Looking through the Glass of the Society
A Theoretical Overview of the Sociology of Literature

النظر من خلال مرآة المجتمع: لمحة نظرية لعلم اجتماع الأدب

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Abstract:

The present work attempts to provide a theoretical account of one of the most important perspectives in literature namely the sociology of literature. It seeks to crystalize how literature mirrors society and how writers use it as a mean to reflect human life and experience, confront social issues and settle social controversies. The work also provides an overview on how society and literature are mutually dependent. They both affect and are affected by each other. While literature mirrors society, the latter directs literary movements and theories. The paper as well attempts to clarify the extent to which literature can depict society, the limitations and outlooks. The writer's role to depict real life images of the society is also stressed. By the end of the present paper, one can conclude that literature depicts society in an attempt to make society realize its ills and values to suggest social amends while the society nurtures literature.

Keywords:.theoretical account, sociology of literature, writer's role, real life images.

ملخص:

يحاول العمل الحالي تقديم لمحة نظرية لواحدة من أهم وجهات النظر في الأدب وهو علم اجتماع الأدب. يسعى إلى بلورة كيف يعكس الأدب المجتمع وكيف يستخدمه الكتاب كوسيلة لتعكس حياة الإنسان وخبراته ، ومواجهة القضايا الاجتماعية وتسوية الخلافات الاجتماعية. يوفر العمل أيضًا نظرة عامة على كيفية اعتماد المجتمع والأدب بشكل متبادل. كلاهما يؤثران ويتأثران ببعضهما البعض. بينما يعكس الأدب المجتمع ، يوجه الأخير الحركات والنظريات الأدبية. تحاول الورقة أيضًا توضيح المدى الذي يمكن أن يصور فيه الأدب *المجتمع ، القيود والافاق*. كما تم التأكيد على دور الكاتب في تصوير صور الحياة الحقيقية للمجتمع. في نهاية هذه الورقة ، يمكن للمرء أن يستنتج أن الأدب يصور المجتمع في محاولة لجعل المجتمع يدرك العلل والقيم لاقتراح التعديلات الاجتماعية بينما يرعى المجتمع الأدب.

الكلمات المفتاحية: لمحة النظرية ، علم اجتماع الأدب ، دور الكاتب ، صور الحياة الواقعية.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The belief that literature reflects society is adopted by many scholars in addition to various schools of thought such as Romanticism, Realism and Marxism. While some writers use literature as a weapon to fight social ills and mistakes and suggest positive change, others use literature to praise certain social practices and approve social values. When scholars assume that literature depicts society, they mean that literature portrays human life and experiences. In fact, through a certain literary work, readers can draw a picture on the culture, history, life style, values, political and economic features of a particular society that a certain writer wills to portray in his work.

Society as well has a tremendous influence on literature. Due to certain emerging or dying social phenomena, literary theories and movements rise to the surface or just disappear from the literary arena. In this vein, it can be assumed that social realities and human experiences nurture literature i.e. literature grows directly out of life.

Through the present work, we will attempt to clarify how the notion of sociology of literature has been approached by scholars through time. It helps to get an idea on the way sociology of literature actually developed from the days of Plato till modern times. Stressing this wide range of these thinkers' perspectives that actually belong to different periods of time and therefore various schools of thought permits to get a more comprehensive vision on the notion of literature and society. This is mainly one of the crucial objectives of the paper.

It is important to note that the depiction of social reality in literature is particularly different from one scholar to another. Every specific thinker added a certain aspect to the sociology of literature according to his/her own vision which influenced in return the emergence of certain literary movements and theories. Not limiting the scope of this work by highlighting one particular period of time or crystalizing a certain range of scholars who belong to a specific school of thought or literary movement permits also to answer a larger stock of questions regarding the concepts of literature and society.

The actual article helps to respond to various aspects related to the sociology of literature. It is true that literature depicts social reality but the objective of the work is to reveal to which extent a literary work can do that? Is it really a possible task? i.e. can a certain writer depict truth in all its totality? How about the writer's subjectivity? Do writers depict objectively social reality or it all depends on their personal experiences, choice and objectives? How can a writer balance between the artistic side of his literary work and exhibiting reality? Which aspect is more important than the other? In other words, does social reality destroy the artistic side of a certain literary work? All these questions and others are going to be tackled in this article. The following section is an overview on how literature affects and is affected by the society.

