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CHRONICLING THE VIVIDITY OF THE YOUTH CONSCIOUSNESS, COGNITION AND FLEETING PERSPECTIVES IN WELL-KNOWN LITERARY WORKS

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Abstract

The paper aims at a comprehensive presentation of the well-known literary works in English bearing potential messages for the youth in terms of motivation, worldly knowledge and philosophy of life through the tapestry of artistic depictions of both imaginary and realistic portrayals of characters, events, and their countenances that often seize the craft of manifestation called literature. It examines how the Gita, the Bible and the Quran; classical authors like Vyasa, Valmiki, Bhartuhari, Kalidasa, Shakespeare, Keats, Tennyson, Tagore, Aurobindo, Whitman and Frost; novelists like Swift, Hardy, Dickens, Naryana, Raja Rao, Hemingway, Fitzgerald; fable writers such as Aesop, Vishnu Sharma, Jatak Tales; and story writers such as O’Henry, Maugham, Anton Chekov; playwrights such as Bernard Shaw, Ibsen, Miller, O’Neill, Vijay Tendulkar, etc; biographical writings, sports narratives and narratives of success and failure are the golden texts to attract the attention of the youth to learn, think and experience life in much better ways. This involves their universal cognition of knowledge to brace the situations of life and act accordingly. Thus, such literary writings bear the testimony of being the texts of utility guiding the youth at the crossroads of life.

Keywords

Well-Known Literary Works, Youth, Motivation, Universal Cognition, Knowledge and Wisdom, Texts of Utility, etc.

Full Article

Introduction:

Motivating youth include fostering autonomy (self-direction), competence (mastery and self-efficacy), and relatedness (social support and belonging) to cultivate intrinsic interest. Psychological factors like passion, personal growth goals, and resilience are essential, often driven by a sense of purpose and a positive identity. (Tang M, et al). Key factors motivating youth to read literature include having autonomy over book choices, access to diverse materials matching their interests, and social interaction.

Age considers; youth ventures — Rabindranath Tagore

Literature not only deals with imagination and emotion but also reflects realistic human experiences across time. From ancient epics like *The Mahabharata* and *The Ramayana* to *The Odyssey*, *The Bible*, and *The Quran*, literary traditions across cultures highlight the vital role of youth in shaping moral, social, and heroic narratives. Worth saying, such anecdotes shape the thoughts and actions of young people across the world.

The philosophy of life as envisaged in the masterly works of William Shakespeare that says. “Life is tale told by an idiot full of sound and fury” (*Macbeth*) or the seven stages of life in



“All the World’s a Stage” (from *As You Like It*, spoken by Jaques) are no doubt help understand life. Similarly, the lines are immortal for the young mass as it says:

...Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow (<https://www.poetryfoundation.org>, 5-9).

This embodies philosophy of romantic escapism. It highlights the contrast between the painful, mortal, and transient human world filled with sickness, aging, and emotional decay and the timeless, blissful, and carefree world of nature, represented by the immortal song of the nightingale. Similarly, the lines from William Cooper’s “Society, friendship and love bestowed upon man,” or A. L. Tennyson’s “One equal temper of heroic hearts, made weak by time and fate, but strong in will to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield. (*Ulysses*) speak of the impassioned spirit of youthful vigour only. It may be Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* that speaks about lack of foresight, pride, war-prone mentality, greed and obsession; Charles Dicken’s *Great Expectations* that speaks of loyalty, adorability, and true service as the true wealth of human being; Thomas Hardy’s *Far from the Madding Crowd* that says about the value of tolerance, enduring love and mutual respect; how to distinguish between savagery from inherent humanitarian attributes in William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies*; and futility of material possession.

In Edward Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* withhold the testimony of worldly knowledge. Literary classics from over the world and from different times show us characters of all ages. The old people in these stories usually show wisdom. They have learned a lot from their experiences. Have grown as people over time. As time passes and things change in communities young people face challenges. We can find inspiration for people in all kinds of writings not just historical or political ones but also in stories that come from peoples’ imaginations.

In India people often tell stories in their homes to inspire people. For example, the story of Aruni is a one from *The Mahabharata*. It teaches us about being completely devoted to someone obeying them and making sacrifices for them. Aruni was very devoted to his Guru.

