

Stephen Halliwell, *The Aesthetics of Mimesis: Ancient Texts and Modern Problems*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002, pp.424 (Paperback); Andrew Ford, *The Origins of Criticism: Literary Culture and Poetic Theory in Classical Greece*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002, pp.356 (Hardbound).

Both the books published in the same year are authored by two eminently qualified scholars who teach Greek and Classics at St. Andrews University in Scotland and Princeton University in the United States, respectively. Halliwell has translated Aristotle's *Poetics* for the new Loeb Classical Library as also portions of Plato's *Republic* and plays by Aristophanes. Ford has also authored on Homer's epic poetry and other aspects of Greek literature and literary history. Both have touched the same area of knowledge, i.e., philosophy of criticism in ancient Greece in its historical perspectives as the titles of the books suggest themselves. Both are exhaustive, renovative and speculative, well-read in the classics themselves and in their modern responses and interpretations. Both the authors are also aware of each other's scholarship as evident from the bibliographies. It is therefore profitable to read both the books together. Halliwell focuses on the concept of *mimesis* in Greek critical culture, the concept that lies at the core of the entire history of Western aesthetics of the representational arts. Ford probes into the very concept of criticism as it was understood by the ancient Greeks who are the founders of this discipline in the entire history of Western literary culture where *mimesis* forms a core idea. Both the books therefore are works in history of ideas.

But Ford claims that his book is a complement to the history-of-ideas approach by understanding criticism as a "social activity", and this social activity started in the history of Western (Greek) literary culture as early as the pre-literary era in comic play displayed in *Frogs* by Aristophanes in 405 B.C.—criticism was originally a public response to a song on occasions and in a context with theoretical implications. Secondly, the author claims that the present study also bridges the common division of Greek criticism into pre- and post-Platonic periods. Critical practices started from the end of archaic age in the late sixth century to the rise of poetics in the late fourth when criticism became an autonomous self-conscious discipline with its own principles and methods. Rather than presenting the rich and complex views of Plato and Aristotle, Ford pinpoints their treatments of poetry as they differed from previous approaches. On the other hand, he demonstrates how the dramatists like Aristophanes circulated different critical ideas and terms such as "poetry", "metaphor", "meter", "theory", "elegiac", "epic", "tragedy" including even the word "criticism"/ "critics" (*Kritikoi*) itself. Since the break-up of New Criticism in the 1960s the critical war, the interdisciplinarity of literary criticism along with the public awareness of and response to the traditional education in literature and social and institutional values of literary theory have all been, according to Ford, the true features of the Greek literary criticism its origin in the archaic period till the 4th century B.C.

After a definitional set-up in the introduction the author presents, in four parts, a systematic chronological account of the rise and growth of literary criticism in different forms in different phases such as table talk, symposium, allegorical interpretation of epic, song, the origins of the word "poet", materialist poetics, politics of democracy and literary culture, theories of prose and poetry, literary genres and systems, and finally the rise of the critic in poetic contexts from Homer to Aristotle.

Ford writes: "Criticism may have no discernible beginning, but it does have a history, and this book is dedicated to tracing how the tradition of Western talk about stories, songs, and plays was crucially changed in Greece between the end of the sixth and the fourth century B.C." This development or the course of change is understood by Ford as "the origins of criticism". The success of this Greek origin of criticism lies in its admiration "for works that many style to context, that exhibit harmony, proportion, and appropriate ornament in effecting a special emotional and cognitive response in the audience—may seem to be valid in all periods". When Ford defines criticism in the Greek context he means a public act of praise or blame upon a performance of song, and

obviously the criteria of praise and blame depend upon the characteristics cited above. Ford distinguishes poetic theory or *poetics* from criticism in so far as poetics is a self-conscious attempt to offer systematic accounts of the nature of poetry in the most scientific terms available. Nevertheless criticism and poetics are interrelated because the nature of poetry, in its positive aspect, refers to the speech-making (*muthos*) that must evoke "praise" in the audience.

