CHAPTER I

AN OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION

*Literature offers not just a window into the culture of diverse regions, but also the society, the politics; the education; it's the only place where we can keep track of ideas. – **Reza Aslan***

Literature is a reflection of the numerous colours that lay out in society. We all know that literature mirrors society. What happens in a society is reflected in literary works in one form or another. The literal meaning of literature is the art of written work in different forms, such as, poetry, plays, stories, prose, fiction etc. It may also consist of texts based on information as well as imagination. Literature is not confined to fiction and does not simply tell stories or poems for some sort of entertainment. It dwells deep inside the minds of people, brings the society on paper, turns the tables towards the follies and shines that are found around in every society and talks about the important aspects that help a man to grow and live in the society. There have been many areas that are covered and voiced in literature that portray the essential aspects that were never talked out candidly. Percy Bysshe Shelley in his masterpiece A Defence of Poetry has said that poets are —the unacknowledged legislators of mankind.‖- (Shelly, A Defence of Poetry).The function of a legislator is to lay down the law, a settled course of action that men may follow. All literary works show us various aspects of the society from politics, economics, education and culture, via various genres of literature from time to time. Literature is considered to be the criticism of life because it mirrors the society, people and the time in which it is produced. Conventionally, literature holds a mirror to life. Corroborating this idea of connection of society and literature, Hippolyte Taine, a French critic gives a scientific approach to the study of literature through his theory of race, milieu and moment. According to this theory Men, Milieu and Message, cannot be separated from literature. As mentioned by the Encyclopedia Britannica:

—Race, milieu, and moment, according to the French critic Hippolyte Taine, are three principal motives or conditioning factors behind any work of art.- (—Race,Milieu and Moment‖, Encyclopedia Britannica)

Background

In an oppressive society the truth-telling nature of literature is of a different order, and sometimes valued more highly than other elements in a work of art.

– *Julian Barnes.*

As mentioned earlier, literature is the mirror of society and its various aspects. Keeping in mind the same vitality of literature and the way it has portrayed the society time and again, we come across the fact that literature is not only a work of art but a splendid way of telling about the ages and eras that behold it. One of the most essential aspects of human living and progress is 'education'. As a matter of fact, there are many researches that have been conducted in the field of education and many perceptions that are brought down to improve and polish education. While much has been said and written about education reform over the past couple of years, the issue and the public discourse around it are hardly new phenomena. Today, we round up the most compelling and visionary reading on reinventing education from the past century. To say Education is important is an understatement. Education is a weapon to improve one's life. It is probably the most important tool to change one's life. Education for a child begins at home. It is a lifelong process that ends with death. Education certainly determines the quality of an individual's life. Education improves one's knowledge, skills and develops the personality and attitude Undeniably, education has shown many possible shades over many centuries and this could be well understood through the voice of literary writers. There can be no today without yesterday. From antiquity till date, man has continued to search for the ideals and philosophy which give shape to the educational system. It is in conformity with the above statement that Rusk (1976) noted the need for educators and students to study "the Doctrines of the Great Educators". Brutus and Brauner (1976) noted that, educational administrators, educators and students at all levels, should study literature to understand the philosophical views of great educators like Plato as their approaches' and suggestions can be carefully applied to present day educational problems. In the same vein, Akinpelu (1984) clearly stated, that since past great literary masterpieces contributed immensely to the development of the education of their time, there is need to consider the relevance of their ideas in contemporary education as past experiences can be useful in solving present and future problems. Therefore, the ideas will serve as a guide to modern education in solving educational problems. The fact is that certain problems have been in existence

in education from the onset. Thus, Boyd and King (1972) recommended that, because of the dynamic nature of the society and its peculiar problems, emphasis should be laid on the development of critical abilities needed for tackling contemporary problems of education.