2. Literature as the Mirror of Society

Literature that is not the breath of contemporary society that dares not transmit the pains and fears of that society, that does not warn in time against threatening moral and social dangers- such literature does not deserve the name of literature, it is only a façade (Taylor, 2013,p.2).

The belief that literature mirrors society is with no doubt widely acknowledged. Many scholars confirmed this assumption even if they belong to different ages or schools of thought. For instance, De Bonald suggests that "literature is an expression of society" (Rene Wellek, 1949,p.90). This means that literature reveals the society's values, culture, religion, history, education, and political issues. In the same vein, W. H. Hudson in his book, *An Introduction to the Study of Literature* suggests that literature is a social record which mirrors men life and experience (1913,p.11). In other words, people's daily life, culture, norms and values are all reflected in literature.

A careful reading of a certain nation's literature can tell us about the individuals' activities and their contribution to the society's advancement. Recording social experience in literature gives us a chance to understand how a particular society functions and the effects of people's behavior. In *The Canadian Postmodern,* Linda Hutcheon observes that literary history illustrates the way literary development imitates the social, cultural, values, norms and political advance of a nation (1988,p. 28). This means that the literary production throughout history provides us with an idea about a certain nation's progress in various fields namely the social, political and cultural ones.

The way literature figures the society is demonstrated through exhibiting the prevailing ideas and thoughts at that time too. In other words, literature facilitates the understanding of the philosophy, ideas and culture of a particular society at a certain period of time. In fact, literature enhances the society's progress and development (Karnik, Baharti and Sheikh, Showkat Ahmad, 2015,p.1). In short and as Arjun Dubey puts it "Literature cannot sustain without society, and likewise the society too cannot be unnoticed in literary pieces in one way or another" (2013,p. 84). Stated differently, the relationship between literature and society is not mutually exclusive, rather it is interconnected to the extent that one cannot sustain without the support of the other.

This belief is strongly advocated by Hudson. For him, a literature that " grows directly out of life is of course to say that it is in life itself that we have to seek the sources of literature, or, in other words, impulses which have given birth to the various forms of literary expression" (1913,p. 11). This means that literature emerges from life, reflects life and nurtures life. Huzain Arisky concurs with these perspectives when he suggests that the content and form of literature depend on the changing atmosphere of the society and the opposite is true. Changes in the society occur due to the new and fresh ideas explored in literature. (p.21). Approximately, all the scholars and critics share the perspective that literature mirrors society and that they are correlated aspects.

Muker jee is another important example of these scholars who holds that "art is at once a

social product and an established means of social control" (1945,p. 496). Muker's statement advocates the idea that literature has the ability to control and guide the society. At the same time literature is born out of the society. This means that it is a two fold relationship. Rene Wellek and Austin Warren in *Theory of Literature* support the view that literature depicts life experience, but what he has stressed most is the fact that "life is, in large measure, a social reality" (1949,p.89). According to him, when literature depicts social life of individuals, it automatically and reflects reality.

3. Writers' Role in Shaping Reality

Reality also depends on the writer's experience and view of reality. In this way, it is crucial to know the social, and historical circumstances in which the writer grows up in addition to the age he belongs to. No writer is immune to the conditions that surround him. Every one of us, as Roshni Duhan states in quoting Goethe, is the product of the country he belongs to and the period he lives in (2015,p. 193). Accordingly, writers do not write in vacuum nor they write for their own pleasure. According to Achebe, as quoted by Edwin Onwuka, the world that the writer creates in literary works is to complement reality not to replace or substitute it (2010,p. 61). The writer should give an addition to the society he is targeting. He should educate, guide, and express his fellow society's interests and issues. The artist should assume the role which Dathorne (1974) describes as "a spokesman for the society in which he lives" (p.3). Therefore, according to Ngugi "because the artist is a medium in the act of creation (in a Platonic sense), he cannot operate outside imbibed beliefs, interests and experiences in life" (1972,p. xv). The way the artist treats and deals with his society's concerns reveal his perspectives about his fellow society's issues.

The writer's role towards society draws the interest of many other thinkers and critics. According to Tailor, the writer " is the looking-glass or mirror that enables the society see itself so as to make corrections or necessary amendments where needed… he must, like a seer, caution the society to bring it to the path of rectitude" (2011,p. 31). To Tailor, one of the writer's duties towards his fellow society is to depict its sociological features and values with both their positive and negative aspects for the purpose of correcting the ills and encouraging and the virtues of societies.

