

BOOK REVIEWS

Suresh Raval *Metacriticism* Athens : The University of Georgia Press, 1981, PP xiv +289, \$ 18.00

If Criticism is "Statement about works of art" (Beardsley) metacriticism is statement about criticism. In the last chapter of his book Raval elaborates the theoretical and methodological implications of the concept of metacriticism. The critics who engage in analysis of the problems of criticism function as metacritics. But the critical theorists who attempt at providing the foundations for their presumed correct theories are not metacritics. "Metacriticism and critical theory are logically independent of each other, but they are not in compatible" (P. 239)

The most remarkable quality of the book under review is its clarity (which Professor Hayden White rightly notices) lack of the so called rigorousness which some critics unnecessarily exhibit and admire (Shusterman).

Raval sets out to make a thorough-going analysis of the logic of criticism through an examination of certain fundamental concepts of literary theory and practice of criticism. The aim is to show that critical concepts, however logically developed and valorized, are, in reality, closely bound up with the historical specificity of the critic. But this does not preclude rationality in critical response : it rather makes for the genuineness of critical disputes and the natural relativity of all literary

formulations. Raval's book thus purports to be an interesting contribution to the valuable body of current theorizing concerning the nature and value of criticism.

The book is divided into two parts dealing separately with the theory and practice of criticism. The first part opens with a chapter on the aesthetics of Kant and the idealists and leads on to metacritical analysis of the concepts of creativity, intuition autonomy and affective response. Dr. Raval scrutinizes each concept meticulously and exhaustively and shows these all to be "contested concepts" which can yet be "reconfiscated" to appear with considerable differences in their later articulations. Dr. Raval, for example, is illuminating on the controversy about intention and shows that although the dispute cannot be settled, it is possible to recharacterize and refine the rival theories of the New Critics on the one hand and those of the Geneva School, Gadamer and Hirsch on the other. Dr. Raval treats the other concepts with similar perceptiveness.

On examining the theories of interpretation, Dr. Raval rightly argues that criticism is not a 'science' despite Richards and Frye, although its rationality cannot be disputed. This part of the book is an exhaustive analysis of the theories of Ingarden, Gadamer, Hirsch, Bloom and others in one long chapter and a separate chapter is devoted to Derrida,

de Man and the deconstructionists. The discussion on deconstruction is a sensible and valuable 'placing' of Derrida and his cohorts: without denying the radicality of their thought, it shows how they shave some "logically" parallel absurdities with the idealistic aesthetic theorists. Dr. Raval rounds up asserting the inadequacy of all monolithic critical schemes and pleads for an intelligent metacriticism for exposing such schemes. The variety, exhaustiveness and wisdom of Dr. Raval's book are rather rare and one would wish for more of them from Dr. Raval in future.

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T. P. Ramachandran, *The Indian Philosophy of Beauty*, pt. I pp. xviii+104, pt. II pp. 152, University of Madras, Madras. India, Rs. 10 00 and Rs. 13-00.

Since De and Kune several books have been written on the fundamentals problems and essential features of Indian aesthetics. But the tedious technicalization involved in the method of approach and the rehashive monotony in the act of analysis very often make the works inaccessible to the readers without sufficient traditional learning in Sanskrit language. On the other hand, some pretensive comparatists create to great a confusion in their paralleling the Sanskrit Concepts and theories with those of the western criticism that the reader drowns himself helplessly in the middle of the torrentous streams of

thoughts losing both the banks- where from he starts and where he aspires to reach. But the present work of Ramachandran is remarkably free from all such blemishes. He never pretends to be a comparatist although his untraditional and yet faithful treatment of the subject simplification and modernization of the notorious Sanskrit Jargons and critical concepts sufficiently prove the depth of his understanding of and insight into the universal status of Indian aesthetics

The first part deals with the general features of Indian aesthetics justifying the necessity of a sense and philosophy of beauty in the judgement of values clarifying the difference between the beauty in nature and the beauty in artworks and analyzing the triangular relation among the artist, art work and aesthete.