The objectives of study

One of the cardinal reasons for this study is to show that Literature as a lens is a wave cutting across all utopian notions concerning education. Again, critical percepts are crucial to education and intricately linked to the attainment of all educational goals. English Literature brings an equilibrium in the approaches to education. It is good to know that all the tentative generalizations in discipline are given further analysis through philosophy of education which leads to the expansion of knowledge. The philosophy of a nation is the bedrock on which the philosophy of education depends. A well critically analyzed work of literature pouring out the education of the time wears the coat of indispensability for a successful educational analysis which brings efficiency to national development. For a number of years now, writers have noted 'a surprising return to the theme of utopia in educational philosophy' and pointed to 'the educational comeback of utopia' more generally (Lewis,2007,683;Papastephanou,2013,23).The language here is interesting; utopia is making a surprising comeback. A and pointed to comeback because utopian energies had long been pronounced 'exhausted' (Habermas, 1989, 48) and surprising because the concept had seemed irredeemably tarnished by the experience. The idea that education, as well as other social institutions, can be transformed rationally and in ways that —enhance human wellbeing and happiness has a long and controversial history (Wright, 1999, para. x). In one of the rare books that explicitly focus on the connection between utopias and education, Howard Ozmon's Utopias and Education (1969) has argued that utopian thought played an important part in influencing educational thought in the west. He points at ways in which utopian thought has influenced education in the past, and also asserts that utopians have, by and large, placed a high priority upon education (Ozmon, 1969). In addition, —most utopian writers not only have a high regard for education but are educationists themselves (ibid., p. x). That education has always been utopian measure par excellence (Hertzler, 1965), Ozmon (1969, p. ix) explains by stating that:

"[As utopians believed] . . . that the great social problems of a society cannot be solved without changing the entire structure of the society within which these

problems reside . . . they saw a twofold necessity for education, first, for the purpose of educating man to the need for great and important changes, and secondly, they saw education as a vehicle for enabling man to adjust to these changes."

However, this utopian sentiment has, in western thought, always been in competition with alternative approaches towards social change that has put an emphasis on reform rather than radical transformation. These two streams are well summarised by Wright (1999):

On the one hand, radicals of diverse stripes have argued that social arrangements inherited from the past are not immutable facts of nature, but transformable human creations. Social institutions can be designed in ways that eliminate forms of oppression that thwart human aspirations for fulfilling and meaningful lives. The central task of emancipatory politics is to create such institutions. On the other hand, conservatives have generally argued that grand designs for social reconstruction are nearly always disasters. While contemporary social institutions may be far from perfect, they are generally serviceable. At least, it is argued, they provide the minimal conditions for social order and stable interactions. These institutions have evolved through a process of slow, incremental modification as people adapt social rules and practices to changing circumstances. The process is driven by trial and error much more than by conscious design, and by and large those institutions which have endured have done so because they have enduring virtues. This does not preclude institutional change, even deliberate institutional change, but it means that such change should be piecemeal, not wholesale ruptures with existing arrangements. (para. 4)

Educational institutions, practices and discourses are therefore torn between demands to, on one hand, create and respond to social change, and on the other, maintain the status quo. Still, all these demands are informed by particular futures discourses. While this is more obvious in the case of demands that more explicitly engage with social change, even demands and desires for maintaining the status quo depend on projection of the current system as a desirable vision for tomorrow. But as educational discourse in the present historical moment is —organized around a totalizing principle in a paradigm that is called analytic, rationalist, or scientific (Fendler, 1999, p. 170), utopianism is, in general, considered 'pass'. This scientific and rationalist approach can be traced back to modernism, as well as to Marx's invention of scientific socialism'. As early as

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1949, Martin Buber had argued that the reputation of utopia sank in value predominantly because Karl Marx used it as a weapon —in the fight between Marxism and non–Marxian socialism‖ (in Ozmon, 1969, p. v). That his thought had all the elements of the utopian (including its dystopian downfall) is now rarely contested. But Marx:

. . . used this concept to differentiate between his scientific socialism and what he felt were the dreamy abstractions of others. The opposing faction was thus labeled by Marx as 'utopian'. To a large extent, Buber adds, this fight between the Marxists and the non-Marxists has conditioned our understanding of the world today. (Ozmon, 1969, p. v)

