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“The Impact of English Studies on My Education”

Every so often, I dust the wooden shelf in my room, and scattered amongst the many shelves I find *The Great Gatsby*, *The House on Mango Street*, and *As I Lay Dying* among many others. As I dust each book, my mind recalls a startling revelation, a wonderful passage, or new characters met. As I review the many novels I have read in the past four years, I am amazed at the distinguished literature I have examined, and the ways in which I have grown through their study. I believe that my teachers and the IB English program have increased my appreciation for and understanding of the English language.

A significant part of my four years of literary adventures at Robinson have been my English teachers. In ninth grade, Mrs. Sanchez introduced me to the wonders of international literature. Mrs. Gibson, my tenth grade teacher, showed me how to incorporate all one’s interests into English studies. My eleventh grade teacher, Miss Holland, encouraged my love of literature with her enthusiasm. This year, Mrs. Giese uses her knowledge of current events to make the texts’ messages personal and thought provoking. The IB program itself places heavy emphasis on writing skills across all subjects. Not only has this principle impacted my education as a whole, it has alerted me to the parallels between literature and other course studies. For example, in order to share scientific findings, I had to express my ideas in lab reports, with clear syntax.

One particular joy I find in the written word is this: it can entail so much of a people’s lives—from their culture, to their history, to their struggles. “How choose between this Africa and the English tongue...how can I turn from Africa and live?” asks poet Derek Walcott as he struggles with his heritage and Saint Lucia’s past (“A Far Cry from Africa”). Also, I came to appreciate the way Ernest Hemingway mastered the language of his works to express those ideas concisely, even though I did not agree with his philosophies. “The girl was looking off at the line of hills. They were white in the sun and the country was brown and dry. ‘They look like white elephants,’ she said” (“Hills Like White Elephants”). In this passage he is able to convey beyond the few words he wrote that the girl is contemplating aborting her baby. Thus, every author’s purpose can be discovered through the adventure of careful consideration.

As T.S. Eliot wrote, “it is in fact a part of the function of education to help us escape...from the intellectual and emotional limitations of our own time.” I believe my English classes and my other studies have done just that; they have allowed me to experience cultures, times, and ideas otherwise beyond my reach. Both my teachers and the IB English curriculum have nurtured my love of literature and revealed to me the interdependent nature of all academic endeavors. I have discovered that language is vital to expression in every field, and knowledge from other fields completes the expression of language.