Ford's voluminous and meticulous probe into the origins of Greek literary criticism illuminates, it seems, its central point that whatever changes have occurred during the last two millennia in the entire course of Western criticism had, in fact, occurred archetypally, as it were, during the origin and growth of the Greek criticism as it is handled and demonstrated by him. The insight and efforts are themselves epic in their depth and dimension though not without a reservation that the advancement of ideas during the post-Greek cultural tradition has sufficiently reshaped and sophisticated our views of literature, literary studies, methodology and techniques of interpretation and criticism despite our profound obligations to the Greek masters. We cannot agree that the current social and institutional approaches to literary studies originated in the Greek culture. When Aristotle omits the linguistic issues in *Poetics* deliberately stating that these are rhetorically relevant, not of literary relevance, it is a great question how to accommodate the structuralist view of fiction's linguistic character into the Greek critical spectrum, apart from many other such innovations in the contemporary criticism.

Stephen Halliwell's book aims at (1) undertaking the searching examination of the ancient roots of the concept of *mimesis* that lies in the very core of the entire history of Western Aesthetics in understanding and evaluating artworks—from the "formative approaches of Plato and Aristotle to the innovative treatment of *mimesis* by the Neo-Platonists of late antiquity", (2) elucidating "the complex legacy bestowed on Aesthetics from the Renaissance to the twentieth century by mimeticist ways of thinking". Obviously, his approach and methodology are different from those of Eric Auerbach whose aim was to present the modes of representation of reality in different genres of Western literature of different periods of different cultures. Auerbach did not probe into the philosophical or theoretical issues of the concept of *mimesis* itself, and Halliwell feels relieved that he does not compete with Auerbach's scholarship particularly in this regard. But he is inevitably in competition with others—after McKeon's seminal essay, Goran Sorbom of Uppsala, Sweden and Ananta Sukla of India carried on extensive researches during the late nineteen sixties and seventies to explore the root of *Mimesis* that lies in the very core of the Western theories of art. Halliwell is aware of Sorbom's 1966 work only, not of his several later works where he demonstrates that *Mimesis* is not a theoretical concept: "Theory of imitation as we find it in ancient texts is not, however, a theory of art, it is a theory of pictorial representation. The ancient theory of imitation was never used to distinguish between fine arts and their products and other human skills and artifacts. The basic distinction for the ancient theory of imitation was that between pictures and real things." (1999) Sorbom's wise observations should have been taken into consideration by Halliwell. Besides, Ananta Sukla in his 1977 book, *The Concept of Imitation in Greek and Indian Aesthetics* has traced the root of the concept far beyond Homer—in the Micenaean culture. His cross-cultural interpretation of the concept of imitation has not yet been countered. Ananta Sukla has clarified sufficiently the theoretical differences between the two distinct critical concepts "mimesis" and "representation" in his introduction to *Art and Representation* (2001) whereas Halliwell has confusingly identified these two concepts. He writes about the achievement of his book: "the book has a two-way perspective: it looks at antiquity from a view point conscious of the later developments of mimetic theory; and it seeks to reinterpret certain features of those developments with a better informed awareness of the complexity of ancient ideas than is to be found in most of the existing literature in the subject."

Halliwell's study of the conceptual diversities in Platonic *mimesis*, his comment that in Plato's view tragedy is a rival to philosophy in viewing the core of human life as a wholesome suffering, his observation of the critical complexities of the "mirror" image in the *Republic 10* are all deeply insightful. So also is his study of the Aristotelian *mimesis* that may rightly claim to have superseded many of the contemporary comments in the area concerned. Similarly, his views of the post-Aristotelian *mimesis* in the medieval and Renaissance periods are also commendable. The light he has thrown on *mimesis* (as also I have done in 2001) from the current postmodern perspectives of Derrida and Barthes proves the views of Alan Tormey (1971) that *Mimesis* was displaced by Representation that was displaced again by Expression appears simply superficial. Halliwell still provokes thinking on *mimesis* by the future generation of genuine scholarship.

Subhakanta Behera, *Construction of an Identity Discourse: Oriya Literature and the Jagannath Cult (1866-1936)*, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 2002, pp. xviii + 244.

