

# Vitascope

ENGLISH PHILOLOGY PROGRAMME

*The Concept of Eternity in Literature*

*The Real Magic Behind Motivation: The Driving Force in Second Language Learning*

*How Are We Living Without a Resurrection Stone?*

*Japan's Rocks or Japan Rules: Japan and China's East China Sea Territorial Dispute*

*The Understanding of God in 20th-Century Society and Literature*

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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

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# The Concept of Eternity in Literature

Mariam Gabitashvili



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Since the dawn of time, people have been fascinated by the idea of eternity. The concept of eternity has been explored from many perspectives, but I will examine its representation in literature. It often refers to the idea that time is infinite and forever stretches out before us. The concept has often been investigated through various literary genres, from epic poems to philosophical essays, authors have attempted to capture the essence and beauty of eternity in their works.

Glimpses of eternity can be seen from Shakespeare's sonnets to T.S. Eliot's

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," as writers have contemplated what it means to be immortal and exist beyond our mortal lives. Examples of eternal characters are those who refuse to age or die, like Dracula or Dorian Gray. However, sometimes time itself can become a character, like in Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*, which uses the Tralfamadorian idea of time, jumping back and forth without regard for chronology.

One of the most important literary works that deals with the concept of eternity

is Dante's *Divine Comedy*, where Dante journeys through Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. This epic work of literature depicts in extreme detail the journey through the afterlife, where he encounters a range of characters that exist in a state of eternity. Dante's depiction of eternity is both magnificent and frightening, as he explores the implications of an infinite existence in the human psyche. *The Divine Comedy* highlights the struggle and quest for salvation that are required to attain an eternal existence.

Eternity has also been investigated in different genres like epic poetry, gothic literature, and science fiction. A lot of Greek epics and medieval romances feature the theme of eternity. For example, characters like Achilles and Beowulf are acclaimed for their heroic achievements even after death. In these kinds of epics, eternity is a source of both fear and wonder, because it reminds all of us of our mortality and impending doom as our time on Earth slowly comes to an end. Eternity can also take a darker turn, like in gothic literature and horror. Authors like Edgar Allan Poe and Bram Stoker use the concept of eternity to depict terror and longing to escape the mortal world. In Stoker's *Dracula*, it is the immortal vampires and in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" it is the never-ending curse. Science fiction often depicts eternity through advanced technology and alien civilizations. For example, authors like Arthur C. Clarke and Isaac Asimov have dealt with the concept of immortality and the implications of eternal existence in human society in a futuristic way.

The concept of eternity has not only influenced literature but various other aspects of human life. It has been a source of inspiration for artists, musicians, and philosophers alike. It can be seen across different cultures and religions, where it is often associated with the afterlife and the divine. In Greek mythology, for instance, the Elysian Fields were portrayed as a paradise where the souls of the heroic and virtuous would spend eternity. Similarly, in Hinduism, the concept of *moksha* represents liberation from the cycle of reincarnation and eternal bliss. Later on, Christianity's influence on Western literature also gave rise to many interpretations of eternity, particularly in regard to heaven and hell. The Bible portrays heaven as a place of eternal life with God, while hell is depicted as eternal punishment.

In conclusion, the concept of eternity has played a significant role in shaping literary tradition. Literature has provided a platform for authors to explore the many elements of this complex concept, as they have done from the *Divine Comedy* to contemporary science fiction. The impact of eternity on human culture and society is profound and far-reaching. By exploring the implications of an eternal existence on human life, literature has helped us to gain a deeper understanding of the human condition and our place in the universe.

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# The Real Magic Behind Motivation: The Driving Force in Second Language Learning

Ana Markoidze



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Learning a second language can be challenging, especially when it comes to staying motivated throughout the process. Therefore, motivation is an important factor that influences the success of mastering a second language. But what should we take into consideration as educators or learners to “nurture the flame” to reach our desired destination? That is precisely what we will explore in this article: the different types of motivation, motivation’s effect on the process of second language learning, and how it can be fostered in the classroom.