The second part is more specific in dealing with the well-known but often confused concepts and jargons of Sanskrit criticism such as bhava, rasa and dhvani. Not a single Sanskrit quotation is there in this part except for the bracketted technical terms; but the very analysis proves his mastery over both language and thought. His interpretation of *alanikara* as both the mental construct or mental imagery of the poet and its expression in figures of speech is both original and provocative. One feels sufficiently inspired for comparing *citrakavya* with imagist poetry not without justifications. The difference between the fact as such and the fact as idealization or a mental construct reshapes the Sanskrit concepts of *vastu* and *alanikara* so as to

view that in the light of current researches in poetics. The precise treatment of the Concept of *dhvani* with its varieties under three categories *vyanigya*, *vyanjaka* and *vyanjana* is sound and sufficient. One expects certainly something more about the relevance of this theory in the present context of elaborate researches in linguistic methods when one asks very sensible questions. Such as whether *dhvani* is a *meaning* or *Communication* when modern linguists have contrasted Suggestion against meaning it is high time for our question whether *dhvani* can be suggestion and yet a meaning (*arthantaram*). But the very Scheme of the book implies that it is a work of exposition rather than of critique.

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Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Translated by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi; Foreword by Fredric Jameson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984, XXV + 110 pp., \$ 8.95.

In the introductory chapter to this slim but dense volume Lyotard defines postmodernism as an "incredulity toward metanarratives." The "condition" denoted in the title refers to the contemporary status of knowledge; knowledge for Lyotard is primarily scientific but also the basis for normative claims. Lyotard argues that knowledge is now marked by a crisis precipitated by questions about the legitimacy and proper role of narrative.

This crisis arose from a loss of faith in the explanatory potential of narrative.

Although the decline of faith in narrative is prompted by the search for legitimacy, the failure to accord narrative a legitimating role in scientific knowledge serves in turn to undermine not only the prospect of a scientific certainty but also any prospects for normative legislation or self-knowledge. Lyotard endorses this loss of legitimacy and embraces postmodernism as both a liberating condition for knowledge and as a method for destroying the remaining faith in grand Narrative, i. e., metanarrative.

Lyotard's quarrel here is not with narrative per se; for he thinks narrative is a kind of knowledge at least as legitimate as scientific inquiry. Narrative, which he understands as a fundamentally finite and local development, was forced to bear the undue weight of the more grandiose claims which scientific knowledge pressed upon its shoulders. Metanarratives are Frankenstein's engineered by science through an abuse of narrative. In reality, scientific knowledge has always been in competition with narrative. "Narration is the quintessential form of customary knowledge." For Lyotard modernity is the first condition that suffered a loss of meaning due to the loosening grasp that knowledge has on its principal form, narrative. Postmodernity would then be not the return to a pre-modern "meaningful" condition but instead the acceptance of the limited purview of "meaningfulness" and a final nay-saying to the dwindling faith in the comforting illusion of a metanarrative.

Lyotard rejects two of the reigning models of legitimation : the first is the theory of scientific legitimation, derived from Wittgenstein, based on performativity; the second is the model of legitimation as consensus, associated with Habermas. The problem with the performativity model is that it presupposes an overly stable system from which judgments of legitimacy issue. Performativity becomes the game of technology which has as its telos not truth but efficiency. The excess stability of this system rests upon the terror of a totalitarianism : "This is how legitimation by power takes shape." Lyotard's argument against the Habermasian model of legitimation through consensus is twofold : Since language games are finite and heteromorphous it is simply wrongheaded to search for metaperscriptives to inform a quest for universal consensus; secondly, it is not consensus but parody that is the true telos of discourse. More damning to Habermas than either of these objections is the observation that his theory of legitimation situates itself wholly within a narrative of emancipation. This narrative, being a spiritual son of Hegel, also suffers from the congenital defect perpetrated by the subject upon Nature.

Although Lyotard rejects both these models, he nevertheless retains important elements of each in fashioning his own prescription for postmodern knowledge. He retains the Habermasian concern for justice and an open-ended species of performativity. His model "would respect both the desire for justice and the desire for the unknown." Imagination becomes

the key term in this renovation of prescriptive epistemology. Imagination depends upon the willingness to paralogically assert. One thus needs to request this willingness from the players in current scientific activity. "The only legitimation that can make this kind of request admissible is that it will generate ideas, in other words, new statements." Legitimation proceeds from parody.

To facilitate the request for parody Lyotard asks that all data banks be open to the public. The difficulty in this request is that it presupposes a public composed of individuals not only interested but also capable of intervening in the construction of knowledge by making imaginative, paralogical moves within the existing language games. This is perhaps the least well-founded aspect of Lyotard's presentation.

