

From the Editor's Desk

Amiya Prosad Sen

Early in our days, as undergraduate students, we were aptly reminded of the two broad forms of struggle that humankind is predisposed to wage in time and history: the struggle against nature and against itself. Of the two kinds, we are likely to be relatively more conversant with the second if only because it more directly enters our academic curriculum or courses of formal study. History is often understood as the dynamic interplay of contrary values and interests and of man shaping his own destiny through this unceasing struggle. However, this view tends to somewhat blind us to realities. We do often forget that there always looms on the horizon the larger and, perhaps, more far-reaching struggle that man has to relentlessly wage against nature, against forces not of his making and forced to face consequences over which he really has little control. Natural disasters of every kind keep recurring, if only to remind us that a struggle that at heart appears to be unequal is ever likely to return. Over the last three years or so, human society has been besieged with problems of an unprecedented kind and it is indeed something of an irony that the greater our scientific advancement, the more challenging contemporary debacles and disasters prove the hidden inadequacies of this advancement. There is really no reliable index to assess or understand the magnitude of problems wrought globally by the spread of the Corona virus and its ever-mutating forms. We do not quite know just when and in what form the next devastating threat to human life will come. Humanity, I feel, has once again been humbled by forces that it can neither fully comprehend nor control.

What is reassuring nonetheless is that amidst all the death, disease and economic ruin, the innate faith in ourselves has never completely faded nor the flame of hope fully extinguished. This is the resilience that perhaps man is best capable of as demonstrated at many

significant points in our history. Indeed, humanity has often demonstrated its capacity to rise and resuscitate itself from the rubble and ashes breathing new life and energy into itself in place of despair and despondency. This, one has to say, is nothing short of a miracle. If anything, man must believe that though remaining a mortal, his spirit is truly indomitable.

I am delighted to present to our readers the Winter-2021 issue of *Summerhill*, a project that we have kept up with through every drawback and difficulty. I take this occasion to thank all our contributors who have persisted with their faith in us and to our readers for the active support that has contributed to make this enterprise a continuing success. As with every other issue of *Summerhill* that I have edited over the past three years, the present number too carries a diverse range of articles on matters of abiding interest. These are both topical and historical in nature and hopefully, will attract a variety of scholars and students across disciplines. I am especially happy to find that a good number of these articles have been authored by promising young scholars who appear to be committed to the life of academic inquiry and interrogation. I hope that this trend will only amplify and reinforce itself in the days to come. Even at the cost of some immodesty I must make it a point to note here our growing popularity with contributors located across India and occasionally, in countries outside India. For this issue alone I recall having received over 40 contributions whereas available space allows us to publish only 14. This issue carries 14 articles and 6 Book Reviews. More books are being reviewed for *Summerhill* now than they were back in 2019, especially because we adopted a flexible policy whereby a reviewer chooses a book to be reviewed rather than await formal requests made by the editor's office.

I take this occasion also to express my sincere gratitude to the staff of the IAS concerned with the publication of this journal. But for the fact that they always kept up their interest in the timely publication of the journal,

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our publications schedules would have been delayed considerably. I thank also successive copy editors who have worked carefully and diligently over the several articles that are chosen for publication. It is only rarely that I have had to intervene with their copy-edited versions.

I imagine that since all good things must come to an end someday, my handling of the editorial desk too has now run its course. However, I must, in all fairness, say that this has come sooner and more abruptly than I expected. I did, after all, quit the editor's office with a somewhat heavy heart. There is every reason to claim that over the past three years or so, the editorial team has done a fine

job with taking *Summerhill* to a position that it holds today among journals of its class. To this end I have invested both my intellectual and emotional interests towards the advancement of this journal. Personally speaking, this has been a matter of great joy and fulfillment. I was especially touched by affectionate and engaging mails that several past and present contributors to the journal have chosen to write to me, expressing some concern and anguish at my decision to quit.

Needless to say, my prayers and good wishes are with my successor(s) in office. I do hope that in the days to come *Summerhill* will scale new heights in academic publishing.