## What Are the Types of Motivation?

There are two main types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation refers to the desire to learn a language for one’s personal satisfaction and is solely fueled by a learner’s interest and curiosity. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, refers to learning a language for external rewards such as grades, job opportunities, or social status. In addition, other factors, such as the learner’s attitude towards the language, cultural background, and learning style can affect motivation.



## **How Does Motivation Affect the Process of Second Language Learning?**

The origin of the word motivation doesn't mean "a moving cause" in Latin for nothing, as motivation plays a crucial role in driving learners to acquire a second language. Learners who are motivated tend to be more engaged in the learning process and are more likely to persist in their efforts to learn the language. On the other hand, those who lack motivation may find it difficult to stay focused and committed to learning the language, leading to lower achievement and proficiency levels. Research has shown that lack of motivation is a significant barrier to second language learning (Gardner, 2010). Learners who lack motivation may feel less confident in their ability to learn the language, leading to negative attitudes and beliefs about the language and the learning process. This can create a self-fulfilling cycle, where the lack of motivation leads to lower levels of achievement, which in turn leads to even lower levels of motivation.

## **How Can Motivation Be Fostered in Second Language Learning?**

One of the ways to make the language learning process fun and engaging is by including interactive activities and games that are relevant to the learners' interests. For example, we have all become familiar with virtual learning because of Covid-19. Now, a teacher can use social media platforms, such as TikTok, to engage learners in fun language learning challenges that involve creating short videos or captions in the target language. This is an application that students

have been using constantly to kill time but may not have considered as a means of self-education.

In addition to this, it is always helpful to provide learners with clear and achievable targets that are meaningful and relevant to their personal and professional goals. For example, a teacher can build rapport by having consultation hours with each learner to set individual language learning goals that meet their personal interests and career aspirations. If a student wants to master a language for a specific field, such as medicine or business, the teacher should provide them with resources and activities that will make their target more achievable. When learners see how closely they are approaching their target, they will be twice as motivated to keep going.

It should come as no surprise that encouraging learners to use the language in real-life situations and providing opportunities for authentic language use can greatly impact their motivation. For example, a teacher could organize a language club with invited native speakers, like exchange students or language fellows, with whom learners can "socialize their language" by using theoretically gained knowledge in practical situations. And guess what? Receiving positive responses to their practical use of language will spark their enthusiasm!

In conclusion, motivation plays a crucial role in second language learning as it affects the learner's progress, effort, and persistence in acquiring a new language.



It is evident that a lack of motivation can lead to poor performance, decreased effort, and ultimately failure to achieve language learning goals. When learners lack motivation, they are less likely to engage in language learning activities and participate actively in the classroom, leading to slower progress. However, teachers, and even us as learners, have an immense power to influence our motivation to learn.

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# How Are We Living Without a Resurrection Stone?

Davit Beraia



Vintage Arthur Rackham Victorian by Prawny (<https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.52453.html?fbclid=IwAR2nVu88lp4ivNJ0skkl8z0r2bfovveb8F9WkiUNH-pjKgz5bWOpgMKyxl>) is licensed under Content License

The life of a human being is filled with different kinds of fears. Phobias are everywhere. We fear things we can't even understand, but the fiercest kind is the fear of death. It's the most powerful fear. It's primal. It underlines the very reason we are human. It lets us undertake things we could never imagine were possible.

What is life if not our constant challenger? What's its purpose other than consistently forcing us to face and overcome our fears?

But is overcoming the fear of death even possible? How can a human being possibly do that? Some people may think that there is only one answer to this question – sacrifice.

J.K. Rowling desperately tries to explain the nature of death and sacrifice in her hugely acclaimed *Harry Potter* book series. Harry was always conscious of the fact that he was being chased by the mass murderer, a literary reincarnation of Hitler, Lord Voldemort.

He was aware that he was the chosen one, and that in the end he and Voldemort would face each other in the final battle. However, he was never willing to die. In fact, he was scared of death even though he was the bravest of all. But the whole narrative shifted once Harry understood that he was the seventh Horcrux, the last vessel for Voldemort's sevenfold divided soul, and that he could only defeat him by sacrificing himself and greeting death like an old friend.