Subhakanta Behera has been probing into the "Oriya cultural identity for quite a considerable time culminating probably in his Oxford D. Phil. Dissertation *Oriya Literature and the Jagannath Cult 1866-1936: Quest for Identity*" that forms the foundation of the book under review. Besides, Behera has also published a number of essays in Oriya on the subject concerned collected recently in an Oriya title, *Oriya Atmapariciti: Jijnasa O Samiksa*, Cuttack: Granthamandira, 2002, pp.101. In all these writings Behera exhibits his erudite and perceptive inquiries that signify sincere efforts of a thinker in concentrating appropriately on a subject deserving most of its timely attention.

Cultural identity has been a pivot of intellectual activities during the last three decades of the last century. The area of this discipline is as overlapping as controversial covering almost all the branches of knowledge in humanities and social sciences. The issue calls into coordination and cross-examination several seminal topics and concepts such as nationalism, nation-state relationship, logic of identity and personal identity. Everything is what it is and not another thing, originally a Socratic idea that found its modern shape in Leibniz's definition of the identity of indiscernibles—if A and B have exactly the same properties, then they are identical. The issue of personal identity, therefore, implies that if a person has a particular group of qualities at a time or in course of time then the person continues to be the same. The possibility of such continuity has long ago been challenged by the Greek and Indian philosophers—Heraclitus and the Buddhists. In modern era the issue has been raised by Descartes, Locke, Hume and Kant. When Descartes proposed that the sameness of a person might be contained in the sameness of underlying mental substance (or consciousness—*cogito*: I think therefore I am/exist). Locke recognizes personal identity (or unity of consciousness) as present in (or due to) the memory of past actions. Whereas Descartes and Locke are both in a circular position, Hume considers personal identity as a fiction (like that of a nation or club or any organization, society, community, committee whose existence through time is not an all-or-nothing affair). Hume's contemporary disciple is obviously Benedict Anderson (*Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. edn. 1991). The existentialist thinkers who prefix existence to essence suspect the identity of the single person at a time or through time—one can imagine oneself as having been or becoming different—one's brain changing either in its matter or in its function while it goes on thinking and experiencing. Franz Kafka's well known story "Metamorphosis" illustrates such a problem of personal identity.

With this philosophical background the issue of cultural identity appears to be much more critical than ever thought to be. Although nation and culture are not identical concepts they share a common relationship among language, territory and myth. From its Latin root *nationem* till date the conceptual dimension of the word nation has bewilderingly expanded, and the triadic criteria of a nation fail to define nations like India, Switzerland and Belgium. In India, where several nation-states enjoy or are identified by their linguistic independence/privilege one can think of their "subcultures" (rather than "culture") under a single banner of national culture—to follow the key distinction made by Geoffrey Hartman between a generality and a particular (*The Factual Question of Culture*, 1997), whereas Raymond Williams distinguishes between two generalities, the arts and the whole way of life. Whereas for Williams society still remained a generality or a commonality, for Hartman it has already become a multicultural plurality of particulars.

Viewing from all these points it is safe to understand Oriya culture as a sub-culture under the national culture of India—this sub-culture being identified by its linguistic territory that determines the consciousness of a group of people that speaks/uses Oriya language as the medium of verbal communication. Obviously, as already proposed by Bhartrhari, it is the language that constructs the experience of a people. Hence it is always the linguistic territory that should determine the geographical territory, although politics always forces the reversal of this truth as evident in the courses of history.