Charles Dickens is one of the best examples that can be mentioned in this context. The writer revolted against injustice in the distribution of the nation's welfare. In his outstanding novel *Hard Times* in 1854, he depicts the sufferings of the poor and suggests instead radical changes that may lead in return to the flowering of their political, social and economic fields. Dickens represents in his novels the social, economic and political circumstances that prevailed during the Victorian age. If we uproot his novels from the context in which they were written, they will lose most of their significance. As the historical period and the society which the literary work depicts are determining ingredients to the success of the work.

Similarly, If Shakespeare's plays were written in the modern age, they probably would not have been considered great literature; the measures of success or greatness are highly sensitive to the context and age of the work. On the other hand, many literary works have been recognized as

great works only after a long period of time as their writers have considerable future outlooks compared to the age they belong to.

4. Prompters of the Sociology of Literature: Major Canonical Works

The early scholars and critics did not hesitate to admit the reciprocal relationship between literature and society. Confirming that literature is a social product, many critics discussed the different possible theories to approach the sociological aspect in literature. Plato is considered the first critic to start investigating the relationship between literature and society. According to him, literature is imitative. It provides truth and knowledge that human beings seek to achieve.

In this vein, the function of art or literature, according to Plato and as mentioned in Ahmad and Amal work, is to depict knowledge and truth about the world we live in; "if art does not provide knowledge and truth, it is not art at all [...] and the right artist is the one who delves into the world of knowledge [...] and the supreme target of real art is to find out the nature of the soul"(2017,p. 28). In short, art or literature for Plato which does not provide individuals with knowledge or truth is not considered art at all. Literature should reflect the real world of individuals; their environment, their life and nature[1].

Aristotle on the other hand, departed from his teacher's assumption that literature is mimetic and that it reflects reality. However, Literature, according to Aristotle, "is not the photographic reproduction of life in all its totality. It is the representation of selected events and characters necessary in a coherent action for the realization of artist's purpose" (1985). This means that literature cannot reflect all the aspects of life, it is rather selective depending on the writer's choice and objective. What is relatively new in Aristotle' work at that time is the idea that a work of literature or art aims not to reflect present reality but future assumptions. Hence, the function of the poet is not to depict facts that have already happened, which is rather the work of historians, but instead to represent what could happen.

Aristotle continues to explain his innovative ideas in stating; "the world of poetry, it is said, presents not facts but fiction: such things have never happened; such things have never lived.... Not real but a higher reality, what ought to be not what is" (1985,p.167-68). Accordingly, the major function of a poet is to look forward to enhance and develop societies through depicting in his work "ideal" reality[2]. To Aristotle, a creative poet seeks not to report social realities as they are but to suggest future innovative ideas that would positively influence the society. Poets are hence the society's designers.

The idea that literature is a social product has been well explored during the eighteenth

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[1] Plato excluded poetry, for him poetry reflects only a copy of the truth and not the truth itself. Thus, poetry in Plato's view, is lies and if it is an imitation, "it is not an imitation of any truth and therefore must be condemned" ("Essay: Art as Imitation").

[2] Thus, literature shapes the society and enlightens its path. Many revolutions around the world throughout history are originated and influenced by the ideas initiated in literature. Miss Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin' was directly responsible for the Blacks' civil wars against slavery in the USA.

century with the emergence of the novel. There is no doubt that it is the romantic era[1] which paved the way to the study of literature from a sociological point of view. From that time, a serious debate about the reciprocal relationship between literature and society began. For instance, it is the German literary critic and poet J. C. Herder who emphasized the necessity to include the social aspect in literature. In his *Idea for Philosophy of History of Mankind* (1791), Herder suggests that the basis of literature is the social structure. Alan Swingwood in his turn emphasized Herder's assumption about the necessity to include social aspects in literature. He comments that, to Herder, every literary work is deeply rooted in certain social and geographical conditions where it fulfills specific roles. (1972,p. 26). In other words, any literary work is the product of specific social traits and geographical conditions in order to accomplish particular functions and roles.

Akin to Herder, the French woman writer Madame de Stael, as Arun Murlidhar Jadhav mentions in his work, links literature to climate, geography and social institutions (2014,p. 659). This French writer suggests, according to Ahmad and Amal, that literature cannot be approached away from social reality (2017,p. 28). Thanks to Madam de Stael's book *Literature Considered in its Relation to Social Institutions* in 1799, the relationship between literature and society has been theorized. Hence, Madame de Stael is considered one of the most influential founders of the sociological approach to literature. Thanks to her creative ideas in relating literature to climate, she rose up into the literary arena.