By deeply considering the fear of death, we surprisingly find that most of us are not afraid of the actual process of dying. Rather we dread not being alive anymore. We fear the fact that our loved ones won't be with us anymore, that all the things we loved about life will forever be lost. And needless to say, we are terrified of the unknown future. Or of the possibility that in reality, there is no future at all. What is interesting is that at the very moment we decide to sacrifice ourselves for a specific reason, this deeper explanation is lost and the primal and most basic aspect of the fear - the fear of the actual process and the pain that dying can cause - returns.

Harry Potter experiences both of these aspects of the fear of death. Before he understood the cruel truth, he was trying to destroy the parts of Voldemort's soul one by one to weaken him and later destroy him in a duel. Although when he realizes that he has to die in order to defeat the dark lord, he doesn't even hesitate and instantly decides to sacrifice himself. But at the edge of the forbidden forest, where he discovers one of the deathly hallows, the Resurrection Stone, he takes the opportunity to use it to see his parents and other loved ones briefly and then asks them if it hurts to die.

Thus, even the ultimate sacrifice does not guarantee that the fear will disappear, it just changes the way we can look at fear. The natural animal instinct prevails. Despite this, if the cause of sacrifice is significant enough and the strength of one's soul is invincible enough, then fear can't make much of an impact on one's decision. And Harry was Lily's son after all. When he was just a baby, she sacrificed herself to protect and save her only son from the darkness, from Voldemort himself. This level of strength ran in his blood.

After Harry has been comforted by his dead loved ones, he asks them to stay with him. They assure him that they have never left and will always live within his heart and consciousness, even without the Resurrection Stone. He then drops the stone in the middle of nowhere to prevent the possibility that even he will ever be brought back to life. In fact, he decided to drop the Resurrection Stone the moment he decided to sacrifice himself. Actually, there is more than one stone. The real resurrection stones are the very things that cause our fear of death, that don't let us throw our lives away, and don't let us despair.

Those are the connections that we make with different people throughout our lives. They are people we love wholeheartedly, who we are not ready to let go, and even more importantly the ones who love us back, who would sacrifice themselves for our sake.

Harry had a myriad of those resurrection stones. He discovered them and created some of them by himself. The major difference between Harry and Voldemort that tipped the power balance

towards Harry was the love he was full of. His life was filled with people he would die for. Even though he was afraid of death, just like everyone, he still decided, without a doubt, to undertake the act of sacrifice to save his friends and humanity in general. Meanwhile, Voldemort had spent his whole life without a single person who truly loved him and he was always clinging to his pathetic lonely life because he didn't have anyone to die for. "Do not pity the dead, Harry. Pity the living, and, above all those who live without love" (Rowling, 2007, p.722). Albus Dumbledore's unforgettable quote perfectly sums up the core meaning of this legendary story.

To go back to the initial question, how are we living without a resurrection stone? We aren't. The answer is simple. We can't live without a resurrection stone. The *Harry Potter* books make an enormous effort to introduce us to this world of boundless possibilities, a world full of magic, fantastic creatures, and uncountable spells, and to make us fall in love with its beauty. Despite this effort, these books still tirelessly try to convince us that we do not need the Elder Wand, Invisibility Cloak, Resurrection Stone, Marauder's Map, or any of those wonderful things to live a fulfilled and valuable life, because "it doesn't do to dwell on dreams and forget to live" (Rowling, 1997, p.171). We are in desperate need of only those resurrection stones that Harry was never ready to let go... never, until the end. The only kind of magic that actually exists in real life is love, as pure and selfless as Harry's love. And believe it or not, this kind of magic will always defeat even the most terrifying cruelty and darkness.

So, let us gather as many of those resurrection stones as we can manage and who knows, maybe in the end one of them will still be able to protect us, even from death. Maybe we will be brought back to life from King's cross purgatory, just like Harry was after Voldemort's deadly spell. Simply because his mother's love and sacrificial protection were still with him.

