

The Written Word

By Catherine Ulassin

The written word is more powerful than anything else. It has the power to inspire, to empower, to give meaning to what would otherwise be unexplainable expressions. The written word is more than just letters on a page. It is the embodiment of culture, the way that we have learned to express ourselves as human beings. Through language, humankind has created a way to express heartfelt emotions through something physical. Writing is a gift that has been given to us, and it is something that must be protected always. It is a beautiful thing, and a powerful tool to be used in our lives.

In writing, we are able to escape. When someone reads a book, they are able to bring their mind to another world. The idea that we are able to create something so powerful, simply with words, is astounding. Words, placed together correctly, are able to form entirely different worlds. The most fascinating fact is how enrapturing these worlds are able to be, and how real they are able to seem to those reading about them. They make us forget that we are even reading a book; we feel as if we truly are living and breathing amongst the characters we are reading about. It is this that is the mystery of writing; that a fictional character can be brought to life to the point where we forget where our lives end and theirs begin. We feel as if we are one with them. Their thoughts, their emotions, are all a shared entity between the words written on the page and the mind of the reader. This is what proves how writing is more than it seems. There is some great power that it holds, the ability to bring to life what began as only an idea. The largest and deepest questions of our age can be brought to the forefront through the themes and main ideas of a book, influencing people's minds as they read without them even being aware. Writing truly is something amazing, where boundaries do not exist. The written language is such a wondrous thing.

Words carry power. They carry the power to lift people up and to tear people down. One word, one sentence, can haunt someone for the rest of their life. Another one can bring someone fierce joy and happiness. Many people forget the impact that words can have. They see them as just that, combinations of letters that form sounds that we then speak aloud. They overlook their hidden value, missing what is hidden deep within a simple sentence. The written language has preserved humanity for as long as we can remember. It is how we remember our past and prepare for our present. Without the written word, we would have no memories of who our ancestors were. Many of our own present ideas would not have been able to take place, because of how much we borrow from the ancient ideas that they created. We depend on the writing of the past to create the writing of the future. The writing of the present is perhaps the most important of all, since it shapes our current thoughts and emotions. Writing can be used as a weapon, such as competing news sources craftily shaping words to get across the message

they want people to hear. We must learn to recognize when words have been placed in an order simply to make us think what someone else wants. Words can also be used to spread truth. When people in crisis reach out, one of the most powerful things are the words they use to describe their situation. We read about this in articles, on websites, in newspapers - and it touches us deeply.

Yet the written language is broad and expansive. Some countries use the alphabet we know well, while others across the world have their own. Some of them use characters, and their sentences look like beautiful paintings instead of writings. To truly love the written language, one must understand how amazing language itself is. I have had the opportunity to learn French, and one of the things I enjoy the most is writing in French. I love seeing how beautiful the language flows on the page, and I never cease to be fascinated by how the French language expresses feeling and emotion. As an author, one day I will be thrilled to be able to translate my own books. We have a duty when it comes to translation to ensure that nothing gets lost. The original message and the poetry of the story must, to the best effort that we can give, stay the same. Language is something that must be preserved. We must protect the beauty of our language, even when it is being translated into another one.

In the modern day, writing is often forgotten. People are so captivated by modern technology that in many cases, the book has fallen to the wayside. People would rather be entranced by tv shows or movies than by a well crafted sentence. The written word is a gift. It is something priceless. It can move people and build them up, it can fuel desire and motivation. It is for these reasons that the written word cannot be forgotten. We must continue to impress upon the youth of today how vital it is to appreciate writing. If this is lost, we will lose so much. So many of the great treasures of our cultures across the world are written in books. To see this disappear would be a tragedy. The written world must be spread, and the beauty of it never forgotten. This is a challenge in today's society, but it must be understood. As a writer, I pray that people will still be interested in books throughout my life. Writing is more than just using a pencil and paper or typing on a keyboard, it is an art. Like artists with paint, we are able to form and create something new. Books are like paintings; they tell a story and inspire beauty. Everyone can interpret them differently, and take their own meanings from them. Books can give people answers. Across all genres, books carry messages. These messages can be the things that people need to hear that they are not able to hear in real life. For so many people, across hard times it was their books that kept them going. When they had no one in the real world to reach out to, it was the strength and humor of their favorite characters that kept them strong. We must never ignore how important words can be. They shape us and our culture, and must never be forgotten