More importantly, the post-romanticism period in France also witnessed the emergence of one of the most influential theorists who marked the sociological approach to literature for decades. H. A. Taine is regarded the father of the sociology of literature. Alan Swingewood claims that in recording the history of the relationship between literature and the society, it is Taine who actually established the first real theory of the sociology of literature. For him, Madam de Stael's and Herder's theories constitute mere random and haphazard perspective compared to a far more systematic theory of Taine (1972,p. 33). In other words, Taine does not stop at the level of stating and expressing his point of view about literature and society, as Herder and Madame de Stael, but he goes even further by attempting to systematize the sociological approach to literature in a scientific way.

Getting deep into the concept, Taine regards a work of literature as 'not a mere individual play of imagination, the isolated caprice of an exited brain, but a transcript of contemporary manner, a manifestation of a certain kind of mind'(1886,p.1). This means that literature does not reflect individuals at the personal level only but instead reflects the society as a whole. In short, literature is the expression of society not, as romantics believe, the expression of individual personality. W. H. Hudson states that "Taine's interest is in reality not in literature as literature, but in literature as a document in the history of national psychology" (1913,p. 50). In his outstanding work in the history of the sociology of literature, *History of English Literature* (1886), Taine claims that the three elements; race, milieu and moment are necessary ingredients in the analysis of any literary work to better understand it.

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[1] Romanticism emerged to denounce ancient beliefs that focus on the aesthetics and form of a literary work.

By race, Taine means the population or the nation's characteristics such as culture, customs, values and norms. The second element 'milieu' refers to the environment and the conditions that surround the writer. This includes the political, social and economic atmosphere. Last but not least, the moment or the historical period when the literary work is produced. This has a tremendous impact on the writer's creativity. What might be considered as an outstanding literature in a certain age or era might be considered a mere humble work in another period. The value of the literary work is attributed according to the historical period in which it is produced.

Taking for instance, Literature produced during the Victorian age is absolutely different from the one produced in modern times. Thus, a certain literary work can never obtain the same value throughout all the historical moments; as every historical period has its own features and characteristics. The three elements stated earlier are considered by Taine as the magic ingredients that enhance the writer's creativity. Moreover, in1869, Matthew Arnold published his book *Culture and Anarchy* where he advocates the belief that one cannot effectively understand a literary work away from its social and cultural elements. Through his work, Mathew endeavors to illustrate the necessity to know the cultural and social backgrounds of a certain literary work in order to better understand it.

Similarly, George Plekhanov in his turn argues that "Art has significance only when it depicts or evokes or conveys actions, emotions and events that are of significance to society" (1912,p.108). Here, Plekhanov suggests that literature is valuable only when it depicts social life and events, if not it is therefore meaningless and useless. Not only this, Plekhanov carries on his assumption to claim that a literary work reflects social class conflicts (1912).This means that one of literature's missions is to depict social issues and conflicts among the different social categories. These social conflicts can be based upon cultural, racial, religious, historical, or economic diversity.

In fact, there are many other important critics that belong to more recent periods of time who left their fingerprints on the concept of literature and society. For example, critics such as Karl Marx, Frederic Engels, Hegel and their followers during the nineteenth century, made considerable contributions in the field of sociology. According to them, literature is regarded as an "economic infrastructure of society" (Arun Murlidhar Jadhav, 2014,p.658). This purely Marxist perspective to literature provided a new wave to the sociology of literature. To better explain the idea, Hegel ,for instance, assumes that literature and especially the rise of the novel is highly sensitive to social changes especially with the emergence of a new social class; the bourgeoisies[1]. Interest in the relationship between literature and society continues to attract more critics especially in late twentieth century such as Lucien Goldman, Leo Lowenthal, Robert Escarpit, Alan Swingwood, Diana Laurenson, Georg Lukacs and John Hall.

Thanks to the works of these notable social thinkers and critics, the sociology of literature witnessed a giant leap of development. John Hall's *The Sociology of Literature'*(1979) is considered one of the most prominent works at that period. It is considered a landmark in the history of the sociology of literature. John Hall believes that there are two major features for the creation

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[1] Hegel's ideas highly influenced Marxism in general and George Lukacs in particular.

and success of a certain literary work, namely the sociological background of the author and the function of the reader. In other words, the writer's sociological atmosphere including social values, norms and features in addition to the way the consumers, i.e. the reading public, receive and value a certain literary work are the vital elements in the analysis and understanding of literature.