Now Behera traces the rise of Oriya (sub) culture during the latter Ganga Dynasty out of which Śāralā emerges as the most important literary leader to convert the Sanskrit *Mahābhārata* into an Oriya one. It is really remarkable, we wholesomely agree with Behera that culture is not an essence of a people, rather signifies the existence of a people. In its construction of the entire range of institutions, artifacts and (religion and others) practices culture defines a people in making up their symbolic universe. This is how Ernst Cassirer has defined man as *homo symbolicus*. In the literary works since Śāralā, the landscape of Orissa is experienced more in terms of its linguistic territory that determines its geography. Ignoring the existentialist rejection of any identity of a being, either a person or a community, judging either from inside or from outside, we agree with Behera that since Śāralā till the formation of the modern nation-state there has been a continuous construction of a (sub) culture that is called Oriya based on literary and religious practices, although simultaneously we must acknowledge the Kalinga-culture (not sub-culture) long before the Gangas, during the time of Aśoka identified by the bravery of its people. The proverbial Sanskrit expression "Kalinga Sāhasika" (Kalingas are courageous) cited by Visvanatha Kaviraja (later Ganga-14th century AD) as an illustration of *lakṣana* is to be duly acknowledged. Military skill, patriotism are no less cultural values than the arts and religious activities. Behera's meticulous study omits two other cultural identities of Orissa—the pictorial and the sculptural. The omission might be due to various reasons. His approach to the centrality of Lord Jagannath is noteworthy. The deity has functioned both centrifugally and centripetally.

Apart from appreciating the great merit of the work accomplished by Behera, we consider his theoretical chapter rather poor in view of the immense growth of literature on the subject of nationalism and the location of culture and cultural identity. Although he rejects the essentialist view of culture or cultural identity (and rightly he does so) he believes in *essential* (cultural) attributes (p. 1). Even if the word 'common' is used for 'essential', these common features are also relative changing in course of its growth and progress. Cohn's categorization of India into four regions such as historical, linguistic, cultural and socio-structural, as Behera refers to, is confusing and needs reconsideration. However, the first chapter might be revised in the second edition.

Darius Cooper, *The Cinema of Satyajit Ray: Between Tradition and Modernity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. XI + 260.

I was introduced to Satyajit Ray's film world in 1963 by my friend Ajay Sengupta who also introduced me to Bengali literature. In a local cinema hall of Bhadrak my native place (now a district headquarters of Orissa) we visited the film *Teen Kanya* (1961) in a matinee show of Kailash Talkies adjacent to Bhadrak Railway Station. That was a significant event in my life which had directed my attention to aesthetic aspects of Indian cinema. Since then I had been a regular visitor to the pictures by a group of Bengali film directors who brought Copernican revolution in the cinema-culture of India rich in its aesthetic tradition that started as early as the 4th century B.C. with Bharata. Along with Ray other film-makers who attracted my attention are Tapan Sinha, Ajay Kar, Ritwik Ghatak, Mrinal Sen and Parthpratima Chaudhuri. The 1960s were the heyday of Bengali cinema, and it was during this time that coincidentally I became intimate with Bengali culture as a whole while pursuing my academic career at Jadavpur University. I remember how eagerly I was waiting for the release of Ray's film almost regularly during the Puja (autumnal Durga festival) every year simultaneously in three cinema halls of Calcutta – my favourite hall being Prachi adjacent to the Sealdah Railway Station. Many of the Ray films till his *Nayak* were produced by R.D. Bansal. Ray's *Charulata* (1964) and Sinha's *Atithi* (Guest) were perhaps simultaneously released, both adopting Tagore's literary sensations of different forms. I might confidently comment that from aesthetic point of view both were on par. Notwithstanding Ray's distinction, Sinha has several times been aesthetically equal to Ray whereas Ghatak and Sen have been advocates of different modernist and anti-modernist Western intellectual movements. Ray and Sen have remained always bias free artists with their individual focuses on different aspects of social events in contemporary Bengal (Indian) – Ray on the realist aspects, Sinha on the moral one.

Starting from *Pather Panchali* to *Agantuk* (which has a distinct moral message) Ray has almost always remained a realist though vigorously exploiting his own symbolic vision of human life in both experiencing