Lyotard's article, "Answering the Question : What Is Postmodernism ?," appears as an appendix to the book. The interesting move here is the illumination of the postmodern condition, along with the role played there by the imagination, by way of the aesthetic idea of the sublime. For Kant, the sublime is a product of the "conflict between the faculties of a subject, the faculty to conceive of something and the faculty to 'present' something." The sentiment of the sublime is altogether different from the judgment of taste, which depends on the false presentiment of consensus. The sublime sentiment "takes place .. when the imagination fails to present an object which might, if only in principle,

come to match a concept." Modernist art which embodies an aesthetic of the sublime, gives existence to the unrepresentable as "fact". A postmodernist aesthetic of the sublime would go beyond a similarly inspired modernist aesthetic by denying itself what Lyotard calls the "solace" provided by the redundant consistency of form found in modernist works. Avoiding this recourse to a form that stultifies by presenting itself not as the imaginable but as the real, postmodern works of art realize that, "it is our business not to supply reality but to invent allusions to the consivable which cannot be presented."

The form of this book would have benefited greatly from an incorporation of the aesthetic arguments found in the appendix (which are quite strongly rooted in the aesthetic theory of Adorno) into the provocative analyses presented in this earlier sections. Had Lyotard concentrated his energies on an analysis of the modernist or postmodernist artwork, as both symptom and cipher of the reproduction of social life, the bite and cut of his commentary would have reached deeper. Such an analysis might have better equipped Lyotard to confront Habermas's aesthetic ideas (especially since this is an area of increasing concern for Habermas), rather than lead to the unfounded and casual dismissal of Habermas, on this score, or having confused the aesthetic sublime with Freudian sublimation.

The danger provoked by this particular limitation is ably demonstrated in Jameson's foreword to the text. Jameson shows that

in the end, Lyotard's true desire is, like Habermas's for a situation or "condition" practically indiscernible from that of critical high modernism.

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Sehdev Kumar. *The Lotus in the Stone: An Allegory for Explorations in Dreams & Consciousness*. Published simultaneously by Alpha & Omega Books, Canada and Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi. 1984. pp. 204. Rs. 195. Illustrated.

The Italian word *dilettante* means one who takes delight in something. What characterises the dilettante is his delight in the preliminary nature of his never-to-be-culminated understanding. The mode of enquiry of the dilettante is distinct from the technique of the more stately gentleman of scientific decorum.

The Lotus in the Stone is a work of a dilettante of mythic images whose searching intelligence never refuses to acquiesce to the chance of being taught something new at each step. As such, this unusual volume strikes one as being somewhat of a scrap-book, full of extraordinary quotations and art pieces of great thinkers and artists from all over the world; at other times, it appears as a sort of personal journal; still at others, it presents poignant and provocative thoughts in a most refreshing and original manner. All together, *The Lotus* is a delightful work of considerable depth and elegance.

The questions that this book raises are at once simple and formidable: What is

consciousness ? How does it express itself in various elements in nature and human artifacts ? Does it exist only at one level, or are there lower and higher levels of consciousness ? And then, most crucially, how do we seek answers to these questions and attain other levels of consciousness, if there are any ?

In art, these questions have found many kinds of expressions over the centuries. But today they are also engaging the attention of thinkers in other fields; in neurology, molecular biology, particle physics, mysticism, psychology. Indeed these questions are such that they cannot be explored in one academic area alone; they demand a wholistic approach in which the observer himself become the most important subject of study. As the great physicist Niels Bohr put it :

For a parallel to the lessons of atomic theory. We must turn to kinds of epistemological problems with which already the thinkers like the Buddha and Lao Tzu have been confronted, when trying to harmonize our position as spectators and actors in the great drama of existence.

In *The Lotus*, Professor Kumar observes the same epistemological problem in a more contemporary and existential idiom :

All explorations of consciousness require us to knock at many doors : of reason and imagination, of the real and the surreal of the mechanists and the mystics. But the ultimate knock would have to be at the locked doors of our own beings; the real meaning answers

will emerge only from the depths of our own ocean of consciousness.