Another famous story is about Shraavan Kumar from *The Ramayana*. He loved his blind parents very much. Shraavan Kumar carried them on a pilgrimage in baskets hung from a bamboo pole. The story of Nachiketa from the Katha Upanishad is also very inspiring. Nachiketa was a boy who wanted to learn about life after death. He went on a journey to the home of Yama, the God of Death.

We also know the story of Bhakta Prahlada, who was a devotee of Lord Vishnu. His father, Hiranyakashipu was a demon king who wanted people to worship him. Prahlada did not listen to his father. He kept preaching about peace and giving up things. The story of Goutama Buddha is also very famous. He gave up being a prince to find the truth. Become enlightened. These stories are a part of Indian culture and spirituality. The story of Aruni and other stories like it are still told today to inspire people. The story of Shraavan Kumar is also very inspiring. It shows us the importance of taking care of our parents. The story of Nachiketa and the story of Bhakta Prahlada are also very inspiring. They teach us about the importance of being devoted, to someone or something. The story of Goutama Buddha is very inspiring. It shows us that we can find truth and enlightenment if we give up worldly things.

Manifestations of Youth in Classical Works:

Youth in classical epics and ancient wisdom texts often captures the raw energy of bravery, sacrifice, growth, and inner turmoil. For example, in *The Mahabharata*, young fighters like



Abhimanyu, the Upapandavas, Iravan, and Barbarika charge into battle with fearless spirit, only to meet tragic ends that underscore their heroism. Others, such as Vikarna and Ashwatthama, grapple with moral dilemmas amid their youthful strength. Over in the Ramayana, Lava and Kusha shine as symbols of bold learning and valor, while Lakshmana, Bharata, and Shatrughna embody unwavering loyalty. Angada's daring leaps and Urmila's quiet endurance add layers to this picture of resilient youth.

Bhartrihari's *Shataktrayam* in which those three "centuries" of verses split into *Niti-shatakam* on ethics, *Shringara-shatakam* on love, and *Vairagya-shatakam* on renunciation— all deliver smart advice laced with spiritual depth, perfect for young minds navigating life's chaos. It urges balancing smarts, ethics, and desire against the fleeting pulse of existence. Chanakya, in his no-nonsense *Chanakya Niti* and *Arthashastra*, drills down on discipline, lifelong learning, and sharp strategy to carve out a life of real impact.

Western classics also echo these themes. Telemachus in *The Odyssey* steps up from boy to man, nudged by Nausicaa and faithful allies toward duty and maturity. Achilles, Diomedes, and Patroclus in *The Iliad* mix glory with hubris, grief, and war's cruel toll. In Dante's *Divine Comedy*, figures like Pia and Beatrice glow with pure innocence against a backdrop of corrupt politics. *The Song of Roland* shows knights like Roland as hot-blooded heroes whose impulses clash with hard-won wisdom, paying the price for their fire. Religious texts pile on: the Bible's David, Joseph, Mary, and Daniel live out faith and destiny young; the *Quran* spotlights Yusuf, Ismail, and the Cave-dwellers for their patience and grit; *The Paradise Lost* frames Adam and Eve's early days as fragile wonder. Even Panchatantra fables and Jataka Tales slip lessons on smarts, bonds, and morals into tales of clever kids or animals. *Don Quixote* weaves youth into its mix of romance, rashness, and tangled society, blending laughs with sharper truths.

Youth in the Voices of Poets:

Wordsworth holds kids up as holy messengers as in "Nature's Priests" or the "best Philosophers"—bridging us to the wild purity adults forget. In "We Are Seven," a child's grasp of death feels wiser than any adult's logic, stirring nostalgia for that lost glow, though poems like "Michael" show how cities can taint it. Coleridge's children, as in "Frost at Midnight," promise a natural, unforced life, anchoring his tender musings, while "Youth and Age" aches over time's theft of vigor.

