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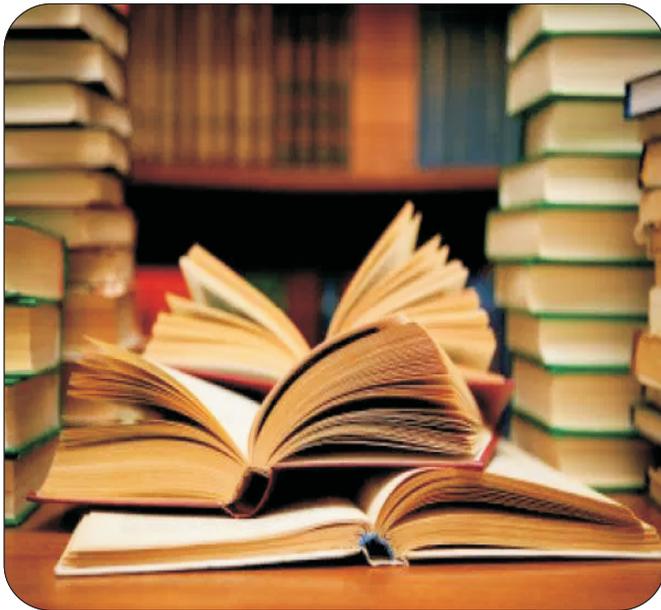


## REFLECTION OF SOCIAL ACTION: LITERATURE AS A SOURCE OF HISTORY



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### ABSTRACT

**A**s an important part of social process, literature is sited within history and not outside it. It is a text born out of a context and the historian can use evidences from it and it can be pointed that the close reading of a literary text will provide much to the construction of past or helped as sense of history. In the course of the time literature reflects the social action of the period as it recorded in history narrations. Social action is any action involving exchange between two or more human beings under conditions of some sort of mutuality of interest, intention on need.

**KEYWORDS** :Social Action, Source of History , social process, literature .

### LITERATURE, HISTORY AND NATIONALISM

The new historicism has given scholars new opportunities to cross the boundaries separating history, literature, anthropology etc. It brackets all these different disciplines in together. New historicists can make a valid class to have established new ways of studying history and a new awareness of new history and culture define each other. The cultural materialism also claims that meaning is created not by individuals or by abstract entities, such as class, gender, nation or race, but only in specific context that constitute a culture. K.N. Panikkar points that the analysis, which became quite influential following the 'cultural turn' in historical research, also tended to treat literature in isolation. The inter-relationship between literature and history occurs because they are integral parts of social process . He also indicates the relations between literature and history as 'literature and history differ fundamentally in the manner in which social reality is embodied and represented. While in literacy representation, imagination constituted the central element, historical representation is governed by evidence and factual accuracy. However much a historian or a writer tries to relate the

narrative to know facts or evidence, still, truth eludes representation . It is one knows that literature consists of which it differ from language in general on the other side, and discourse specifically on the other, in order to inquire into a given literary works relationship to the various social milieus in which it cross and in which it finds its various kinds of receptions, uses, consumptions. Hayden White puts that any effort to determine the status of literary work as a kind of social action, as an effect of social caresses, or as a reflection of social structures conditions etc, will be tinged by ideological in the degree to which one must presuppose a specific answers to the question, 'what' is the nature of society' before proceeding to establish the ways in which 'literature' is related to a given social formation and he also points later being construed variously as a kind of social action, as an effect or reflection of social action, as a kind of ideal mold of the most desirable kind of social actions, and as a variable entitles to or mode of transcendence of any merely social action. In their ways the relationship between literature and social action seem valid and each reveals a different aspect of the many ways in which we call literary action and its product literature are involved in social process not different times and places in history.

It is pointed out that in the modern personal literature played an important role in making national consciousness among the word. Some take literature as a tool of protesting their political enemy. Some sense of language community may even have been presented in their earlier stage of nationality formation, Hobsbawm puts that, in the absence of a system of formal education, there could have been no mass linguistic uniformity, and loose lingual francae might have come into being before the extension of public instruction. These had been fostered by preachers, the reciters of songs and poem common to wider cultural area . On this basis when we take India as a 'place' number of print media and literature made guiding people towards the nationalist movements. By this way literature played a constructive role to transform nationalist ideology and programme to the people.