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# Japan's Rocks or Japan Rules: Japan and China's East China Sea Territorial Dispute

Ananya Atri



Sumi Sumi-E Watercolor by Krisatu (<https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.52453.html?fbclid=IwAR2nVu88lp4ivNJ0skkl8z0r2bfovveb8F9WkiUNH-pjKgz5bWOpgMKyxl>) is licensed under Content License

A 50-year-old dispute exists between Japan and China over the ownership of small, uninhabited islands and rocks in the East China Sea that are administered by Japan. They are known as the Senkaku Islands in Japan and the Diaoyu Islands in China (Grieger, 2021).

Hamakawa (2007/2015) and Heflin (2000) offer contrasting views of the islands' ownership. Heflin (2000) asserts that, as the International Court of Justice (ICJ) has consistently demonstrated over the years, the primary criterion in determining

ownership of islands is the exercise of sovereign power over island territory. As a result, Japan has a valid claim to the Senkaku Islands. Hamakawa (2007/2015) argues that the Diaoyu Islands were discovered and named by the Chinese, which is evidence that historically, China has controlled them.

This article contends that because it is based on international law, Heflin's claim, supporting Japan's ownership, is stronger than Hamakawa's. Furthermore, to uphold objectivity in the article,



facts are corroborated through a European Parliament briefing written by Grieger (2021). This article also considers how the islands' ownership is represented in popular culture and what that suggests about how the situation is viewed by the Chinese and Japanese populaces.

Heflin (2020) states that the Senkaku Islands belong to Japan because they have maintained sovereignty and have controlled the islands unobtrusively and consistently for more than a century. This is significant because the ICJ has historically determined that a party's actual displays of power are more relevant to establishing ownership than historical and documentary evidence. This precedent is shown in cases like the *Island of Palmas Case*, where the United States lost to the Netherlands, and the *Minquiers and Ecrehos Case*, where the United Kingdom was awarded ownership instead of France.

According to Hamakawa (2007/2015), the government of Japan began surveying the Senkaku Islands in earnest in 1885, a fact that unintentionally reinforced Heflin's assertion of Japan's ownership. It was established through these surveys that the Senkaku Islands had not only been uninhabited but also had no evidence of having been governed by the Qing Dynasty. Based on this confirmation, the Japanese decided to install markers on the islands to legally incorporate the Senkaku Islands into Japanese territory in 1895.

The islands are mentioned as early as 1534 in records of the *Sakufioshi* (investigative missions between 1372 and 1879), where they are described as

"navigation aids on the sea route" (Hamakawa, 2007/2015). This points to China's historical control of the islands. Further, Hamakawa (2007/2015) asserts that Japan stole the Senkaku Islands during the First Sino-Japanese War after forcing the Qing government to sign the Treaty of Shimonoseki in April 1895, which required them to cede Taiwan and all the islands belonging to it.

Both Hamakawa and Heflin discuss historical evidence that supports China's ownership of the islands. Heflin (2000) points out that a Japanese map published in 1785 used "the same color for the Diayou Islands and China", thus attributing the islands to China. Further, Japanese maps published in 1874 and 1877 did not include the islands. During the Japan-Qing negotiations of 1879, China and Japan alike recognized the Ryukyus Islands, which were to be attributed to Japan, as consisting "of 36 Islands, and the Senkaku Islands were not included in these Islands" (Hamakawa, 2007/2015). These arguments prove that in the past, even the Japanese acknowledged China's sovereignty over the Senkaku Islands.

However, culture matters in politics, and culture, particularly popular culture, can express both individual and collective decisions and views (Ling & Nakamura, 2019). The documentary, *Diaoyu Islands - The Truth*, presents the opinions of Chinese popular culture toward the islands. Asserting that Japan has no legitimate claim to the islands, the documentary urges the Japanese government to hand the islands over to China as they have always been its property.

The documentary gained significant positive feedback from the Chinese populace. However, in Japan, the documentary was considered to be inaccurate. According to Ling & Nakamura (2019), the popular Japanese anime, *Appleseed*, can be used to understand Japan's perspective because it shows the Senkaku Islands as being a part of Japanese territory. Despite the fact that Senkaku Islands aren't discussed explicitly in the anime, this portrayal challenges the view of the islands as a disputed territory rather than Japan's territory.

