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What is the Value of the Story?

**Introduction**

Story-telling is an art, a need, and a way of catharsis. People read stories to find situations that resemble their own life experiences. They find words and expressions for their feelings, emotions, and relationships. The writers do their job for their accomplishment; that is, they feel to be accomplished by the narration they render in their books. Their thoughts, imagination, and insights get life through their words and tend to exist in people's minds and hearts for long periods. The two stories, "On the uses and disadvantages of history for life” and "Apricots," shed light on the value, need, and significance of stories, each from its particular perspective.

**Discussion**

In the story, "On the uses and disadvantages of history for life," Friedrich Nietzsche argues that human history is created by the flow of events and can be used as an inspiration for man. History offers many things to ponder over, and if understood fully in the right perspective, it can influence human life greatly. Man has been bestowed upon by nature with mental capabilities that allow him to remember what he does. History is compiled as the record of incidents and experiences of humans. Nations leave their mark on the coming generations. History can prove evidence of the happenings and the right and wrong that have happened in earlier times. He categorizes the study of history in three types; Monumental, antiquarian, and critical. The three types of histories have their particular frame of inspecting the incidents. Monumental history describes the events in a way that the reader has an impression of a greater past. It describes personalities and events such that they were in ideal condition. It nurtures reverence in the readers' minds for the previous generations. It is positive to some extent, but it also creates a misconception of reality. Antiquarian history also makes the study of past biased, in the sense that it associates antiquity with the people and events of the past. Critical history focuses on the good and bad of the happenings in the past. It has developed criteria for the evaluation of people's deeds and initiatives. It connects the events and finds out linkages between them to formulate theories and conclusions. However, it is also not objective absolutely, as the personal involvement and attachment of the historian cannot be separated from him/her while he interprets the historical events.

The historical interpretation can be accurate only if the researcher has an unbiased vision and uses his potential to understand the true historical context. The writer wants reforms in the study of history. He exclaims, “Only when historical culture is ruled and led by a higher force and does not itself govern and lead does it bring with it a powerful new stream of life, a developing culture, for example, something healthy with future promise (Nietzsche, 21).” He thinks certain current practices involved in the historical studies should be analyzed and revised. Further, the writer indicates the importance of the present concerning the future and the past. The incidents, developments, and events in the past have shaped the present. The future will be shaped by the present happenings the same way. This approach of thinking urges man to make efforts to progress in every field so that the consequences come up to the desired goals. He explains the disadvantages of an excess of knowledge that disorients man. The excess of knowledge can lead to misconceptions and ambiguities. The writer asserts to being moderate, objective, and determined in pursuing the goals of life.

Rebecca Solnit describes the nature, purpose, and value of the stories written from different perspectives. She describes stories to be creative, thoughtful, and entertaining. Her reflections about the stories she had confronted related to her mother are clear statements of professional integrity. She says her mother was suffering from Alzheimer's disease when she was young. Her perceptions of the stories at that time have changed substantially. The writer narrates various incidents of her life in the story, and it seems that she is passionate about writing. She gives an account of her trips, achievements, medical treatments, and the disease of her mother. She analyzes works of other acclaimed writers and reflects her thoughts about their works. She believes that stories inform people, educate them, and offer an opportunity to explore their inner-selves. She keeps telling a variety of things in her story, such as a narration of Buddhism that seems her to be fascinating and gives her a fairy-tale's appeal. She dares to explore the unexplored and write about novel things and rare incidents. She writes about the attributes of memory at one place in the book, “Memory, even in the rest of us, is a shifting, fading, partial thing, a net that does not catch all the fish by any means and sometimes catches butterflies that don’t exist (Solnit, 12).”

Both stories share thoughts of the influences of knowledge, experience, and events on human minds. The former criticizes historical studies so that the human society can get the maximum benefits from this discipline, and does not get disoriented. The latter describes the necessity of story-telling in human society. She tends to inform the reader that stories have their particular importance in human life. She compares the stories to apricots arguing that stories offer different appeals and feelings associated with each scenario. Some stories are sweet; others are bitter. Some stories inflict sadness on the reader; others bless with happiness.

**Conclusion**

The two stories discussed in this essay present their writers' thoughts about the influences of certain writings on the minds of people and the society overall. They suggest that the literature that helps in progressing a society should only be encouraged. History should be studied and written in a way that does not distort reality and gives a justifiable account of past events and personalities. Stories have different shades, feelings, and reflections. Writers love to write because they like sharing colors of life, depth of feelings, and experiences of life with others.

Works Cited

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