Kumar sets out to explore the nature of consciousness through an allegory, by telling afresh and uniquely the story of Manu, the Primal Man of Indian mythology. Kumar's Manu, however, is a 'modern' man who stands at the threshold of the East and the West, of science and spirit, of ignorance and knowledge. By constantly grappling with myriad facets of life with suffering and humiliation, poverty and violence, arrogance and destruction—Manu's seeking becomes an allegory of a pilgrim in search of his true self. In prose, that often verges on the poetic, Human expresses it thus :

The true evolution of man is to what he is—a Man. No more. No less. The other creatures in the universe seem not to ask about themselves and wonder who they are. They are what they are. But man alone questions; "Who am I?" This is at once his glory and his torment

"The nature of a rose is to emit fragrance," Manu thought. "The nature of the sun is to radiate. The nature of the dog is to be a dog. Then what is the nature of man?"

In literature, allegories are a difficult genre, because the philosophical questions that guide their structures, tend to make them somewhat pedantic. *The Lotus* avoids this with delicacy and with good deal of craftsmanship. The works that strike one as the closest parallels to *The Lotus* are Albert Camus' *Myth of Sisyphus*, Herman Hesse's *Siddhartha* and

Rene Daumal's *Mount Analogue*. Yet *The Lotus*, at various levels, is a more complex and richer work. Like Joseph Campbell's *Mythic Image*, it presents the allegory of Manu with an enchanting set of visual images drawn from various sources. The use of these images—many of them without any direct reference in the text—and numerous poems and thoughts that appear through out the book, make *The Lotus* truly a work of a dilettante, meant to initiate a dialogue, a reflection, an enquiry. There is no attempt here to anatomize or classify various academic studies in the field of consciousness. At places, there are occasional discussions about evolution, about poetry, and about the nature of suffering. But they too are all inter-woven as an integral part of the allegory. I have called Kumar's work as that of a dilettante, for what comes across most clearly in *The Lotus* is a sense of delight. This sense—for too rare in scholarly writing—has set free an unmistakable creative spirit in Kumar. He tells Greek and Indian myths, uses parables and metaphors, narrates dreams and fantasies, and employs ideas and images from every where. Sometimes, in fact, the richness of its pattern makes one a little dizzy; it is not unlike entering the Minakshi Temple at Madurai. Kumar has asked some eternal questions afresh. These are not questions that can be answered once, and for all. He has suggested, here and there, how these questions may be made lucid, and how the answers one formulates may be kept free of dogma—whether of science or of religions. As the famous Indologist Heinrich Zimmer said

it "a cupped handful of the fresh waters of life is sweeter than a whole reservoir of dogma, piped and guaranteed."

The Lotus is a most admirable attempt at providing "a cupped handful of the fresh waters of life."

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M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, (Trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist) (University of Texas Press : Austin, 1981, pp. 444.)

Just after the death of Bakhtin in 1975, a collection of some of his important essays was published under the title, *Questions of Literature and Aesthetics*. Out of them Michael Holquist selects four essays to make them into the present book. The four essays in this book are united by their concern with the poetics of the novel. The reader finds himself grappling with more and more difficult ideas as he moves from one essay to the next.

In the first essay Bakhtin contrasts the novel with the other genres. According to him it is the semantic open-endedness and a contact with the incomplete reality that distinguish the novel from the other genres that are static. The developing nature of the novel enables it to develop as a process. Bakhtin's discussion here of the three-dimensionality and multilingual consciousness of the novel foreshadows the more complex internal dialogism of the novel explained in the last essay. The novel, Bakhtin would say, stands in a parodic

relationship to the other genres unmasking the traditionalism of their form.

Out of the other genres the author chooses epic to be compared with novel. His choice is probably guided by the traditional connection between the epic and the novel. He sees a lot of difference between the two forms. The absolute past of the epic is walled off from the subsequent times in which the narrator and the readers exist as opposed to the novel's relation to the contemporary reality. The element of laughter in the novel, which traces its roots in the folklore, distinguishes the novel from the epic. It is this laughter, together with the search for a new point of view, that threatens to destroy epic, the embodiment of a unitary experience, a form which demands a single and "pious attitude towards itself." Through the use of laughter the novel shows man ceasing "to coincide with himself" whereas the epic presents the appearance and actions of the individual "on a single plane".

In the second essay Bakhtin discovers the seeds of the novel in the familiar speech of the folkloric and low literary genres where parody played an important role. But in ancient times, the parodic-travesty, he records, was without a form. It was nothing more than ridiculing another's language and another's direct discourse. The parodic-travesty forms matured into the novel by their capacity to create a distance between languages and reality, an indispensable condition for the realistic kind of discourse, and by their potential for accommodating polyglossia which completely liberates consciousness from the

power of its own language and its own myth of language. Laughter and polyglossia had anticipated the novelistic discourse of modern times. The novelistic word was born and developed not out of a mere literary struggle of abstract world views but in a very complex and long struggle of cultures and languages. A modern student of novel could feel that Bakhtin stretches the concept of the novel too far. But the fact is, though other qualities creep into this genre and assume importance in course of time, there is an awareness of an alien language flowing through a particular kind of literature down the ages and acting as its organizing principle, on the basis of which Bakhtin charts the genealogy of the novel.

