

## From the Chief Editor's Desk . . .

With globalization, science and information technology as the *mantra* of contemporary thinking, the finer sensibilities of life inherent in the concept of *Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram* — which John Keats also voiced in his famous line "Truth is Beauty, Beauty is Truth," as the ultimate knowledge — seem to have receded to the background, marginalizing as it were, art, literature and humanities. And yet, the picture is not so dismal. As long as life abounds with wonder and man continues his quest for perfection, he will be motivated by Ideas, creativity and be compelled to organize his emotional concerns into an intelligible verbal experience—questioning, creating and trying to understand the cognitive, moral and aesthetic truth. As knowledge increases in range and complexity, making demands on human abilities, consciousness extends its scope and range. It is here that the efficacy of the written word stands unchallenged. Again, it is here that the current issue of *Summer Hill* as a means of effective communication holds its ground with the ring of authenticity about it.

"Sensibility," says T.S.Eliot, "alters from generation to generation, but expression is altered only by a man of genius." Human nature as an integrated and unified reality is understood with three fundamental powers—to know, to love and to will. The way we live, experience our existence, and deal with the challenges and opportunities of life depends on these three capacities. Since human life is not a 'given' determinate construct and life's dynamism consists in purposive intentionality, man creates himself perpetually through meaningful activities with ideas, thoughts, and emotions directing him towards self-assessment and enquiry. Anand Coomarswamy's term "precept of the concept" aptly summarizes the idea that truth is what each one sees. A literary artist expresses his truth by organizing his thoughts and sensibilities into a unified whole by an instinctive reaching out of the heart. Despite the forces of 'multiculturalism', power politics, location and space staring the creative artist in the face, the spirit of the common man cannot be repressed. As Jnanpith Award-winning writer Gurdial Singh puts it "the spirit of the common man is bound to triumph, that spirit is undying, irrepressible," whatever the ideology or 'ism' is current in the world.

In today's scenario of globalization, and multiculturalism the issues to be contended by literature, humanities and science are intricate. With the concept of the self and culture always in a flux, the need of the time is to relocate and define them so that they are not lost in the cultural synthesis but are able to strengthen their self-assertive spirit of inquiry, discovery and reinterpretation. Various agencies have to work to strengthen and preserve Indian culture and one of it is education and the art of teaching. The necessity of contextualizing humanistic education and evolving a holistic approach to teaching in which the global, the local and the cultural coalesce cannot be overlooked. It is in this context that pedagogy in literature and humanities assumes significance so that it offers fundamental insights into the complex texture of Indian culture and the possibility of renewing its concepts to make it relevant to the contemporary reality.

Talking about the arts, C.D. Narasimhaiah once remarked that the arts are "the storehouse of values by which we live." By implication it means they are the cornerstone of a culture. Creativity is inspired by intense experience; it radiates deep churnings, which the aestheticians call 'Beauty.' Aesthetic experience stimulates renewal and induces transcendence. According to Vedanta our life is controlled by space and time. i.e. *Shrishti* and human beings can best understand *shrishti* in relation to space and time. Even Eisenstein recognized this fact of existence. Since literature involves the qualities of both space and time, and has rhythm and form, it charms even the scientists. Literature as Borges says, "becomes the only solace of life" when human beings cannot bear the assault of reality.

While literature, humanities and the arts capture the wonder of life, science puts faith in rationality and denies access to inner experience. Globalization, which is the bi-product of science and technology, exercises stress, to the point of violence, on the ecosystem, the living beings and the societies by putting profit and consumerism above life. Referring to the violence of globalization a critic calls it a "war against nature, women, children and the poor . . . a war of monocultures against diversity, of big against small, of war time technologies against nature." The Indian concept of animistic spiritualistic approach to life, marks the superiority of our culture manifest in the holistic view of life.

In the present culture of violence, it would not be out of place to give some thoughts to Gandhi's ideas about violence and the necessity to evolve a non-violent approach to life – be it human or non-human. Camus's famous injunction "neither victims nor executioners" be, recognizes violence embedded in the historical process and the necessity to say "No' to power-relationship. Violence does not always mean physical harm. Even verbal insults or the tendency to deny someone his fundamental human rights can be termed violence. The question of intentionality is vital in understanding the nature of violence. When Gandhi talks of maintaining eco-balance, he wants an equitable distribution of nature's bounty without depriving the society at large, including the less privileged, so that happiness and contentment is vouchsafed to all.

If attaining happiness is the goal of life then one has to desist from a materialistic philosophy of human nature, which places premium on matter as the basic constituent of the universe and of human beings as the product of biology, and turning to the spiritual view choose the path of peace, goodness, beauty and compassion. A spiritual life is a life of growth and detachment, purpose and reflection, discipline and creativity. A spiritual life transcends the limit of time and space. It follows then that a spiritual lifestyle calls for a major review of our thinking about our life experiences and perspectives. Books are the medium with which we can examine not only our inner process but also our interpersonal relationships and our relationship with God. The path to happiness is through contentment – contentment with the self, with complete harmony, peace and the aura of bliss around us.

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