Nonetheless, both authors, Hamakawa (2007/2015) and Heflin (2000) agree, and Grieger (2021) verifies that China advanced its claim for Senkaku in early 1970, not before that. Hence, China has not maintained continuous sovereignty on the island, which is seen as the deciding factor by the ICJ. Despite the ancient evidence presented by Hamakawa (2007/2015) and the views of the Chinese populace depicted in the documentary, *Diaoyu Islands - The Truth*, Hamakawa himself could not refute the fact that Japan, by exercising sovereignty, has asserted its legal claim and therefore will continue to retain control of the islands. Grieger (2021) states that Japan has "valid control" and hence denies any dispute claim. Lastly, as Heflin (2000) concludes, the ICJ would find China's claim invalidated by Japan's peaceful exercise of actual power over the islands. Hence, Senkaku is Japan's Rocks, and indeed, Japan rules, from a legal viewpoint.

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# The Understanding of God in 20th-Century Literature

Gwanza Basilashvili



Saint John the Evangelist on Patmos by Titian ([https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.43725.html?fbclid=IwAR0XNXsg300g\\_klqLuSQ8FfpddCeS\\_VbFUR60B58rTHFFq2PuNtrclHFjY](https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.43725.html?fbclid=IwAR0XNXsg300g_klqLuSQ8FfpddCeS_VbFUR60B58rTHFFq2PuNtrclHFjY)) is licensed under CC BY 1957.14.6

Religion has always played a huge role in people's lives and countries' fates. For some people, it is a way of moral life, and for others, it is used to justify their actions or to blame an outer force for their unlucky life. The impact of religion on society can easily be documented. Assessing people's understanding of God, however, is quite a different task. Literature offers a unique window to the thoughts of the time, as artists have always used it to express their feelings, emotions, thoughts, and beliefs.

Catholicism's role in global history is unimaginable. The Vatican, serving as the religious center of Europe, has controlled countries around the world for dozens of centuries. Without a doubt, this undermined the power of the king, forcing one bad-tempered royal to commit radical actions. When Henry VIII was denied a divorce by the Pope, he split his connection with the Catholic Church and established a new national religion in England - Protestantism (McDowall, 1997).

Personal lives and love affairs were not the only things that Rome was controlling. Their hands were ruling other governments as well. For instance, the Magna Carta, which is considered the symbol of liberty today, was annulled by a papal bull, a public decree from the Pope (The National Archives, n.d.). Centuries later, while Mary Queen of Scots was waiting for her execution, she wrote a letter begging Rome to intervene on her behalf (Madeley, 2011).

Rome's reach extended not only to royal members but to the lower and middle-class as well. The church taught women to obey their husbands. Further, they spread two different ideas about women. First that they should be pure like the Virgin Mary, and second that their husbands could not trust them, as they were as sly as Eve (McDowall, 1997).

Religion's influence during the 20th century was perverse, impacting governments, kings, and everyday people alike. Although, while the Catholic Church was busy telling people how to worship, other understandings of God emerged in literature. For some authors of this time, God is merciful, for others, vengeful, and for some, God may not exist at all.

English novelist and poet, Thomas Hardy, began as a Victorian realist whose interest was humanity's struggle against fate. Tragic visions, an ironic tone, and a sense of loss are characteristic features of his literature. In his verse, "Hap" (Hardy, 2006, p.1868), he presents an unexpected paradox and draws a cruel version of God, who is to blame for human misfortune. Even though this is an action for which he would have been criticized in real life,

this is something all humans do - it is our nature to blame outer forces. That is one of the reasons why this poem is brilliant. We, mortal people, identify ourselves with the author and feel relieved of our "sinful thoughts".

According to Hardy, humans are very tiny and trifling things that have no importance to God. In "Hap" he wrote, "Know that thy sorrow is my ecstasy,/ that thy love's loss is my hate's profiting!" (Hardy, 2006). As we see, the narrator has lost his lover and puts the blame on God. However, in "In Time of 'The Breaking of Nations'" (Hardy, 2006, p. 1884), Hardy describes another reason for his anger, war. The title of this poem refers to a verse from the Bible, "You are my hammer and weapon of war:/ with you I break nations in pieces;/ with you I destroy kingdoms" (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2001, Jer. 51:20). The reason why Hardy is so interested in humans' grapple against God is that he experienced many things in his life. He lost his lover and witnessed a world war. The cruelties that he went through, made him disbelieve in God's mercifulness.