In the third essay Bakhtin makes a chromotopic analysis of the ancestors of the novel and figures out in them the changing image of man, the pluralisation, abstraction and privatisation of his experiences. He finds in the Greek Romance a faith in the indestructible power of man against nature and against all human forces. This is conveyed through an "extra-temporal hiatus", during which the leading character remains unchanged, "between two moments of real time sequence." In the adventure novel of everyday life unlike in the Greek Romance there is an idea of growth. But it is wrapped in a "mythological sheath" of metamorphosis. It consists of a series of crisis and rebirth instead of an evolution. This kind of novel deals with private life but only through overhearing and eavesdropping while discussing the ancient biography and

autobiography Bakhtin talks of the exteriority of human image in the classical art and literature and the gradual breaking down of the public wholeness of the individual and the human image becoming multi-layered in the subsequent forms of autobiography. According to him folklore is an endless source of realism for literature, specially the novel. But the folkloric realism demands space and time for the full realization of an individual in contrast with the metaphoric system of ideals in literature at a later stage.

In the last essay Bakhtin stresses the need for any study of verbal art to unite the formal and the ideological approach. His concept of heteroglossia on the novelistic discourse affirms the ideological colouring of language. He conceives language not as a system of grammatical categories but as ideologically saturated, as a world view. This requires him to reject the traditional concept of stylistics as a private craftsmanship. According to him the stylistic profile of the word is shaped by an interaction of the novelistic discourse with the heteroglossia. His idea of stylistics is invested with a dialogue. Bakhtin makes a clear distinction between the poetic and the novelistic discourse. In the novelistic discourse the word forms a concept of its own object in a dialogic interaction with an alien word that is already in the object. Born in an atmosphere of the already spoken the word is determined at the same time by the answering word, by what is yet to be said. The opposing environment of the alien

word presents itself to the speaker in the consciousness of the listener.

The integration of the formal and the ideological approach facilitates Bakhtin's making a profound statement on the philosophy of language through the poetics of the novel. Modern linguistic and literary studies can ignore this work of Bakhtin, but at a great cost.

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Richard Shusterman : *The Object of Literary Criticism*; Rodolphi; Amsterdam, 1984. (237 pp)

The book grows from Shusterman's Oxford doctoral thesis; it consists of a brief preface and seven chapters. In the first chapter, Shusterman attempts to locate the literary work of art within the general canon of art. In particular he wishes to stress the anomalous character of literature by emphasising how traditional categorisations of art—for example, visual vs. performing—have no grip vis a vis. literary works of art. Against those (he cites Urmson and Mrs. Smith) who argue that literary works are a kind of silent or private performance, Shusterman urges persuasively that this view is simply incompatible with the phenomenology of the literary experience. If literature has this anomalous nature, then, we need to understand its character, and also the conditions under which we are and those under which we are not confronting the same work of literature again. These topics, ontological status and identity, take up two

following chapters. But first, in Chapter Two, Shusterman attempts to relate the four problems that he will consider—identity, ontological status, interpretation and evaluation—to show how a proper understanding of one depends on a proper understanding of the others.

To consider these issues in pairs, identity and ontological status are clearly related. At its simplest, if I wish to count the number of works of literature in a particular room, I need to know both what a work of literature is, so that I know whether to count the three volumes of my copy of Proust's *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* as three works or one work, and also I need to decide or sort out whether there are two works or one when I have two copies of James Joyce's *Ulysses* on my shelf. Shusterman's own argument, in essence this counting one. Similarly, questions of interpretation are clearly related to questions of evaluation. I need to have interpreted the work before I can begin evaluating it—or so it seems. Moreover, without the application of some of the evaluative categories to my particular work it may be difficult, perhaps even impossible, to begin interpretation of it. Questions of evaluation and interpretation on the one hand, and questions of ontology and identity on the other are clearly related.

