Chapter 23
Patterns of Creativity

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Understanding the Text

1. How does Shelley's attitude to science differ from that of Wordsworth and Keats?

Answer

Wordsworth in his A Poet's Epitaph looks at science with a critical mind. Even in Tables turned he praises nature and appreciates the beauty it bequeaths to the humanity and is critical of how humans ruin it all with their science and art. Keats in Lamia talks of two facets of human nature: one is sensual and other emotional. Keats calls philosophy destructive and pleasure unreal and calls them inseparable. However, it is not that one must take Wordsworth's and Keat's take as absolute. Shelley, for instance, is of a different opinion. For scientists it is best if they consider Shelley. A. N. Whitehead's testimony called Shelley's attitude to Science, an opposite pole to that of Wordsworth. He loved science, and was never tired of expressing in poetry the thoughts, which it suggests. Science symbolised to him joy, and peace, and illumination.

2. 'It is not an accident that the most discrimination literary criticism of Shelley's thought and work is by a distinguished scientist, Desmond King-Hele.' How does this statement bring out the meeting point of poetry and science?

Answer

A Desmond King-Hele, a British physicist, is the author of Shelley: His Thought and Work. He said that Shelley's attitude to science emphasises the surprising modern climate of thoughts in which he chose to live. Shelley describes the mechanisms of nature with a precision and wealth of detail. It is a perfect fusion of poetry and science. A scientist critically reviewing a poet's work on science. S. Chandrasekhar points out two examples from Shelley's poetry in support of what is said about him. He points out that in his poem Cloud, a creative myth, a scientific monograph, and a gay picaresque tale of cloud adventure are fused

together. Then he cites an example from Prometheus Unbound, which has been described by Herbert Read as the greatest expression ever given to humanity's desire for intellectual light and spiritual liberty.

3. What do you infer from Darwin's comment on his indifference to literature as he advanced in years?

Answer

Darwin, a great scientist, known for his work On the Origin of Species, enjoyed literature only until he was 30, as he said. He enjoyed poetic works of Byron, Coleridge, Shelley, etc. immensely. Shakespeare's historical plays gave him much pleasure. However, as he advanced in his age to reach the benchmark of 30, the charm faded and he began losing interest in pictures and music that once gave him great delight. He tried reading poetry and Shakespeare; however, he found it so intolerably dull that it nauseated him. It is surprising that the answer to this change is in Darwin's own statement. His mind had become some kind of a grinding machine to process laws out of facts. It caused atrophy of that part of the brain on which higher tastes depended. It was hard for Darwin to infer it as well and, thus, his romance with literature died away.

4. How do the patterns of creativity displayed by scientists differ from those displayed by poets?

Answer

Poets are the bards celebrating the nature surrounding them. While, scientists are the ones to harvest nature and its mechanism and mark inventions. Poets such as Wordsworth and Keats criticise humans of exploiting nature. Whereas, scientists on the other hand utilize the given resources of nature to create and invent. However, it is not that there is an enmity between poets and scientists. Shelley said, undoubtedly the promoters of utility, in this limited sense, have their appointed office in society They make space and give time.Here we have Darwin, who enjoyed literature immensely, however, until he was thirty. He said later,' My mind seems to have become a kind of machine for grinding general laws out of large collections of facts but why this should have caused the atrophy of that part of the brain alone on which the higher tastes depend.Thus, it can be understood, while the poets celebrate the present and arrest it making it all immortal, the scientists create and invent leading us to a tomorrow, thus, marking a difference.

5. What is the central argument of the speaker?

Answer

A In the essay patterns of creativity, S. Chandrasekhar tries to figure out the reason for the difference in the patterns of creativity among the practitioners in the arts and practitioners in the sciences. He did not answer it, rather, he made an assortment of remarks that bore the answer. He cites examples explaining how poets and scientists view each other defining the difference in their views. There are poets such as Wordsworth and Keats who are worshippers of nature, who believe that humans sabotage nature by the technological advancement. However, there are poets like Shelley, who do poetry on science. It is difficult to segregate the views and put them into water tight compartments. Darwin, for instance enjoyed literature immensely as it gave him utmost joy, but only till the age of 30. W. B. Yeats, in praise of Shelley's A Defence of Poetry, called it the profoundest essay on the foundation of poetry in the English language The author of the essay, Chandrasekhar wonders in the end that why is there no such A Defence of Science written by a scientist of equal endowment. Perhaps the answer to the question he knew already.

Talking about the Text

1. 'Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world'.

Answer

Shelley in his famous essay, A Defence of Poetry, made the given statement. In his work, Shelley expressed his view on poetry and poets. The power of poetry and the beauty of it. It is true that poetry makes every thing immortal by arresting its enchanting beauty. It not just reflects, it has the power to ignite minds and bring change. Poetry inspires humanity. Like Shelley said, ? oets are...the mirrors or the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present; the words which express what they understand not; the trumpets which sing to battle and feel not what they inspire; the influence which is moved not, but moves.It is poetry that bears the future and inspire minds. It beholds the past and mirrors the present as well. Poets are the subtle revolutionaries of our society. In fact, not just poets but all the great authors as well. They are the force that drive the society to newness and are moral critics. They

participate in the society not just as viewers, but they keep a watch and express their criticism or appreciation through their work.

2. Poetry and science are incompatible.

Answer

There are two perspectives to every issue. While poets like Wordsworth and Keats condemn man of exploiting nature and moving towards science, Shelley is a scientific poet, who even in his poems like his Cloud. Shelley loved science and expressed it in his poetry.? It symbolised to him joy, and peace, and illumination. Charles Darwin, being such a great scientist was immensely fond of literature, especially in his youth. However, another scientist, Faraday, who was absolutely engrossed in his scientific experiments about electricity and made great invention. It is always difficult to conclude whether poets and scientists are compatible or not. There will be many such poets and scientists fond of science and poetry. While there will be many who are only concerned about their subject.

3. 'On reading Shelley's A Defence of Poetry, the question insistently occurs why there is no similar A Defence of Science written of equal endowment.'

Answer

A person who is passionate about her/his subject is bound to praise it profoundly. The only difference might be in the medium of expression. While a poet chooses words to praise his subject, a scientist may choose an invention to express his passion. This is natural. Thus, it is so that Shelley came up with a writing piece and Faraday discovering the laws of electromagnetic induction and his discoveries led him to formulate concepts such as 'lines of force' and 'fields of force'. It is not that scientists do not defend their subject, Faraday did defend his discoveries by answering Gladstone that there was every probability of the government taxing the electricity soon. Just the medium one chooses to defend their subject matters.