

# Free essay about making literature matter

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Literature is the art of communication that explains the diverse nature of the environment in which we live. It is the point of reference for all humans which existed at the time of any event or were born after the event and would like to feed their imaginative situation by reading what happened then. Literature can be categorized into two main groups. These groups are oral and written literature. Oral literature is the art of communication through the word of mouth, but most of it is not recorded anywhere. This literature used to happen in the ancient times where the old generation would advise the young on the culture and norms of its community and their obligations. In addition, oral literature would be used by the old generation as well as the young people to pass the time in the evening after working hard during the day.

With time, literature has revolutionized, and technology has defined methods of preserving the events that happened in the past. This has led to the emergence of written literature that is communicated from one generation to another. The work is reserved text books, articles, documentary publications and many others. In the current century, technology has salvaged the glory of literature that the young generation is becoming non-receptive to reading. However, this negative attitude can be attributed to the acted plays and documentaries about the written literature. Despite its repulsive force to avid leaders, it has helped in instilling more facts about literature on people's minds than just reading. Written literature has now been converted into audio and visual form, where the current generation can listen and watch plays and documentaries of their own culture or a different culture. Major areas where literature work can be accessed include schools and national

libraries, archives and national theatres where plays are performed to communicate the aspects of a certain culture.

The purpose of this essay will be to elaborate the importance of literature in our lives and the societal changes it has made. Dissecting the contents of the book by Schilb and Clifford, " Making Literature Matter", literature will be manifested in poems, plays and written scripts. The essay will correlate poems from different authors, texts and other commentaries with intent to emphasize why the claims that, " literature is the mother of civilization are undisputed"

The flexibility of literature is that it can be orally presented, written or performed to communicate the intended information to the target audience. For the literature to deliver the intended message, the authors must supplement it with humor to ensure that its meaning does not succumb to the virus of extinction and lose its meaning. Therefore, literature is a combination of factual and imaginative writing. Factual information is based on true events that happened to include the historical origin of a certain practice observed by a section of people. On the other hand, imaginative literature is communicated the form of fiction stories, poetry and drama. For instance, poetry could be used to express romance to a loved one or used as a way of praising someone or something. Drama is used to teach the community of benefits and dangers of a certain practice or portray the culture and practice of a certain community.

Barbara W. Tuchman, a renowned author, depicts books as the carriers of civilization. This description is the core subject of why we believe in what we believe in, why we act and behave the way we do and why we opt to discard

some past norms in favors of new trends. Our past is the epicenter of our actions. Without the past, “ the present cannot sustain its meaning”. (Schilb and Clifford) Everybody is confined within a certain community which performs its activities in a different manner from others. This forms the basis of our origin. Our parents and grandparents narrated to us about our forefathers and their way of conducting the activities of our community. From this oral literature, we adopted the norms and principles, which we have, strictly observed till now. These norms have always defined the characters of different communities in the society. In addition, oral narrative and drama formed the basis of inculcating good behavior to children. In her quotations, Tuchman describes books as “ magicians, teachers, companions and bankers of reserves of our minds”. (Schilb and Clifford). I concur with his opinion in the sense that books are the custodians of our history and it’s only through books that we can understand our current situation and the factors that resulted in it.

For example, though controversial, the contents of the Bible about the existence of God could serve as written literature to the generation that followed after the creation of Adam and Eve. We were not present to witness the presence of God on earth, but we believe and trust that he lived, ascended to heaven and is our overseer and protector in our everyday lives. Moreover, in the past, there was no electricity, television, radio and internet. In our current generation, all these features have become part of our current lives. It’s the written literature about past inventers that has enabled advancement in more capital intensive methods to ease the lives of human beings. For instance, in the course of living, housemaids have been the

alternative approach to relieve working parent's house chores. In the recent past, technocrats have combined both written and current facts and invented a robot that performs equal activities just as the housemaid. Most of the countries had no self rule and were colonized by other nations. They operated within imposed rules and regulations by the colonizers. These colonizers drafted a constitution that they used to govern the country. As the generation passed from one to the next, the colonizers were toppled, and the natives took over power. The remnant generation is the subject of the views we have about others. The views were inculcated in the mind of the older generation which has been transferred to the current generation. Some of the evil views include racism and tribalism.

For example, it is the inhuman behavior by our colonizers that prompted the evolution of guidelines and regulations to govern everyone. Racism, gender discrimination and inhuman atrocities enlightened people on their freedom and privileges. In his literature "So Mexicans are taking away jobs from the Americans" Jimmy Santiago Baca expresses satirical behavior exercised by Americans against Mexicans. Americans racially discriminate Mexicans under the disguise of labor force invasion. Santiago use metaphor and symbols to describe the extent of the situation. "Do they come with horses and rifles and say, gimme your jobdo they sneak into town". "Even on TV, an asthmatic leader "crawls turtle heavy".. Depicts how old and weak politicians mislead the society to promote racism. Baca motivates people to rise and refrain from racism and thus the campaign has led to enactment of rules on racial discrimination in America. (Schlibs and Clifford)

Further, evolution of science can be attributed to the preserved written

information of ancient inventors. For instance, George Stephenson was the pioneer inventor of the first steam powered train in the early 1840s. The technical skills he used to invent are recorded in engineering books and have been used by subsequent engineers to invent electric train. Other science inventions include the evolution of communication from radio telephones to hand-held mobile phones. Therefore, science literature, recorded in books is the subject of the world's civilization in the science and technology sector. Written literature can be used as tool to express feelings and inculcate its reality in people's minds. Szymborska Wislawa's poem " True love" describes love as the icon of co-existence among people. She uses her words to express the ' magic' in love. She asks, " True love, is it normal, is it serious, and is it practical" She use poem to help those who do not believe in love to change their mentality to positivity about love (Schilb and Clifford)

Moreover, written literature is the subject of understanding the social values in the society. Poetry is one of the avenues that are used to express one's feelings or praise someone or something. For instance, W. H. Auden, a well-known poet and dramatist, expresses his concern about how people lose their identities in the face of a changing technological world. " Social Security? Birth date? , Nine-digit telephone number starting with area code? Mother's maiden name?" These quotes depict human being as abstract numbers to modern society and devoid of emotions and ideas. Auden describes the unknown citizen in the poem " Unknown soldier" describing that the soldier has become a government's puppet by conforming to its demand to earn the praise of a ' perfect man' To deliver the intended message, Auden uses metaphors like " wasn't odd in his views", " normal in

every way”, “ saint” to describe who the unknown citizen was. Through literature, Auden portrays that people have a history of their character and is only manipulated due to the environment they live. (Schilb and Clifford)

## **Conclusion**

In summary, literature can only find its meaning written and preserved well for future generation. Not everything that is written is good and if a change is necessary, what is written will form a good basis. The present cannot sustain without the past. “ It is the present today that become the past tomorrow”. Literature is the mother who teaches us about who we are, why we do what we do and helps us to unravel new ways of performing certain activities.

## **Work cited**

Schilb, John, and John Clifford. Making Literature Matter: An Anthology for Readers and Writers. 5th ed. Boston: Bedford, 2011. Print.