The main thrust of Shusterman's work, is towards a radical pluralism. His general strategy is to distinguish a number of opposing positions in the works of philosophers, and then to argue that all of these strategies embody something right about

their subject matter, but err in taking that insight to excess. Thus the correct view, in Shusterman's opinion, is a kind of pluralism which embraces the appropriateness of *some* cases of all these philosophical insights, but denies the Universal applicability to all cases of any one of them.

The philosophers concerned would have been very dissatisfied to find their comments integrated into some kind of pluralism. What kind of objections can we imagine them making? In general Shusterman has little to say about this. He seems to think that his pluralism can accommodate this puzzling variety of apparently contradicting views. In particular, the strength of his argument seems to rest in those examples, for if critics genuinely do proceed in these different ways, then presumably any philosophers who have urged that they cannot or should not are somehow mistaken. But here we may strike a note of caution which perhaps Shusterman does not. For a major tradition in Anglo-American analytical philosophy has drawn a distinction between grammatical form and logical form: that is to say, between what appears to be going on in sentences (roughly) and what is *actually* going on. Thus one might expect the philosophers of these different persuasions to urge that Shusterman's critical examples, while superficially fitting the models they oppose, are—at some more profound level of analysis—entirely compatible with their own preferred models. I am not for a moment suggesting that this is right. But certainly it

is not a view which Shusterman takes very seriously. No doubt this is in part due to his rejection of the grammatical form/logical form distinction; or anyway, his desire not to take it very seriously, while that decision seems to me entirely correct, I can imagine that it will not sit too happily with other writers on philosophical aesthetics. If Shusterman offers no elaborated response to such criticism, it is clear that he wishes to take very seriously another kind of criticism of his pluralism. Thus he attempts to defend it from objections of a kind generally levelled against relativistic views: that it makes the particular 'games' played by critics all equally adequate or appropriate. Shusterman offers one straightforward reply, and one slightly more puzzling one. The puzzling reply is that "Even critics must accept that much of their evaluative statement consists not of accurate description but of motivated urging and institutional rendering" (p. 211). He distinguishes between questions internal to criticism made by critics, and those presented from some 'external' viewpoint. The first of these are clearly areas where one can be right and wrong, where one can contrast effective or appropriate ways of proceeding with others. As to the other kind of question, the external question which seeks to find a complete account of criticism, and hence to suggest that one's view of criticism is better or more appropriate (or) than some other, Shusterman's view is uncompromising, Such an 'external' view is impossible. Any aesthetician who attempts it is simply confused.

In the concluding chapter dealing with the question whether criticism is science or art Shusterman's overall conclusion is that this train of thought is misguided in two ways. First, it does not properly understand the nature of science but second, it has an over-admiration for certain values traditionally associated with science. That is to say, that only by being scientific can criticism become acknowledged as valuable. Here Shusterman has two comments. He thinks that the personal character of critical judgement is demonstrably as an essential rather than peripheral feature of criticism' and hence that Frye's model of a personal judgement-free criticism is a misconceived one; but also, that this does nothing to undermine the objectivity of criticism. Finally, he thinks the issue something of a tempest in a teacup. Careful analysis will allow us to see that the values from some scientific criticism are entirely inappropriate to the criticism of literature: those which undermine (if they do) the role of personal judgement in literary criticism are clearly misplaced. On the other hand, a proper understanding of criticism, and in particular an understanding of the essential plurality of critical methods and procedures, allows the retention of many of the supposed virtues of science for criticism. Notice how this issue becomes, in Shusterman's treatment, a way of reaffirming the pluralism he has advocated throughout the rest of the book. The objection to criticism implicit in the claim that it is unscientific amounts to an assertion of some kind of inchoate character, where various methods,

procedures, models and so on, each in conflict with the others, are yet not open to the kind of evaluation that would decide in favour of one and against those others. But Shusterman wishes to urge that pluralism is "a healthy asset" (p. 224) of criticism rather than a reason for objection to it; and this is so because it is "a natural and proper response to the complexity of the literary object and the variety of critical aims" (p. 224). That is to say, Shusterman returns us, at the end of the book, to the topic he had set up at the beginning : we need to understand the object of literary

criticism, and when we do that, we realise that there are a plethora of such purposes for literary criticisms, at different times and places, and among different schools; and moreover that the object of literary criticism, the literary work of art, is itself a complex and anomalous one which needs at one time to be treated in one way, and at another time in some other way. the book is obviously Valuable for the aestheticians and literary theorists.

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