A nation is a soul , a spiritual principle and of all its cults 'that of the ancestors is the most legitimate, for the ancestors have made us what we are. A heroic past, great men, glory. This is the social capital upon which one bases a national idea . Ernest Ranan also points out that 'national memories are concerned, griefs are of more value than triumphs, for they impose duties and require a common effort, pointing in the colonial situation where nationalists repeatedly invoke the idea of glorious pre-colonial traditions (symbolized by 'culture' the family , language, religion , and women) which have been trampled upon by the colonial invader' . This is the importance of a close analysis of literature during the time of British power in India. These national feelings can be seen in poetry than any other literary genre. Poetry has become a vital force which has not only subscribed to the growth of that branch but led to an introspection and self criticism of the society. This situation has interested each other for strengthening the national sentiments and thereby posing an action plan for changing the social system. A good number of poets turned to be nationalists and their sentiments were recorded in mellifluous melody and rich sonorous quality of poetry. Their lyrics were read by the new literate class and they were largely converted to the religion of nationalism. As such nationalism widened the scope of poetry and inaugurated not only romanticism but also progressive ideas leading to realism .

The banner of Indian National Movement was held aloft by a galaxy of poet patriots- Rabindranath Tagore, Subrahmania Bharati, Vallathol and Bakimchandra Chaterji. Both Bharati and Vallathol are known for their radical views and the concept of extreme nationalism. Bankim Chandra Chaterji in his Anandmutt had written 'Vanthe Matharam' which spread like a wild fire and kindled national spirit.

So literature does transcend the conditions of its own production and that, as a consequence, literature gives us insight of a special sort into the nature of social production and reproduction in general. In this way literature is a commodity, like other commodities insofar as it is product of human

labor capable of entering into the commodity exchange relationship, it is a special kind of commodity, commodity which speaks about the conditions of its own production. In the case of French society, Bloch studied on French romance and gives its historical significance. Which informs 'Old French Romance' is presented as residing in its utopian anticipation of the kind of society which will subsequently emerge from the social conflict that are held to be its concealed subject matter. Marc Bloch clearly points 'the relation between the literary text and its historical context', in terms of the conditioning of the former by the latter. Gumbrecht puts 'literature plays a double role, on the one side, it is an explanandum whose explanans consists of past social condition, on the other hand, it is an explanans whose explanandum is the current situation of the (Spanish) society. Its indication to take that current situation pretty much as it is and to write a kind of literary history that will satisfy the needs as much of the current ruling group as those of the oppressed. For Benjamin, 'literature mediates between the forces and modes of existence of a given time and place and spiritual world, the world of meaning and value, in distinctively the way that Baudelaire had imagined that it to do in his theory of correspondence'. For the Positivistic view of history as the 'objective' description of a series of events in an isolated past neglects the artistic character as well as the specific historicity of literature. It is as K.N. Panikkar points out that, 'the literary engagement with the colonial experience is, however, a crucial input in the process of decolonization. A necessary pre-requisite of decolonization is the generation of social consciousness about the myriad way in which colonial cultural hegemonisation is realized. He also pointed that 'Ngugi Wa Thiobgo, an African novelist, in a very insightful analysis of the politics of language in African literature, recognizes the 'cultural bomb' as the 'biggest weapon' of colonialism. The effect of a cultural bomb, he argues, is to 'annihilate a people in belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves'. The decolonization of mind involves the recovering of these lost attributes'. This way these poets enriched their writings and inspired the masses in the National Liberation Movements 'That history deals with real events and literature with imagined ones may now be seen as a difference in degree rather than in kind. The difference between cases of historical and literary events will always be there as a differential moment in terms of what is called 'the effect of the real' what is called history will always seem more real to us than what is called literature'.

### CONCLUSION

Finally, a literary work is not an object that stands by itself and that offers the same view to each reader in each period. It's at once a displacement of social problems into an imaginary realm and prefers the possible solutions to that problem which later history will provide. In this way, however, we can point that literature is both determined by external and internal social process. So literary works consist of its 'reflectiveness' with respect to social conditions.

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