Another very interesting literary work is "The Darkling Thrush" (Hardy, 2006, p. 1871), which reflects the author's state of being at the border between Victorianism and Realism, innocence and experience, and the 19th and 20th centuries. The poem paints a dark and tragic world inhabited by "the nihilistic poet and the optimistic thrush. Of course, the thrush has a richly symbolic function; on one level its instinctive song represents the natural world's anticipation of spring and regeneration" (Harvey, 1978). The main idea of this verse is rebirth, not only religious but personal as well.

Housman's perception of God is quite similar to Hardy's. The main theme of his works is the idea that the world was created by God, but he abandoned it and humanity as well, "What God abandoned, these defended, / And saved the sum of things for pay" (Housman, 1917). The loss of his mother at the age of twelve cast a dark shadow over his life and impacted much of his work (Britannica, 2023). In a letter to his sister, shortly before his death, he wrote, "I abandoned Christianity at thirteen but went on believing in God till I was twenty-one" (Maas, 1971).

Like Hardy and Housman, Yeats also was not deeply religious. In "The Second Coming" he portrays a very hopeless and dark situation and evokes negative feelings in readers, "Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,/ the blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere,/ the ceremony of innocence is drowned" (Yeats, 2006, p. 2036). The poem can be interpreted as a person's own second coming, as in "The Darkling Thrush" by Thomas Hardy, or as Jesus's return to glory when the dead will be resurrected and together with the righteous living will be taken to heaven.

While discussing Yeats's poetry, it is noteworthy to overview "Leda and the Swan" (Yeats, 2006, p. 2036), an allusion to Greek mythology, which vividly describes the act of rape. In this story, poor Leda, a beautiful young woman, is abused by the mighty god, Zeus. Even though Zeus, the god of the sky, is just a myth from ancient Greece, he still carries the status of god and represents all mightiness. Here, as with Hardy, Yeats represents God as a vengeful creator.

The disparity between portrayals of God during the 20th century is evident. The Catholic Church had made it their mission to use religion to regulate people and tell them how to believe. As much as the church may have wanted people to turn a blind eye and go on believing without questioning, human curiosity persisted. Authors of the time utilized their voices and craft to toil with different understandings of God. Hardy, Housman, and Yeats all experienced tragedy in their lives which caused them to question God. Through their words, society was given permission to question as well.

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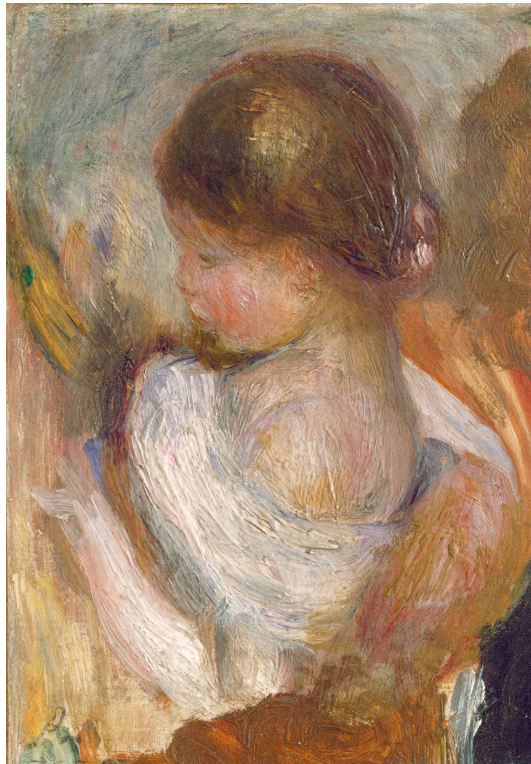
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# The Importance of Subjectivity in Art

Lika Miruashvili



Young Girl Reading by Auguste Renoir (<https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.52215.html?fbclid=IwAR0kAu2HZP5S4EA7fxxtfHOjv9EeYFPLp8XL-0pNAHELugScQYq2nh7o28Q>) is licensed under CC BY 1970.17.71

Approaching art with a generalized or detached perspective can be considered disrespectful not only toward the artists, but their creations, too. Creative freedom has endured a long history full of trials, some of which we still may not be aware of. It is in the interests of all individuals to understand the importance of subjectivity when it comes to art.