4.1. Lukacs' Reflection Theory

Lukacs's Reflection theory does not come in vacuum, it rather emerged as a result of a series of landmark works from the days of Plato, Aristotle, and Romanticism to Marxism. It contradicts to a large extent formalism which detaches the literary work from its historical and social atmosphere. The Reflection theory's main interest is, in fact, to explain literary works according to social and historical elements rather than individual or personal basis (Milton, 1954,p. 425). For Lukacs, realism is a crucial element in any literary work. It helps diagnose social problems and provide solutions to them. In his own words, realism is " the basis of literature; and that all styles 'even those seemingly most opposed to realism' originate in it or are significantly related to it" (1962,p. 48). In other words, realism is the platform upon which literature stands.

Lukacs basically suggests that all the literary styles have been inspired from realism in a way or another. To apply realism in literature is actually to depict truth about the society which the writer is targeting in his work. Therefore, literature is perceived as a record of social phenomena, circumstances and conflicts. Taking, for example, social conflicts and struggles, the theory of reflection engages seriously in depicting the truth about such conflicts especially concerning social class struggle. In the view of Ahmad and Amal, A literary work to Lukacs mirrors social class conflicts and struggle in addition to the writer's perspective on reality[1] (2017,p. 27). Reflecting reality for Lukacs does not mean depicting truth with all the existing images in society as such attempt will result in weak and superficial literature.

In this way, reflection for Lukacs, in Rieser's words, is not to depict the details of the whole image of life because if we compare the details of life with the ones of an artistic work, it will destroy the artistic allusion (1957,p. 239). In other words, details are not recommended or permitted otherwise they would have contradicting effects on the value of the literary work. Lukacs pursues his outstanding research by examining the relationship between the artistic aspect or the aesthetics of the literary work and reality. According to Lukacs , as cited in Ahmad and Amal's work, "Realism is an aesthetic way to analyze literary works based on the idea that all knowledge are built on reflections of the external reality (i.e. the outer world)" (p.31). This means that literary works are interpreted on the basis of reality which provides true knowledge about the visible and external world. In his own words, Lukacs finally decides that:

> The aim of the work of art is to give a picture of reality such that the contrasts of appearance and essence, of general law and of the particular, of immediacy and of concept coincide in a direct impression so that the public has the feeling of indissoluble unity: the essential becomes visible in the appearance, the general law seems to be the cause of the particular

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[1] Lukacs developed this idea after being influenced by the works of Marx and Engles.

instance (p.238).

Lukacs claims that a piece of art's major function is to differentiate truthfully between opposing elements taking, for instance, appearance and essence. Here, the writer should focus on the lasting features in humans. In this regard, the essentials jump to the surface to become visible. Such truth impacts positively the public's visions and emotions about their societies' enduring and unbreakable unity.

The writer's role in the process of reflecting reality is of crucial importance. He acts as a mediator between literature and society. The literary work is based on the deliberate consciousness of the writer i.e. the writer's intentional choice of elements and events. In other words, reflection for Lukács is conscious and deliberate not spontaneous or photographic (ibid,p. 32). Through reflection theory, Lukacs intends to show how the writer' objective stands, convictions and attitudes towards social issues are reflected in his work. He thinks that the writer should not be idealistic or driven by his personal views but rather he has to be committed to the reality of his society. Not only this, Lukacs, as mentioned in Ahmad and Amal, assumes that the rich is the experience of the writer and the deep is his world-view, the more the writer is considered successful (2017,p. 32). Therefore, according to Lukacs "a great writer has to portray his characters and depict their struggles to achieve the required social change objectively without intruding his political orientation" (ibidem).

To sum up, the writer in Lukacs view is the active element in the literary composition process where he should detach his personal views, feelings, sense of belonging and solidarity in order to depict real social circumstances, changes and conflicts. This relies to a large extent to the author's heavy knowledge and deep understanding of the world around him. Therefore, the writer in Lukacs theory should not merely mirror society; he should be rather creative and critical at the same time. In Lukacs's reflection theory, there are no certain particular rules and restrictions that orient the writer's choice of events and characters. What is rather important is the feature of objectivity. When the author endeavors to mirror his society's reality, he may emphasize on a particular phenomenon to illustrate his own literary vision and perspective and this, in Lukács's opinion, does not deprive him of objectivity (ibid,p.33). Lukacs clarifies, "Objectivity means totality; that the writer has to reflect the real world as a total entity with all its contradictions" (ibidem).

