

EDITOR'S NOTE

When a back date issue of any academic journal is published a little later than its timeliness, the joy of its publication is overwhelming. However, it poses some critical questions: whether could this be made theme-based, works cited by the contributors later than the publishing year, its relevance on time scale and so on. This volume could not be made thematic, as it has to be evolved based on available papers of IUC associates and a few other contributions by scholars of repute. On the other hand, it provides opportunities with changing times. It is a peer review journal with its own advantages, including style of presentation and importance in ranking system of UGC. The authors had a chance to look at their papers afresh and recent work could be cited on the topics. Some contributions therefore carry references of later years than 2011.

There are nine essays belonging to different disciplines and exploring new areas or debates within the respective discipline. Essays from political thought, philosophy, political sociology, literature review on Partition, a combination of history, art, gender and sexuality, history of ideas and community identity of Sri Vaisnavas in South India, understanding tribes through popular cultural studies, and reflection on English literary study and pedagogic issues have enriched this volume. Two book reviews, one by a philosopher and the other by a development sociologist, are included.

Mangesh revisits the famous debate between Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus, which was triggered by Francis Jeanson's carping review of the latter's book on political philosophy, *The Rebel* (1951). He gives an overview of the debate which addressed a wide range of issues including the meaning of history, the nature of revolution, as well as the relationship between freedom and necessity. Camus objected to Jeanson's and Sartre's uncritical attitude towards the pronouncements of Hegel and Marx. He condemned the duo's failure to decipher the Hegelian roots of communist cynicism, their refusal to acknowledge the unraveling of the Marxist prognosis and the authoritarian character of the USSR, as also their cavalier censure of all non-Marxist revolutionary traditions. In turn, his two detractors accused Camus of theoretical naiveness, indifference to history, as

well as complicity with capitalism and imperialism. The sociologist Raymond Aron was one of the prominent contemporaries who responded to the controversy. He found Camus lacking in philosophical rigour; but endorsed the latter's critique of communism. Mangesh draws on the relevant writings of Maurice Merleau-Ponty to illuminate the issues raised by this debate. He points out that the philosopher eventually launched a formidable attack on the revolutionary romanticism of Sartre and Marx, which resonated with many key arguments advanced in *The Rebel*. Thus, the initially discordant positions of Camus and Merleau-Ponty converged and opened up new horizons of thought.

Ajay explores systems and lifeworlds from Habermas as well as major trends of classical Indian philosophy traditions including Bhartṛhari, mīmāṃsā and Nyāyas for words and its meaning, language and knowledge and the objects. Our world exists and is expressed through language, as language is a window to the world; the world has an essential structure as a language has. If we were to ask what could have come first, the intention to speak or the language with its predefined structure, we are more likely to believe that it is the latter. But as soon as we have decided upon priority of language over intention to speak, we have another set of questions emerging from the other end. Further, purity of linguistic understanding along with the uninterrupted flow of tradition where it has to be located, leads to many questions and each tradition and philosophical thought approaches and answers the quest differently.

Kanad looks at *Rāmāyaṇa* as a tale of devoted companionship and unfair separation between couples. *Rāmakathā* or the story of Rāma, one of the most notable South Asian traditions, has different versions including Vālmīki, Kālidāsa, Bhavabhūti, Ānanda, Kampan, poet of the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*, Kṛtibāsa, Tulsīdās and many more. Scholars consider different accounts of Rāma's life equally valid and many literati, from Bhavabhūti to Rabindranath, have held different opinions about persons, situations and their doings. The article focuses on three couples — Rāma-Sītā, *krauñca* (crane-couple) and Daśaratha-Kaikeyī — and encompasses different views and interpretations of the persons and situations. He refers to 'Uttarakāṇḍa' after studying different writers' versions and argues that Vālmīki had little role to play in this gross alteration of his message. Rāma is the eye-candy of normative orthodoxy and the political right wing, and the villain in the eyes of the gender-sensitive writers, while Sītā is the ideal submissive woman or the symbol of the gender-oppressed yet strong-willed women. The association of

krauñca with Rāma-Sītā and interpretation of their relationship varies with different poets and similarly for Daśaratha-Kaikeyī and their personalities. Daśaratha's passion for Kaikeyī surfaces time and again and Kaikeyī's villainy is innovated by Vālmiki to emphasise the couple's love and companionship.