Tennyson's young souls' pulse with raw feeling as in Mariana or The Lady of Shalott, trapped in longing and isolation by society's chains. "Locksley Hall" traps youth in grinding expectations; "Tears, Idle Tears" mourns its slip away. Eliot flips the script in *The Waste Land*: his typist and "young man carbuncular" drift through hollow routines, shallow flings, and squandered promise, mirroring modern drift. Whitman celebrates youth's electric hum that is freedom, democracy, nature's beat as in "I Hear America Singing" or "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking," calling them to seize their power. Tagore's kids in *The Crescent Moon* dance with divine playfulness, imagination unbound by rules. Aurobindo's young heroes, like in "Baji Prabhou" or "Rose of God," fuel national fire and spiritual leaps, turning personal spark into collective dawn.

Youthful Fire in Fictional Worlds:

British novels cast youth as rebels shaking up class wars and old guards that is from Victorian lessons in virtue (Pamela's trials, Fielding's rough roads) to Dickens battered street kids and Hardy's fate-crushed dreamers. The 20th century amps it up with "Angry Young Men" raging against elites, then dives into sex, identity, and multicultural flux.



American stories thrive on coming-of-age clashes. Huck Finn or Holden Caulfield dodges phony norms to forge their own code, wrestling innocence against the world's grit. Indian English tales thread tradition and today's hustle like Chetan Bhagat's go-getters battle exams and expectations; R. K. Narayan's folks stumble into self-knowledge; Anand calls out caste cruelties; Raja Rao arms youth against colonizers; Salman Rushdie fractures them into postcolonial mosaics. Speculative worlds sharpen this edge. Dystopias like Cindy Pon's *Want and Ruse* hurl teens at corporate greed and eco-ruin. Katniss in *The Hunger Games* fights empire while juggling heart and revolt. *Harry Potter* grows through spells and showdowns with power. Climate tales like Catherine Bertagna's trilogy rage at elder neglect, reclaiming wisdom for "survivance"—not just hanging on, but building thriving tomorrows. Indigenous sci-fi flips victimhood: youth here craft resilient hopes.

Staging Youth for the Audience:

The works of Kalidasa, India's legendary classical poet, offer a sophisticated roadmap for the youth that balances passion with duty. In stories like *Abhijnanashakuntalam*, *Meghaduta* and *Raghuvamsha*, Kalidasa reminds us that the best time of our life is when we are young but this time does not last forever. The story of Dushyanta and Shakuntala from these stories is a warning to us. It shows that if we just follow our feelings without thinking about what's right we will be unhappy. Kalidasa says that real love must be combined with responsibility. Kalidasa also says that it is not how strong we are that matters but how smart we are. He wants young people to know that being wise is more important than being powerful. Maybe the important thing we can learn from Kalidasa is from his own life. He knew a lot of things. He could not use this knowledge until he stopped being so full of himself. Kalidasa teaches us that if we want to be the best we can be we have to be humble and that is what Kalidasa is trying to tell us through his stories.

In the West, dramatic literature uses youth to bridge or break that generational divide. Shakespeare's young protagonists, from Romeo and Juliet to Rosalind, act as engines of change. Whether defying social norms or navigating the complexities of gender through disguise (as seen in *Twelfth Night*), Shakespearean youth highlight the tension between individual desire and societal authority. George Bernard Shaw's plays, like *Pygmalion* and *Arms and the Man*, are essentially manuals for independent thought. He encourages the young to challenge "the Life Force," reject romanticized notions of war, and dismantle class structures rather than blindly following tradition. While Henrik Ibsen focused on the courage to be authentic in a hypocritical society (*A Doll's House*), Arthur Miller used characters like Biff Loman to show the youth acting as a family's moral conscience, struggling to find truth beneath their parents' delusions. In the works of American dramatists like Eugene O'Neill, youth is often a tragic state—a battleground between idealism and the weight of generational trauma. Similarly, modern Indian English playwrights like Mahesh Dattani and Girish Karnad portray the young as modernizers who must negotiate the steep terrain between ancient tradition and a globalized future.

Short fiction often distills the youthful experience into a single moment of growth or rebellion. Classics like *The Boy Who Cried Wolf* or *The Hare and the Tortoise* provide the initial ethical framework for the young. In O. Henry's *The Last Leaf* or Ray Bradbury's *The Pedestrian*, we see the young resisting conformism and finding hope in the face of despair. Contemporary tales, such as Mia Alvar's *A Contract Overseas*, highlight a different side of youth—the heavy burden of family responsibility and the sacrifices made by the global diaspora.

