

**Nikola Tesla Doubts Things Scientific
May Be So Qualified.**

To the Editor of The New York Times:

Apart for its controversial feature, your appropriate editorial of the 8th inst., referring to Prof. Lowell, is interesting, because it raises the question whether there is such a thing as "artistic" scientific research.

Used in this distinctive sense, the term cannot relate simply to skill or adroit employment of natural forces, energies, or resources for beneficial purposes, or to some rules, maxims, or principles or other results of thought and observation. The word unmistakably suggests the ideal and aesthetic. If such be its interpretation, my answer to the question is in the negative.

As nearly as I am able to define it in this restricted meaning, artistic effort is beautiful expression of the painful striving of the human mind to free itself from the material and to attain the ideal. This qualification of the artist's endeavor seems to me essential. Whether the pain be intense and poignant, as that of Laocoon, or but a faint echo of a sad event recalled by a poem of Heine, it must be felt, for both the endeavor and impossibility of attainment are suggestive of suffering. To my mind a work of art must embody, first, a noble idea born of this painful striving for dematerialization; second, its expression in beautiful form, and, third, something, however little, of the artist's individuality.

What is there of all this in a scientific work? I should say nothing whatever. The man of science is indifferent to pleasure and pain. He will infect his body with some dreadful disease and take notes calmly while his life is ebbing away. The beautiful does not exist for him. When he sees the Falls of Niagara he has no eye except for the display of power and the possibilities of its transformation and use. In fact, he is not in the least concerned in any aspect of nature through human temperament. One can conceive of a perfect scientific being without soul.

I would prefer to qualify original investigation or research, discovery, and invention as "creative" scientific effort, which is equivalent to that of the artist, though it springs from a different, if not opposite, motive. Both the artist and man of science are striving for independence from the material world in the only two ways possible—one by its casting off, the other by its complete mastery.

NIKOLA TESLA.

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