No person with feelings can ever be truly objective about anything. Therefore, artistic expression is inherently subjective, aiming to evoke emotions within individuals. Literature, music, and paintings are trying to convey a meaning that is beyond them - a simple truth that lives on for generations to come. Considering this, it is essential to view art subjectively - recognizing the significance it holds for someone who has overcome

personal challenges carries greater weight than its technical perfection.

Humans have many different ways to connect - whether through simple words, glances in a crowded room, or shared laughter in the soft, warm glow of the fireplace, we all yearn for connection. Sometimes people seek this sense of belonging through human interaction, waiting to be told: "You are not alone." Other times it comes through art. As art offers another pathway to forge those bonds. It provides a safe space for individuals to subtly express vulnerable feelings that may be difficult to communicate directly. Music, paintings, literature, and theater serve as means through which people can convey their emotions.

In earlier times, when the division among social classes was more noticeable, art was limited to the privileged elite. Only the wealthy and powerful had the pleasure of listening to incomparable musicians and being painted by masters of their craft. Ordinary people of that time never had the chance to experience such cultural richness - some farmers faded from existence without ever having heard a musical instrument. However, in this time of rapid technological developments, we have more opportunities to access art than the royals of centuries ago, who possessed unimaginable wealth and power.

While it is true that what the majority of people consider a masterpiece or a classic is a remarkable work, it does not mean that it is undeniably "the best." There are reasons why a novel or a record becomes beloved.

A large community of admirers signifies an extraordinary accomplishment by the artist, building a community of supporters who find solace in their creations. However, people who believe some pieces of art are superior to others fail to grasp the broader meaning of art itself.

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Imagine a room, where by the wall, there is a couch. A warm, cream color gives it a sense of safety. Near the couch, someone sits and waits for a patient. This person, a doctor, has spent years studying and researching how to help people. When the day is over and the doctor is home, they choose to read an adventure book with nothing but empty words - words that never truly encompass the magic of the places they so desperately try to describe.

Should this doctor be judged for their choice?

They have spent their whole life caring for other people, trying to make a dent in the circle of time, leaving behind kindness to be remembered for.

Is it wrong, if, for once, they think about themselves and choose something to read that is easy to follow, a novel that soothes them?

In another room, there is another couch. Here sits someone who has spent their life chasing highs they were never able to reach. A person that has spent hours with a glass in their hands that never empties of cold, burning, alcohol. When this person gets home, they choose a "classic," deeply philosophical book. It is exactly what they need - a book where they can

search for the meaning of existence and the purpose they have never found in their own life.

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There is no way to determine what type of literature will help someone at a certain point in time. For one person, maybe an adventure story is the cure to their problems. For another – a classic novel full of moral teachings is the way to go. No one knows what's really happening in somebody else's heart, so we don't know what they need. The people described in the two scenarios above are doing just what they need to do in order to become the best version of themselves. They are both equally deserving of respect and the freedom to select the right genre of literature for themselves.

Whether you read to find an escape to a world that feels like home to you, or to find the secrets of the universe, as long as you find something akin to your soul in the pages, you are doing something right. Despite the habit of some to call certain books "lowbrow" and declare themselves, directly or indirectly, superior, no reader is better than another. If there is a story that only one person in the entire world wants to read, it means that story is worth telling.

If we judge others for their choice in art, what do we risk losing?

"An introvert with an active imagination...I quickly found a kindred spirit in Jo March, who, like me, loved to read and write... As I struggled with bodily insecurities

and finding my place in the world, I saw in Jo the confidence that I felt lacking in myself" (Dunbar, 2020). Here we see that art gifted someone with dreams and goals as well as the courage to reach for them.