The study also emphasizes a comparative study between how the education system is portrayed in the fictional world and how it is found in the real world. Some ideas and portrayals are very authentic to the education as found out of the books and many works show the idealized situation which nowhere exists in the education system. It shows how education has affected lives and what progress it has brought in the fictional characters. Paradoxical to it, it also mirrors the reality and the struggle to find one's own entity even after being educated. This is needless to say, has a stressing reality hidden. Some works of fiction have flaunted the high led lives with good facilities and all the luxuries to receive education, at the other end is a shattered struggle to be literate enough to survive. The voice of literature can very well be assumed the voice of people of the time. There are contrasting figures and characters which can only be a piece of imagination. There are also many manipulative situations which are merely written to take the reader into a different world. Some of these works are highly praised in the history of English literature. But nevertheless, there are writers who bring about the realities of the educational world beautifully on paper.

Delimitations of the study

This research is confined to the study of education, education system and its portrayal in the literary world. It does not include any other discipline apart from education and literature. Further, it does not involve any sort of experimental research and is purely based on analytical research as understanding the notions of writers with context to education could be best laid out through a keen analysis and critical thinking. It does not involve the perceptions of an ordinary student or teacher or common people around the

society but how some specified writers incorporated their views on education and these writers serve as a mouthpiece to common people of different ages. The writers and works that are taken into consideration are Thomas Hardy and his 'selected novels', Thomas More's 'Utopia', Virginia Woolf's 'Selected Essays' and 'A Room of One's Own'.

Rationale of the study

As a matter of fact, not many researchers have considered fusing education and English literature together. This study gives me an opportunity to figure out a candid observation regarding how vivdly education is infused in English literature and captivates to travel through this untouched area of study. The fundamental reason to conduct this study is the swift change in education system which is a hindrance to some and a boon to some. Therefore, knowing about how education went through changes from one age to the other may help in the formation of new soulful stable ideas that can help us to understand not only education but what has been the demand of a learner who is struck between the traditional and modern notion of education. Choosing nothing but literature as a voice to it is because literature has mirrored the society abundantly since centuries.

Need and Importance of the study

It is unequivocal to say, education plays a vital role in the overall alleviation of the nation. This study is essential as it gives us an insight into the core of understanding education and how it can be improved through studying the utopian ideas of education. Moreover, as it is rightly said, to make something better, it is essential to understand its roots. Here, blending education and English literature has helped us to reach the history of how education system intended to be since ages. The one thing that needs to be noted here is that, education here, is not studied through the formed notions, philosophies or policies but it is a discernment through the fictional world which obsessively portrayed the lives of common people of the time.

Research Methodology

Research is an essential and powerful tool in leading man towards progress. Without systematic research there would have been very little progress. John W. Best has rightly said:

"The secret of our cultural development has been research, pushing back the areas of ignorance by discovering new truths, which, in turn, lead to better ways of doing things and better products."

Scientific research leads to progress in some field of life. New products, new facts, new concepts and new ways of doing things are being found due to ever increasing significant research in the physical, the biological, the social and the psychological fields. Research today is no longer confined to the science laboratory.

Meaning of Research: Word 'Research' is comprises of two words i.e. Re + Search. It means to search again. So research means a systematic investigation or activity to gain new knowledge of the already existing facts. Research is an intellectual activity. It is responsible for bringing to light new knowledge. It is also responsible for correcting the present mistakes, removing existing misconceptions and adding new learning to the existing fund of knowledge. Researches are considered as a combination of those activities which are removed from day to day life and are pursued by those persons who are gifted in intellect and sincere in pursuit of knowledge. But it is not correct to say that the research is restricted to such type of persons, however, it is correct to say that major contribution of research comes from highly gifted and committed workers. Thus the research is not at all mysterious and is carried on by hundreds of thousands of average individuals. Research is also considered as the application of scientific method in solving the problems. It is a systematic, formal and intensive process of carrying on the scientific method of analysis. There are many ways of obtaining knowledge. They are intuition, revelation, and authority, logical manipulation of basic assumptions, informed guesses, observation, and reasoning by analogy. One of the branches of research known as empirical research is highly goal-oriented technique.