Gitika views all intellectual practice at the crossroads of traditions of thought and contemporary realities or discursively ordered. In this context, she elucidates the discursive space of political sociology in India through Frederick George Bailey's work in Orissa in post-colonial India. She has explained how Bailey worked with a very specific understanding of 'politics', as "orderly competition"; how the different arenas, such as the State, the political constituencies and the villages are connected through interaction without essentializing a particular style or idiom of Indian politics; interaction of traditional and modern political institutions based on analysis of political behaviour and processual components into political analysis to challenge the formalism of structuralist paradigms; and analysis of structure and agency. This kind of analysis has thrown light in understanding the state through the everyday, routinized practices through which individuals and groups in society make sense of the state and its institutions; and three levels of explanations of political activity, viz. cultural, structural, and external and their complementarity and conflicts in given arenas. He demonstrated that different norms constituting the different systems — a tribe, caste, or nation — are intertwined in actual social situations, and disputes arising in one system may be waged in terms of another as well as role of traditional leadership and chiefs, and intermediaries to be looked into.

Baisali reviews the role of creative literature on Partition vis-à-vis government or what institutionalised documentation or historical analysis intends to achieve, as it has a wider canvas and imaginative liberty that captures diverse themes and perspectives, from simple to complex ones. She has broadly categorised different tales on Partition into two categories, one of short fiction as the immediate response to Partition and the other that looks at Partition in retrospect and valorises survival strategies and opines that majority of the stories fall into the first category. Yet, a time like Partition helps in revealing the best as well as the worst qualities in an individual; she also elevates Partition from a merely physical experience to a metaphorical one by insinuating discussion on Hindu and Muslim nationalism. Women's experience during Partition has mostly remained unspoken and ill-documented through this

turbulent period and beyond. Bengali Partition tales constitute a remarkable but little-discussed segment of narratives, and strike a distinct note in representing the emotional/psychological setback the divide created. The paper also covers stories which show that for the second and third generation population growing up without a first-hand knowledge of Partition, memory has very little to offer.

Preeti examines erotic representations of female bodies, amorous behaviour and heterosexual practices in diverse patterns of cultural articulation. She urges that there is a strong need for examining patriarchal hegemony and its institutional practices that have portrayed different aspects of women's life from the prism of male suitability in the name of culture. The paper undertakes an epistemological inquiry regarding female sexuality represented in architecture embodied in Hindu temples and attempts to map the genealogies of feminine sexuality, as archaically imbricated in the Indian psyche. She contends that social, cultural and political climate of the time encouraged the use of erotic motif in religious art in given times, such as female figures in form of *parichārikā*, *abhisārikā*, *kāmini*, *shukasārikā*, *shalabhanjikā*, *mīthuna*, and *maithuna* are sculpted since fourth-fifth centuries in shrines of different cults. As a paradox, religion and sexuality have shared certain characteristics from the beginning of human history. Feminine sexuality itself is subjected to arbitrary positioning into the dichotomous notions of morally good or bad. In Indian traditions, overt feminine sexuality is a characteristic often seen with the demonic women, mostly portrayed as inherently depraved and dangerous, and needs masculine control in order to protect social morality. This is how through art, literature and films the masculine order manipulates the agency of femininity and constructs feminine sexuality. She concludes saying that the massification of ignorance through religion facilitates a male-centric order to get massive credence to its attempts at perpetuating the cultural difference based on gender.

