

NCERT SOLUTIONS

CLASS - 12th



aglasem.com

Class : 12th

Subject : English

Chapter : 6

Chapter Name : On Science Fiction

Q1 What makes for the distinction between the various genres of fiction- 'a sports story', 'a Western story', 'a jungle story' and science fiction?

Answer. In this story the author made a distinction between various genres of fiction- 'a sports story', 'a Western story', 'a jungle story', and science fiction by mentioning that "Science fiction is a literary universe of no mean size because science fiction is what it is, not through its content but through its background." The author distinctly portrays the characteristics present in each type of fiction which showcases their difference from one another. A 'sports story' necessarily has an athletic or competitive activity as an integral part of its content. A 'Western story' essentially centers around the life of a cowboy in the American West whereas a 'jungle story' usually centers around the dangers of a forested tropical wilderness. Science fiction usually has the components of interplanetary travel and extraterrestrial creatures as part of its plot. But what really distinguishes it from the other genres of fiction is its background whereas the other genres are differentiated on the basis of content. He further argues that if the content of any of the other genres is placed against a background of a society distinctly different from ours, then that becomes science fiction.

Page : 199 , Block Name : Understanding the Text

Q2 How does Asimov established that John Campbell was wrong in his opinion that it is not possible for a science fiction mystery to be fair to a reader in the same way as a classic mystery is?

Answer. Asimov established that John Campbell was wrong in his opinion that it is not possible for a science fiction mystery to be fair to a reader in the same way as a classic mystery is. He provides the example of a classic mystery of Sherlock Holmes, where the detective was provided with extraordinary abilities of sight in order to pace up the plot and yet it remained fair to the readers. He argues that if such plots were fair in classic mysteries then the use of the latest scientific findings which the reader is unaware of can be used by the writer in penning

down a science fiction mystery. They do not need to adhere to the rules of classic mystery and still, it would be fair to the readers.

Page : 199 , Block Name : Understanding the Text

Q3 What are the pitfalls that the writer of science fiction mystery must guard against?

Answer. Writing in any genre contains some or the other pitfalls. In the case of science-fiction mystery, the writer must be aware of his content and must be aware of the ways to modify it. The modifications must have a rational explanation. Thus writing science fiction is difficult but not impossible. It is always possible to cling to the rules of this genre as the writers of classic mystery fiction usually cling to theirs.

Page : 199 , Block Name : Understanding the Text

Q1 Imagination and fantasy help human beings to speculate upon the possible explanations for the complexity and unpredictability of the phenomena in the universe.

Answer. Isaac Asimov seeks to establish the importance of science fiction in this chapter. He believes that science does not produce absolute truth nor does it support its existence. Science can also never promise that everything in the universe is controlled by it. Science is itself a product of imagination. Imagination drove us to experiments and experiments led to discoveries which helped in explaining the phenomena which were once unexplainable. Thus, science is based upon imagination which "help human beings to speculate upon the possible explanations for the complexity and unpredictability of the phenomena in the universe."

Page : 200 , Block Name : Talking about the Text

Q2 The difference that science and technology have made in everyday life today was visualized in science fiction fifty years ago.

Answer. Science fiction has built a bridge between science that was fifty years ago and the science of today. Fifty years ago science was visualized as something extraordinary, difficult to imagine and sometimes people related it to superstitious energy. But now, science and technology have taken a new shape. Everyone is aware of science and technology and conducts critical studies on it. The modern-day contributions of science in our lives have been visualised in science fiction ages ago. For example, the flying carpet or winged horses are the imaginative manifestations of today's airplane or jet planes. The crystal ball which allows us to gaze into the future or the magic shells that facilitated in hearing the human whisperings from afar is nothing but modern-day inventions like televisions and mobile phones. Thus, the science and technology that surrounds us in this present day were already imagined and presented to the readers, decades ago, through science fictions.

Page : 200 , Block Name : Talking about the Text

Q1 Discuss the author's attitude towards the pre-scientific imagination and the tone he adopts while talking about it.

Answer. Asimov talks about the time when science did not hold much prevalence in human society. The unexplainable phenomenons, the causes behind which were discovered later on by science, were a source of wonder then. Thus, superstitions and belief in mythical creatures were present since logic was absent. The author's tone towards pre-scientific imagination is skeptical in the beginning since he talks about magic, flying carpet, and winged horses. However, gradually, a sense of awe develops, as he points out that the present scientific discoveries were infact imagined by pre-scientific imagination. He gives the examples of flying carpets which may very well be the modern-day airplanes or the crystal ball which showed the future which may be the television in the modern-day.

Page : 200 , Block Name : Appreciation

Q2 Observe how the paragraph, as a form, has been used in the essay. Some paragraphs consist of just one sentence. What purpose do you think the author had in putting them in this manner?

Answer. Paragraphs that consist of just one sentence are:

1. "The goals of these ancient stories are the same as those of modern science fiction- the depiction of life as we don't know it."

2. "Science fiction is a literary universe of no mean size because science fiction is what it is, not through its content but through its background."

In the first paragraph, the author is talking about some ancient and modern science fiction and in the second paragraph, the author is shedding some light on science fiction's background and its genres. The author put these paragraphs in one line in order to distinguish them and emphasise upon the ideas mentioned in the paragraphs regarding science fiction.

Page : 200 , Block Name : Appreciation

Q3 Mark the linkers used by the author to connect the point he makes in one paragraph to the next. For example, let me explain the difference that makes in the last line of Para 1 of Section II. These are called discourse markers or discourse signallers.

Answer. Linkers used by the author to connect the point he makes in one paragraph with that in the next are as follows:

1. "There must have been tales of the strange and different.... Let's consider- The respect that people have....manipulate that key."
2. "Science fiction is a literary universe of no mean size because science fiction is what it is, not through its content but through its background: Let me explain the difference that makes."

Page : 200 , Block Name : Appreciation

aglasem.com