and expressing characters, emotions, relationship with a quest for meaning of human life itself. But Ray has never been an absurdist. He (Sinha as well) believes in both Aristotle and Bharata – in the significance of plot and expression of emotion in the drama (cinema). Therefore, instead of texturing any story by himself, he has always adopted the powerful plots woven by the most successful Bengali novelists and story writers such as Bibhutibhusan Bandopadhyay, Rabindranath Tagore, Sunil Gangopadhyay and Sankar. He started the revolution with Bibhuti Bandopadhyay's *Apu Trilogy*, and earned the Gold Bear for the same author's *Ashani Sanket*. Similarly, outside Bengali literature he chooses Prem Chand only (*Sarranj Ke Khilari* and *Sadgati*) for his plot construction that suits his aim and ambition for depicting the fall of feudal luxury and the critics of castism. At the same time Ray is fully conscious of the Indian conception of drama and literature as phenomena or forms of artistic exercise that express *Rasa*. Therefore, Ray's camera focuses the faces of the characters signifying his strategy of generating *rasa* through the *sattvika abhinaya* mostly. Saumitra Chatterjee is not a handsome actor in comparison with Uttam Kumar. But Ray chooses Saumitra, particularly for his face that is gifted with *sattvika abhinaya* – among physical, linguistic, visual and mental, Ray emphasizes the last one. Of course the visual aspect of his films is extremely significant as is the auditory one. The sight of a train in *Pather Panchali* and the rattling of the train at midnight in *Kapuris* are equally important for generating the desired *rasas*.

In the book under review Cooper writes five chapters on Ray's films each chapter focusing on a distinct aspect of a group of films: the first chapter on *rasa* in *Apu trilogy* and *Jalsaghar*, the second on the issue of problems of the Hindu (Bengali) woman in *Charulata*, *Ghare Baire*, *Teen Kanya*, the third on the crisis of man in contemporary India (Bengal), the fourth on the colonial issues in *Sarranj Ke Khilari* which he understands as Ray's political vision of the doubly colonized. In the final chapter Cooper highlights the linguistic aspects of Ray's film – the language of *Bhadralok* culture. The ironic perspective of this aspect of Ray is that he uses this language to censure this language. One cannot forget the irony of character's dialogue with Amal – "Dada, Kulpi Khabo?" (Brother, would you like to taste Kulpi [a kind of ice-cream]? Perhaps there is no other language in which one can express a neglected woman's crave for a male's company as well as her expression of the repressed desire for intimacy.

Cooper's aim of this study is "to situate and evaluate the cinema of Satyajit Ray from an Indian aesthetics as well as an Indian social and historical perspective", and concludes with statements "Had Ray lived to make films after *Agantuk*, he may have confirmed to dismantle contemporary *Bhadralok* culture. His last three films shouted that he had made a new beginning in disrupting the "classical" in his own oeuvre and gradually replacing it with the "marginal" – proving that Ray was not completely out of step with contemporary India, as had unfairly been claimed". Cooper's study of Ray's filmic experience in different phases of his career is undoubtedly praiseworthy, particularly for his sincerity in placing Ray in contemporary critical idiom. Cooper is not anachronistic in interpreting Ray's consciousness of such phenomena as political hegemony, feminism and colonialism in a period when these phenomena were not reflected in the critical vocabulary. But an error which strikingly appears is the question – is *rasa* generated only in the films that Cooper groups in his first chapter or in all other films as well? If *rasa* is generated, in all his films, which in fact is so, then why is he not focusing this aspect systematically? It is absolutely inappropriate to categorize Ray's films as Cooper does. It is never the fact that some films generate *rasa* whereas others deal with different social and political problems that do not generate *rasa*.

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Richard Shusterman. *Surface and Depth: Dialectics of Criticism and Culture*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York: 2002. ISBN 0-8014-3828-4

Richard Shusterman's new book is a collection of previously published essays that span the length of his philosophical career and the breadth of his research in aesthetics. Those unfamiliar with Shusterman's writings will encounter an engagingly lucid and forthright pragmatist. Those familiar with his writings might ask whether *Surface and Depth* provides any added value beyond proximity. It does so by clearly organizing the

ask whether *Surface and Depth* provides any added value beyond proximity. It does so by clearly organizing the theoretical oppositions upon which he has constructed his conception of art as *dramatization*. The different chapters of the book ground and sustain an argument that otherwise would be difficult to grasp in the form of disjointed journal publications.