Frida Kahlo's underrated painting, *Self-Portrait with Cropped Hair*, is often overlooked. Appearing in a man's suit, Kahlo is surrounded by locks of her hair scattered across the floor. Lyrics in Spanish at the top of the painting hint at the meaning: "Look if I loved you it was because of your hair. Now that you are without hair, I don't love you anymore" (The Museum of Modern Art, 2019). Kahlo had recently separated from her husband, Diego Rivera, at the time of the painting. This deeper meaning is only revealed to those who seek to understand the pain the artist was going through, or recognize their own pain portrayed in the painting.

If we look at everything through the fog of objectivity, we neglect all the people, like Dunbar, who have a subjective connection to art and artists, or like Kahlo, who have used art as an expression of sorrows we are unable to voice. So, while there are no readers who are better than others, there are good readers. Those who know that we consume what brings us fulfillment of some kind. Those that do not judge what people need to find comfort.

The essence of art as a whole is to bring serenity to life, to connect people, and to create a safe space for those who may have never had one. It acts as a sweet, or sometimes bittersweet, medicine that heals the exact wounds that need care and attention at that point in time. Therefore, art belongs to



no one and everyone, its purpose is to bring people with shared experiences together and connect them.

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# Meet the Authors

## **Mariam Gabitashvili**

Mariam Gabitashvili is an English Philology major in her third year of studies at the International Black Sea University. As an English major, she has read literature from many genres and noticed the different ways that authors, all from various times and places, conveyed their thoughts about eternity. Some depicted it as a gift from the divine, others made time into a character itself, and one of her favorite representations described it in extreme and terrifying details in travels through the nine circles of hell. She was fascinated by the similarities and differences and decided that eternity was a subject she could not pass up an opportunity to write about.

## **Ana Markoidze**

Ana (Anko) Markoidze is an English Philology student in the School of Education, Humanities, and Social Sciences at International Black Sea University. Winning some English creative writing competitions in her teenage years, helped Ana's confidence grow. Now, she is ready to use her love of writing and copywriting in the role of both a writer and an editor for IBSU's first student magazine - Vitascope. Because she is pursuing a career in teaching, Ana chose to delve into a complex aspect of language teaching, motivation. Ana's article demonstrates why motivation is a shared responsibility. Teachers should encourage student independence so that learners can find their own "moving cause" or motivation.

## **Davit Beraia**

Davit Beraia is a fifth-year student in the Faculty of Medicine at Tbilisi State Medical University. The nature of the fear of death and sacrifice has always fascinated him and he wondered what the correlation between these two topics might be. Writing this article happened to be a great opportunity to dig into those themes. As usual, Harry Potter was there to provide him with literary parallels and guide him through interesting connections between literature and psychology. He considers reading and writing literature to be his hobbies as they are his favorite things to spend time on. He had a great time writing this article.

## Meet the Authors

### **Ananya Atri**

Ananya Atri is a student at the International Black Sea University pursuing a degree in International Relations. She will soon begin her senior year of study. Her interest in the geopolitics of the Asian-Pacific and the crucial role that international law plays in addressing territorial disputes is evident in her piece. Meanwhile, she sends her love to her family in India.

### **Gwanza Basilashvili**

Gwanza Basilashvili is currently completing a Bachelor's degree in English Philology at the International Black Sea University. It is an immense honor for her to have her article chosen for publication in IBSU's first student magazine. From a young age, she has held a deep affinity for literature. It has served as a means for her to escape from reality, embark on journeys to diverse places, and perceive the world through the eyes of different characters. As a future teacher of English language and literature, she believes that her calling lies in teaching kids to read a word so that later on they can read the world - as Paulo Freire said, "Reading the world always precedes reading the word, and reading the word implies continually reading the world."

### **Lika Miruashvili**

Lika Miruashvili is finishing her second year in the American Studies program at the International Black Sea University. The topic of her article is something she often thinks about. She believes that everybody deserves their hobbies and interests to be seen as valid and worthwhile. She also believes that no matter how hard some may try to distance themselves from art and look at it "objectively", art will stay a subjective, beautiful phenomenon that can change, and can sometimes even, save lives.

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