Definitions of Research: The following are the important definitions of research: "Research is an endeavor / attempt to discover, develop and verify knowledge.

J. Francis Rummel "Research is an honest, exhaustive, intelligent search for facts and their meanings or implications with reference to a given problem. The product or findings of a given piece of research should be an authentic, verifiable contribution to knowledge in the field studied."

P.M.c.: "Research may be defined as a method of studying problems whose solutions are to be derived partly or wholly from facts."

W.S. Monroes : "Research is considered to be the more formal, systematic intensive process of carrying on the scientific method of analysis. It involves a more systematic structure of investigation, usually resulting in some sort of formal record of procedures and a report of results or conclusion."

While preparing for this survey I have taken ANALYTICAL RESEARCH, LIBRARY RESEARCH AND COMPARATIVE STRATEGY as the consideration to study and bring out my conclusions. Analytical research is a specific type of research that involves critical thinking skills and the evaluation of facts and information relative to the research being conducted. A variety of people including students, doctors and psychologists use analytical research during studies to find the most relevant information. From analytical research, a person finds out critical details to add new ideas to the material being produced. Research of any type is a method to discover information. Within analytical research articles, data and other important facts that pertain to a project is compiled; after the information is collected and evaluated. Some researchers conduct analytical research to find supporting evidence to current research being done in order to make the work more reliable. Other researchers conduct analytical research to form new ideas about the topic being studied. Analytical research is conducted in a variety of ways including literary research, public opinion, scientific trials and Meta-analysis. A classic definition of analysis in qualitative research is that the "analyst seeks to provide an explicit rendering of the structure, order and patterns found among a group of participants" (Lofland, 1971, p. 7). Usually when we think about analysis in research, we think about it as a stage in the process. It occurs somewhere between the data collection phase and the write-up of the discussion. Under this narrow definition, analysis is about what we do with data once collected: it is concerned with how we bring conceptual order to observed experience. When using emergent designs, however, a stronger emphasis is placed on analysis as an activity concurrent with data collection. For example, in grounded theory studies, the analytic process can be thought of as a braid with data collection, analysis, and interpretation as the braided strands. There are two assumptions that underlie this approach. First, there is an assumption that analysis rests solely with the researcher. Second, there is an assumption that analysis begins when we start collection of data.

Laurel Richardson (2003) talks about writing as a method of inquiry. While we often think of the final write-up of a project as a mode of telling about the social world, it is also a pervasive activity throughout a project that serves as a method of discovery and analysis. Through the process of writing at various stages in the project, we work through how we are thinking about our topic of inquiry and our relationship to it. From this perspective, writing is the means by which we make our analytic process manifest and available for review. According to Richardson, it is through writing that we word and reword the world we are studying. Writing is a research practice, not simply a research product, through which we express our analytic insights and constructions of lived experience.

One of the reasons we do social scientific research is to come to a different understanding of the social world. In the absence of analysis, we would have largely undifferentiated descriptions of lived experience. Analyzing social reality is a process of thoughtful reflection whereby the researcher serves as a catalyst in the creation of an ordered, conceptual portrayal of the reality at hand. At the very least, in descriptive-oriented studies, this analytic process involves the selection of certain kinds of reality to study and present. Implicitly, this is a meaning making process that involves the construction of that reality. In the same way that the photographer brings us snapshots of reality, the researcher brings to the reader meaningfully created windows on social reality. Moreover, in studies where the aim is to interpret these realities and generate explanation, this involves a process of abstraction that is a kind of "double hermeneutic" that involves the "dialectical interplay" between the subjective meaning of people's experiences described using everyday language and the researcher's reconstructions of that reality using emerging concepts and interpretations (Rothe, 1993). These assumptions, when taken together, create a portrayal of analysis that is "switched on" at the beginning of the project and that is shaped.