The essays comprising *Surface and Depth* have been revised or rewritten for organization around the historical rift between the sensuous aesthetic surface and the search for deeper interpretive meaning. *Surface and Depth's* scope is considerable in that its three main sections ("Logics of Criticism," "Logics of Culture," and "Contemporary Reconstructions") consider the rift from the philosophical perspectives of analytic aesthetics, pragmatism, and continental philosophy. In some cases, such as the limited discussions of convention and surface property relevance, the broad range of analysis can be seen as a drawback because thorough understanding is sacrificed. This is less a criticism regarding the accomplishment of the book's objective than a statement of the desire for more. On this point, Shusterman does an effective job of directing the reader to further sources of information.

The book's first section, "Logics of Criticism," begins by charting the transition from the classical analytic philosopher's preoccupation with the immediacy of surface to the contemporary analytic philosopher's preoccupation with metaphysical. Shusterman allows us to see the internal conflicts which have marginalized analytic aesthetics within the overall practice of analytic philosophy. He also analyzes the tension between descriptive accuracy and critical reform, and between analytic and non-analytic logics of interpretation. In attempting to clarify and resolve these tensions Shusterman analyses the aesthetic theories of G.E. Moore, Beardsley, Danto, Dickie, Margolis, Dewey, Croce, Derrida, and Wittgenstein, among others. You will find compelling arguments concerning prescriptive, descriptive and performative logics of interpretive statements, the role of reasons in interpretation, and the nature and role of authorial intention. As Shusterman develops his argument for a pragmatic resolution of these tensions, it becomes clear that his thought is shaped primarily by Dewey and Wittgenstein. This section ends with an illuminating examination of the ways in which Wittgenstein changed analytic aesthetics.

The book's second section, "Logics of Culture," builds upon the conclusion of the first section, that the use and validity of one out of an acceptable plurality of interpretive logics is governed by what Shusterman calls the *principle of coherent comprehensiveness of understanding*; this principle encapsulates the pragmatic goals of an enhanced aesthetic experience and quality of life he presents in his book *Pragmatic Aesthetics*. In this section, the author analyzes the impact of culture on the schematization of thought. He begins with the distinction between *nature* and *culture*, arguing that the positions adopted by Hume and Kant contain an unrecognized cultural subtext whereby the natural uniformity of feeling resulting from universal taste or disinterestedness actually depends upon a culturally established consensus. The only argument in the book I find seriously flawed is that in which he argues in support of a socially privileging subtext in Kant's theory. The author then examines the concept of convention with respect to the *nature vs. culture* controversy, and the concept of culture as developed in the aesthetic theories of Alain Locke, Dewey, Eliot, and Adorno. Finally, Shusterman briefly analyzes the importance of the visual surface of Lewis Carroll's poem "Tale of a Mouse" and the poem "l(a)" by E.E. Cummings.

In the third section, "Contemporary Reconstructions," Shusterman presents his own formulation of pragmatism, *reconstructive-poetic pragmatism*. In doing so, he identifies the affinities with and differences between his account and those of Danto, Margolis, Rorty, Dewey, and Bourdieu. "[Reconstructive-poetic pragmatism] offers the strategies of genealogical narratives and new ways of talking that not only expose the questionable motives and sources of invariance but also contribute to new, variant linguistic practices that can improve our culture" (201). In this spirit Shusterman construes art, in a fallibilist and revisionist fashion, as *dramatization*, a vivid and intense experience that is socially contextualized or framed. The idea of art as *dramatization* integrates the aesthetic surface and the deep cultural framework by which meaning is constructed; he asks the reader to consider art as an integration of the different meanings of the phrases "to dramatise" and "to dramatize".

One weakness of *Surface and Depth* is that the pragmatic system Shusterman develops is not explicated through diverse practical application; his only two examples focus on literary art. Although he does develop a more extensive application of his pragmatism, with regard to rap music, in his book *Performing Live*, application to the visual arts is needed. Overall, *Surface and Depth* would be an effective and provocative introduction to pragmatic aesthetics for advanced aesthetics students. It provides a deep understanding of pragmatically constructed relation between philosophy and art and will serve as a marker of the future development of pragmatic aesthetics.

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