Banibrata traces the history of English literary studies and explores epistemological space of the studies in India. India has twin legacies of English language and literature to contend with—the colonial legacy of English language *per se* and focusing on its functionality. As such, many academics have scrutinised the growth and development of English studies in England as well as in India and have provided perceptive accounts of the institutionalization of English studies in India, and have shown how it was causally linked to the corresponding process in England through colonialism. The paper overviews work done on the topic and shows how the idea of

pedagogical practices for English is mechanically implanted through the education system in general and the university system in particular with a historical, political and cultural baggage. Students gain degrees in English Literature without being aware of how the subject was instituted in colonial times and the circumstances under which it is studied today. The paper refers to the UGC's *Model Curriculum for English and other Western Languages* of 2001 and identifies areas of intervention as well as spells out some grey areas in its recommendations.

Ranjeeta juxtaposes the emergence of multiple identities and the formation of the community vis-à-vis a uniform identity and sectarian affiliations articulated in the texts, tradition and practice. The paper delves into the ideas of history of the Shivaishnava of South India from the thirteenth century onwards and the ways in which modern representations were informed by the texts and contexts. Shivaishnavas are a Vaishnava community that considers Vishnu and his consort Lakshmi as their supreme godhead, and regards the Sanskrit Vedas and the *Nālāyira Divya Prabandham*. It has two distinct groups, the Vadakalais and Tenkalais, that maintain their identity through affiliation with the temples and *mathas*. The paper describes how inscriptions available belonging to different temples show schism developed during thirteenth and seventeenth centuries and over look the historical processes of the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries AD, how a plurality of identities based on multiple traditions emerged that did not coalesce around the Sanskritic and Tamil traditions to form a distinct Sanskritic or Tamil sect, how formation of political and linguistic zones, new social class and expansion of social base of Shivaishnavism contributed to its changing form, and despite efforts to include non-brahmanas in the ritual activities, Shivaishnavism remained highly brahmmanical in its outlook, and how sectarian interests and behaviour have shaped up multiple identities, which are mutually interactive.

Sayantoni explores the less travelled area of popular cultural studies through this paper. She describes inner life of the Santals and their spatial tactics and idea of environment and justice through a retrospective look into the past, based on available descriptions in folktales documented between 1890 and 1929. Santal Revolt of 1855 against oppressive laws related to land, forest and revenue is a crucial event in the environmental history of this region, dominant spatial practices as well as justice as their leaders were arrested and sentenced to death. As tales reveal, for the Santals the inner and the outer world, the house and the world they inhabited including

water bodies, were equally important. The tree acts as a space for solace, forgiveness and redemption, and the carved nichés in the walls offer protection and a place of refuge. Some of the stories reflect shifts in agricultural practices, dilemmas on conservation, or the flux that the community was facing due to migration, or how the Santals chose coping mechanisms around the atrocities of *Zamindars* (landlords) and moneylenders, or the simple changes in technology, some that the Santals willingly took on for their own betterment at that time. Jackals and termites occupy importance and stories on jackal are analysed from moral and culture perspective.

Two books are reviewed. The book *Contrary to Thoughtlessness* reopens an examination, evaluation and critique of contemporary American theorists writing on Aristotle's ethics and is reviewed by an educator, an associate to inter-university centre. The book *Revolution from Above: India's Future and Citizen's Elite* enunciates the role of citizen elites to revolutionise the Indian scenario, instead of getting bogged down with dystopia and accepting the reality as 'given'. The education, health care, energy resources sectors and process of urbanisation have been elaborated as priority sectors to bring about change in India.

The space of acknowledgement is important towards the end of introduction of the volume, as it has provided opportunity, autonomy and joy for the publication of academic writing to the editor as well as the contributors. I am very happy that within a span of six months, we all together are able to bring out this volume. My experience of editing the volume of 2008 helped me in maintaining quality of an academic journal of high repute as well as in academic enrichment.

I am grateful to the peer reviewers for insightful comments and feedback on each paper within a short time. I had a chance to interact with some of them personally which has enlightened me on many counts. This volume could not have been possible without contributors' will, efforts and cooperation. The book reviewer needs special mention, as reviewing a book within a short time needs dedication and an inclination of a special kind. I pay due respect to all the contributors for their contribution and bearing with me for demands of being an editor.

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