

The role of the writer in society

[Profession](#), [Writer](#)



Formative assignment: discuss the role of the writer in society, with reference to specific examples. The 'writer's' role is vital to society in many ways. From the newspapers that are written to be informative, to the poets that are taught foreducation, from the bible that millions follow on a daily basis to fictional novels for entertainment. On one hand, Literature is all around and can be extremely influential, informative and enlightening. On the other hand, literature can be dangerous and also a source of controversy.

The aim of this essay is to explore some of the key writers that portray this. Literature in itself takes on two main roles in society. The first is an active role. This could mean that the literature itself is inspirational and effective towards society. The second is a passive role. This meaning that the literature itself is there but not necessarily crucial to create a real impact on today's civilisation. Either way, this only emphasises the fact that the writer's role, whether passive or not is important. The role of the active writer is extremely significant.

A powerful example of this is that of William Shakespeare (1564-1616). The role that Shakespeare took on in society was ultimately very influential. The fact that his works are still studied in schools and colleges to this day, almost four hundred years after his death and that he is still thought of as one of the greatest poets and playwrights in history portrays the importance of his works. Shakespeare's plays are still performed in theatres worldwide and his house still stands in Stratford-upon-Avon and is now considered a landmark.

There are many reasons as to why Shakespeare was so influential, one of which being his influence on the modern language. Many of the phrases that

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are still used to day were adapted from a number of Shakespeare's plays. Another of these reasons is Shakespeare's ability to write a dialogue. The depth and skill that Shakespeare was able to describe the setting of his plays, the compelling characters that he created and the script the actors were to use made each of the scenes flow fluidly and also made the story easy for the audience to follow.

One of Shakespeare's plays in particular stands out amongst the rest purely because of the main character, this play is Hamlet. Due to the fact that this play was written hundreds of years before the idea of psychology, Shakespeare's characterisation of Hamlet is extraordinary in itself. " 'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good-mother, Nor customary suits of solemn black ... Together with all forms, moods, shows of grief that can denote me truly. " The idea of a character that is so completely consumed by his grief and obsession with death is unheard of in any other works of the time.

Another example is the renowned novelist Charles Dickens (1812-1870). Although Dickens' literature was chronologically later than that of Shakespeare, his work was no less influential. He is identified as the one of the best writers of the Victorian era and one hundred and forty years after his death, Dickens' novels such as ' Oliver Twist' and ' A Christmas Carol', like that of Shakespeare, are still also taught in schools and colleges, films are also made and re-made of his novels and are still performed in theatres.

Dickens writing is prominent due to, firstly, his ability as a story teller. His works are highly entertaining, yet the subjects that Dickens touches on maintains the ability to capture the empathy of the audience in a way that makes it possible that the audience understands the complex issues, without

having experienced them. the parish authorities magnanimously and humanely resolved, that Oliver should be 'farmed,' or, in other words, that he should be despatched to a branch-workhouse some three miles off, where twenty or thirty other juvenile offenders against the poor-laws rolled about the floor all day, without the inconvenience of too much food, or too much clothing, under the parental superintendence of an elderly female who received the culprits at and for the consideration of seven pence-halfpenny per small head per week. "

His observations of the imperfections of Victorian society are so well written that even though he wrote mainly of the injustices of the era, he is able to resolve the stories by creating comical and ultimately engaging storylines. This shows an expert ability to write an interesting plot without making the story too complicated for the reader to follow. In contrast to the above novelists, an example of controversy in literature is that of the author D. H. Lawrence. Lawrence wrote the infamous 'Lady Chatterley's lover' in 1928, which was first published in Florence, Italy.

The book itself was a notorious subject as it portrays the story of a noble woman having an explicit affair with the working class game-keeper. The deeply descriptive language and use of banned obscenities used by Lawrence to describe the sexual part of the relationship meant that it could not be published in the United Kingdom until 1960. " His lovemaking was earthy and gritty, and no wonder, as he'd misplaced his dibber earlier that day, and had to use the only suitable piece of equipment he'd had to hand in the greenhouse at the time"

This piece of literature may have aroused debate amongst many people yet this still stands to be a widely recognised story of forbidden love. Even though it has only been around for the last 60 years in this country, this story in its entirety forcedly changed the perception of many on people that are very different from themselves. In conclusion, the role of the writer has established itself in today's civilisation in many forms. Whether the novelist writes for entertainment or education, whether to touch on previously taboo subjects, or to question authority and provoke a worldwide debate, the writer's position is prominent.

A writer can follow the norm of society or can go to extremes, and in this freedom can incite a revolution. The extent of the impact of the writer and their work remains to be seen, but as it stands the effect is there whether the writer intends it or not. References for Assignment 1 - Formative assignment: discuss the role of the writer in society, with reference to specific examples. * BBC. (10, Nov 1960). Lady Chatterley's Lover Sold Out. Available: http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/november/10/newsid_2965000/2965194.stm. Last accessed 11/10/11 * Charles Dickens (1966). Oliver Twist. 3rd ed.

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