. Dreams take time and dedication, something society rushes, but nonetheless despite the alterations done in the world up until it is made a reality, dreams do come true. Change is something that is out of society's control, not everyone, or everything remains the same. For instance, Kincaid finally got to see England and a variety of things changed. "This is the new England." (Kincaid) As the years go on literature grows. The power of literature not only controls society and trends, but teaches lessons as well. Literature opens minds and many eyes to their mistakes, past, present, and future. Reading or seeing literature in a book or play can show people their mistakes. Whether it was a mistake internally or externally with someone else, literature proves things many can not and will not admit to. *Macbeth* is a prime example of how to teach society to learn from their mistakes. He was told his future and took matters into his own hands. The witches never told him how he would become King, only the fact he would be King. "All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane of Glamis!, All hail, Macbeth, hail to thee, thane of Cawdor! All hail, Macbeth, thou shalt be king hereafter!" (Macbeth, Shakespeare) Macbeth took many lives, such as King Duncan, his best friend, Banquo, and attempted to kill Banquo's son just to be King of all he could. Macbeth went out of his way to show he could rule everything, but that made people only despise him more. Society is taught a lesson everyday whether through literature or current events. With it being so many horrendous events occurring society is "woke". There is too much happening to not take every precaution to stay safe. Lives are being taken, racism is splurging more again everyday, poverty is at all time low, and gender equality is not equal. Thus, literature is <https://assignbuster.com/does-literature-reflect-society-or-does-society-reflect-literature/>

society's only hope to create change, to inspire someone to take the next step because as time goes on with literature growing, society will be the most powerful, creating world renowned innovations and mindsets.

History is constantly repeating and adapting new and better ways to create a positive society along with various styles. There is never a point in society where it does not repeat the past. It does not repeat the exact same, but whereas it repeats with slight improvement. Society is working on becoming a nonjudgmental, free place. However, in order to have that, it has to repeat, show improvement, and make a change. Society runs off past literature to create future literature. "To educate a man in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society." (Theodore Roosevelt) Men and women deserve equality. Why should women be undermined because of their gender? Women are just as strong and brave as men. Society has been working on giving women more and more leeway to not be judged and be who they want. Whether it is a doctor, construction worker, or even a computer programmer, women can do just as much as a man, if not more. Though some men do not know what women want, it is a key factor in balancing the scale of equality. "Women desire to have sovereignty, As well upon their husband as their love, And to have mastery their man above;" (Wife of Bath's Tale, Chaucer) Feminism is taking over society. Women have fought for their rights and still are fighting. In 1920, the 19th amendment was made, giving women voting rights. History has to repeat and improve before society can actually change for the better. As for men, men are always trying to protect their manhood. With women rising beyond measures, men are now fighting for their dignity. To have a woman take

their job or a woman do their job better than them, threatens them. Men feel obligated to be the head instead of sharing the head of the house. Once society feels threatened, they will do all they can to protect or redeem themselves. In the story of *Macbeth*, Lady Macbeth tests her husband's manhood saying "That made you break this enterprise to me? When you durst do it, then you were a man; And to be more than what you were, you would" Later in the story he does all he can imagine to prove himself to be a man and higher than his wife. The wife wanted to higher status as well, though Macbeth still stole all the power in the end. Gender equality is a necessary and society is flourishing into a balance beam. Unlike gender equality, racism has yet to diminish. Racial discrimination has been the cause of a few recent events. It is not as harsh as it was during the Civil Rights Movement, lives are still taken and harmed. Trayvon Martin is a prime example. His life was fatally taken, for no reason. Also, like the Civil Rights period, he does have justice being that his killer got away with murder. Literature publishes many stories, everyone has a story, though some do not get to tell it. Literature allows people to recreate itself. Romanticism is probably the most popular form of recreated literature. Love is only perfect in literature and not even always then. Society tends to want the same thing they have seen in a movie or read in a book. First and foremost, love is unexplainable and has no time stamp or preplanned timeline. So, a couple can try to recreate a story, but it will not be their story, and every couple needs their own story. Many people may say "This one is for the books!" Legends are made through literature. Superman, Ironman, Black Panther, and many more all began with literature, particularly comics. An epic hero is a noble and brave person. *Beowulf* is the story of an epic hero named

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Beowulf who slayed a dragon and his enemy. He is a legend and much of society has read about him. "Your fame is renowned wherever men journey, my dear friend Beowulf, among all the peoples. You hold power with balance, with wisdom of mind. Now I shall fulfill our friendship as we earlier agreed. And you shall bring peace to your people for a long time to come, a source of strength to the heroes." (Beowulf) Legends are what society looks up to. Without legends the standards to helping someone would not be where they are now. Literature and Society are like a time machine, going back in time, and improving things for the better, so that sooner or later society will be as close to perfect as possible.

Some will say society shapes literature, however, I firmly believe literature shapes society. Society shapes literature everyday for the present and future. Society wants to set trends, but individually. Instead of legends, people are the ones other people look up to. Whether it is clothes, music, or recreational activities, society tends to follow behind what is currently popular. Popularity brings all the hype, especially if it is publicized more than expected. Money indeed is the root of all evil. Today in society, money can get you anything. Having money gets oneself a step farther than the person with less money. Literature and money sometimes reflects the success of the work. Many people say "it's not what you know, but who you know". To create literature society has to experience their story, but to create society literature has to be published to base a life foundation. On relationship terms, love is not the same. Love stories are made into stories through literature to later inspire others. As a couple love is what you make it, not what someone else makes it. Whether you are in a relationship or standing

alone, simply just as an individual, you have a story. Telling your life journey can inspire someone else, particularly future society. It can also promote internal growth. Society getting a chance to express oneself is the hope of literature growing. "It is not bragging if it's true" (Shepard) Despite the negative and positive sides of one's journey, every story has meaning. It shows the strength and values of a person. Literature shapes society in many ways for the present and future, but for the bettering of literature. Indeed, society helps further literature, but nevertheless to influence society literature is needed.

To have a society, you have to have literature. The world would not be what it is or has been without literature. Dreams turn into a reality as long as society follows their own path. "So many of our dreams at first seem impossible, then they seem improbable, and then, when we summon the will, they soon become inevitable." (Reeve) Society is a unique turning table, because with every piece of literature as an individual it is remixed to fit them. There is no doubt life is what you make it. As a woman, defy odds, there is no need to be underestimated or self-restricted to certain things. Women and men are equal and both deserve fair treatment. Women should not be judges for who they are or what society thinks they are only capable of. Women are strong, brave, and very much so able to do the same as a man. As Nike says "Just do it." Men and women should be open to sharing power and objectives, especially in marriages, because as a couple you are to act as one. The values of society rise everyday, due to the uprise of new styles and techniques used in literature. Literature sets the bar, not just for dreams, but for societal values as well. Society is constantly promoting

positivity. Whether it is through modernism or romanticism, everyone wants to be happy. As an individual being happy is what matters most. Life is a challenge and if one is not happy, it is indeed harder to grasp. Throughout life, it is not perfect, people make mistakes, because society is human. Literature teaches society lessons. Literature serves as an inanimate counselor. It inspires you to do or want better or yourself, because some do not hear it from their peers. Whether the situation is self-related or external friends and family, literature provokes realism and is even forgiveness. Literature will indefinitely reflect society through history and history. Society will never be same for long, for the sure fact of new ideas continuously sprouting throughout and because of literature.

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