

Précis 16: CSS 2007

Q.2: Write a précis of the following passage and suggest a suitable title: (20)

The author of a work of imagination is trying to affect us wholly, as human beings, whether he knows it or not; and we are affected by it, as human beings, whether we intend to be or not. I suppose that everything we eat has some effect upon us than merely the pleasure of taste and mastication; it affects us during the process of assimilation and digestion; and I believe that exactly the same is true of anything we read.

The fact that what we read does not concern merely something called our literary taste, but that it affects directly, though only amongst many other influences, the whole of what we are, is best elicited, I think, by a conscientious examination of the history of our individual literary education. Consider the adolescent reading of any person with some literary sensibility. Everyone, I believe, who is at all sensible to the seductions of poetry, can remember some moment in youth when he or she was completely carried away by the work of one poet. Very likely he was carried away by several poets, one after the other. The reason for this passing infatuation is not merely that our sensibility to poetry is keener in adolescence than in maturity. What happens is a kind of inundation, or invasion of the undeveloped personality, the empty (swept and garnished) room, by the stronger personality of the poet. The same thing may happen at a later age to persons who have not done much reading. One author takes complete possession of us for a time; then another, and finally they begin to affect each other in our mind. We weigh one against another; we see that each has qualities absent from others, and qualities incompatible with the qualities of others: we begin to be, in fact, critical: and it is our growing critical power which protects us from excessive possession by anyone literary personality. The good critic, and we should all, try to critics, and not leave criticism to the fellows who write reviews in the papers - is the man who, to a keen and abiding sensibility, joins wide and increasingly discriminating. Wide reading is not valuable as a kind of hoarding, and the accumulation of knowledge or what sometimes is meant by the term 'a well-stocked mind.' It is valuable because in the process of being affected by one powerful personality after another, we cease to be dominated by anyone, or by any small number. The very different views of life, cohabiting in our minds, affect each other, and our own personality asserts itself and gives each a place in some arrangement peculiar to our self.

PRÉCIS:

to call forth → chew
→ A feeling of foolish or address-ively strong love
overso- hold
decora- ted

Influence of literature on readers

A writer of a book affects us without our knowledge and ascent. Reading affects us just like eating, despite the joy of the taste. It directly affects our whole being. The author believes that in adolescence, the mind of a person is dominated by the personality of a poet if the reader has some taste for poetry. The same may happen at a later stage of life to a person who have not read much. By reading the works of multiple authors, the readers weigh their personalities in his or her mind and develop a critical approach towards them without getting too much attached to a single author. The writer asserts that all the readers should be critics and should not leave this job to those reviewing examining books. These different perspectives about life, in a reader's mind, influence each other and reader's personality.