

Rupayan Mukherjee, Jaydip Sarkar (eds.)

POP
ULAR
LITERATURE

- TEXTS, CONTEXTS, CONTESTATIONS -

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Rethinking Sciences, Situations and Bamboo-groves in Ray's Science Fictions: *Guessing Who Speaks What*

Rajadipta Roy

"Arise. Heed the prophecy... Learn all the wisdom
and all the secrets of the white man. But do not follow
his vices. Be true to your people and the ancient rites."

Ngugi wa Thiong'o.

The premise of Bengali Science Fictions (henceforth abbreviated as SF), and more specifically that of Satyajit Ray's science fantasies, has long been a fiddly ground of political negotiations between the colonially surcharged discourse of western science and the subversive counter logic produced immediately against such colonial manoeuvres to let out the steam of its cultural hegemony. With such an awareness of ambivalence underpinning one's knowledgebase, it is frequently observed in the process that SF of the western canon may easily be looked at as an expression of the politico-cultural transformation that originated in European imperialism and was inspired by the ideal of a single global technological regime. Well documented for years in the contributions of such writers like Jagadish Chandra Basu (1858–1937), Hemlal Dutta (?), Jagadananda Ray (1869–1933), Rajshekhar Basu (1880–1960), Sukumar Ray (1887–1923), Hemendrakumar Roy (1888–1963), Premendra Mitra (1904–1988), Khitindra Narayan Bhattacharya (1909–1990) etc., the slow yet decisive reallocations in the specific genre of SF in Bengali literature, which was albeit a creature of imperialism and inspired by a world-view of techno-scientific empire, have gradually lead towards a paradigmatic shift in the culture of writing SF's in the hands of Satyajit Ray in the context of post-Independence nation-building of the Indian postcolony by the second half of the last century.

Any perfunctory study of the positivist philosophy of science reveals that an intricate colonial schema of normative power