This means that, according to Lukacs' point of view, the writer has the freedom to choose the issue he wants to tackle in his literary work, however, what is necessary for the writer is to reveal reality with all its totality. Totality means reflecting reality with all its contradictions i.e. both positive and negative features, visible and hidden elements, in addition to general and specific laws. When the writer uses his typical characters, he should not concentrate only on certain elements and neglect others. The typical character should be representative and reflects the real image of the chosen social sample with all its totality. As Lanning assumes; the "literary type has the ability to represent "both the tensions of everyday life, and historical trends and conflicts that shape the wider world" (2002,p.133). This literary type, or character, must be self- conscious in the writer's work i.e. the character should be aware about the world around him.

A great writer, as Lukacs suggests, has to make his character experience an independent life of his own […] driven by the internal dialectic of their individual and social existence (1948,p.11).

Not only this, Lukacs assumes that "No writer is a true realist or even a truly good writer, if he cannot direct the evolution of his own characters at will" (ibidem). In other words, the writer should choose the characters and settle the events deliberately and consciously with an already settled purpose to his work. He should provide his characters with a certain freedom to control their lives which are in return driven by their internal social and personal urges.

Last but not least, it is noteworthy to mention that Lukacs's view of realism is compatible with Balzac' work, when reflecting human essence, and largely contradicts with zola's naturalism. Through his works, Balzac could reflect social reality via characters who manage to mirror the total features of human beings. This means that Balzac managed to overcome his subjectivity towards his respective society in order to truthfully reflect social reality. This was not the case of Zola's view of naturalism in which he gives a photographic image of reality which Lukas criticizes to be rather a mechanic incomplete reflection far from reality. At the end, Lukacs' reflection theory is considered a real gain in the field of realism and sociology of literature.

4.2.Michel Zeraffa's *Roman et Société*

Through her work entitled *Roman et Société,* Michel Zeraffa endeavors to analyze the relationship between literature and society. According to her, as mentioned in Bernard Mouralis' analysis of her respective book, a novel is a cultural phenomenon characterized by certain types of society (1972,p. 452.trans mine). This means that the novel is the expression of a particular society's culture namely traditions, customs, religion, and language. In her book, Zeraffa criticizes the distinction between literature as an expression of society and literature as work of art i.e. Balzac's realism vs aesthetics (formalism). She finally asserts that a literary work, namely a novel, which does not depict society, is rather an art not a literature (1976,p. 25). When the novelist neglects the sociological aspect of his literary work, this means that he is far from realism.

In this vein, Zeraffa proceeds her research by establishing the necessary features that should be present in a certain literary work so as the latter can be considered a real engagement in the sociology of literature process. First of all, as mentioned in Bernard's work, the writer should precise the place where the events of the novel proceed (1972,p.453.trans mine). The second condition is the way the novel depicts social reality (ibid). Here, Zeraffa criticizes those works that neglect totally the aesthetic aspect of the novel and concentrate instead on the content. Moreover, Michel Zeraffa suggests that attention should be given mainly to the novel or literary work (1972,p. 454.trans mine).

However, at this level, we are confronted with two possible methods. The first one holds that the meaning of the work is tied up to the society or explained thanks to the society. While the second method advocates the belief that the narrative or literary work is self- explanatory (ibid). This means that the work contains its meaning in itself; no external social reference and explanation is needed.

Finally, Michel Zeraffa continues her assumptions stating that the relationship between literature and society is mediated by the writer. Here, the writer's role is to forge the different

images that he takes from the society to reveal reality. In other words, a certain literary work is not attributed directly to a particular society. It is instead the writer's creativeness to elaborate a whole complete image of reality out of the various groups or elements that constitutes the society (1972,p. 453.trans mine).

7. CONCLUSION

In the actual paper, we have provided an account on the sociology of literature from the perspective of different theorists and scholars such as plato, Aristotle, J. C. Herder, Madame de Stael, H. A. Taine, Lukacs and Zeraffa who exhibit high interest in studying the relationship between literature and society. These theorists agree that literature and society are mutually dependent as literature emerges from life, reflects life and nurtures life. However, each theorist contributed to the field, with varying degrees, from his/ her outstanding point of view. The work also stresses the role of the writer to depict reality. Concerning this point, the writer's experience and view of reality influence the way reality is portrayed. In this way, it is crucial to know the social, and historical circumstances in which the writer grows up in addition to the age he belongs to. All in all, we can conclude that we cannot talk about the sociology of literature without crystalizing that literature and society are mutually dependent and that it is the role of the writer to act as a mediator to mirror reality.

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