What's more whether through the lens of a 5th-century Sanskrit poet or a 20th-century social critic, literature consistently views youth not just as a biological phase, but as a moral choice between ego and humility, or between blind obedience and conscious action.

Speaking Tales of Life as Inspiration:



Biographies of young leaders emphasize early courage, resilience, and vision. Works such as *The Diary of a Young Girl* (Anne Frank) talks about how to face and overcome extreme adverse condition; *Long Walk to Freedom* (Nelson Mandela) is an epitome of struggle and victory for the freedom of a great community; and *I Am Malala* on believable trekking of life right from a helpless child to a global lamp post for oppressed and suppressed women really trace the growth of influential figures from youth to leadership. Similarly, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, Gandhi's *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, and Isaacson's *Steve Jobs* highlight transformation and determination. All these are no less inferior to a spiritual victory of rationalistic spirit of the entire humanity reflected through such noble souls. Other biographies—of Theodore Roosevelt, Alexander Hamilton, Abraham Lincoln, Catherine the Great, and Elon Musk—illustrate how youthful ambition shaped historical impact. These narratives underscore risk-taking and perseverance in shaping history. The youth learn from all these that one needs to be creative, brave, broad and consistent enough to brace the challenges of life and society to achieve something which is undreamt of by many.

Inspiring Sportive Spirits of the Young:

Sports narratives about youth emphasize resilience, discipline, and perseverance. Works like *Becoming Muhammad Ali*, Gabrielle Douglas's *Grace, Gold and Glory*, and *The Race of My Life* by Milkha Singh portray journeys from hardship to achievement. Similarly, Mary Kom's *Unbreakable* and *Fauja Singh Keeps Going* highlight endurance and determination. Fictional works such as *The Crossover*, *The Contender*, *Roller Girl*, and *The Running Dream* explore personal growth through sport. Together, these texts celebrate the grit and potential of young athletes.

Critical Discussion and Conclusion:

Anāyāsakṛṣaṃ madhyam aśaṅkatarale dṛśau |
Abhūṣaṇamanohāri vapurvayasi subhruvaḥ || (www.shloka.sanskrit.today)

This verse outlines that youth have strength of inherent beauty that does not need any external decorations. It caters to natural charm and vigor (grace) in itself. The more it comes across the adages of life, the better it becomes in managing life. Youth is like a tree growing, sapling, budding, blossoming and leading to fruition. It sees the cascade blazoning, fragrance in the breeze, sunlight in the day and moonlight at night as flares of romance and sweetness. It discovers and rediscovers itself repeatedly in the realms of self and society. Beliefs, values, experiences, deliverance of temper. and even rebelliousness happens to be experiments for him or her. The lines of Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken" is sheerly inspiring. It says,

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference (<https://www.poetryfoundation.org>, 3-5).

The lines from H. W. Longfellow's *A Psalm of Life* are unforgettable in this context. The enterprising lines from Ernest Hemingway's "Man is not made for defeat.... Man may be destroyed, but not defeated." (*Old Man and the Sea*); the life accounts of Ben-Hur or the Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* bear inspirational textual contexts for the youth of the world.



Literary writings on youth play a dual role, acting as both a mirror for self-reflection and a tool for constructing identity and societal values. While contemporary literature is lauded for addressing mental health, social issues, and fostering emotional growth, it faces criticism for reproducing limiting stereotypes, lacking diversity, and offering only narrow, idealistic views. (Mukherjee et al). One important thing is often noticed in the literary works that they reflect universality of cognition. Like Matthew Arnold's argument of the establishment of objectivity through "high estimate" and "higher truth" in literary writings, the author or the artist in the words of T. S. Eliot, a poet endeavours to make "a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality" in order to achieve a "more valuable" entity: the established, collective tradition of literature. The language of such a great commitment of an artist turns to be profound eloquence of truth and morality. As a result, the influence of such writings shapes the thoughts and actions the minds of the youth across the ages and spaces of the world.

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