

Note from the Editor

Summerhill (June, 2019 Issue) offers a variety of essays representing different themes and academic disciplines, keeping in mind our objective to spread across the domains of Humanities and Social Sciences. Also, rather than target the specialist alone, this journal seeks to provide articles that will be instructive and entertaining to a wide variety of readers.

This issue also carries four Book Reviews which will be of benefit to interested readers.

RESEARCH ARTICLES

K.P. Deepak's essay "D.F. Karaka Jr.: A Neglected War Correspondent of the Eastern Theatre of War" traces the life history of D.F. Karaka, a war correspondent and author of India who in the World War II reported from very difficult war zones in the Eastern Theatre. The author laments that this very important writer on the events of the War has been systematically neglected by the critics in India. He highlights the literary merits of Karaka's writings in this semi-biographical and critical essay.

Maheswar Hazarika in his essay "The Philosophy of Sankara and Sankradeva: A Brief Study" has brought out the similarities and differences between two great philosophers of India, Adi Sankara and Sankaradeva. Though they lived in different historical periods and belonged to different sub-cultures within the Indian sub-continent, there is a remarkable convergence of their views on the nature of the Ultimate Reality (Brahman). Both were Advaitins, adhering to the principal tenets of non-dualist metaphysics. Yet, they differ because while Sankara emphasized knowledge as the supreme path to liberation (mukti), Sankaradeva emphasized the importance of bhakti.

Debjani Halder's essay "Melodramatic Imagination in Ghatak's Cinema" brings out the originality of the cinematic imagination of Ritwik Ghatak, the talented and innovative film-maker from twentieth century Bengal. Ghatak, like his other illustrious contemporaries Mrinal Sen and Satyajit Ray, transformed Bengali cinema

in particular and Indian cinema in general by making cinema truly reflect the everyday, existential anguish of human existence. The author has attempted to throw light on the melodramatic elements in Ghatak's cinema.

Sutapa Dutta's essay "Fort William, Calcutta: Fortifying an Imperial Space" brings out the historical and educational significance of Fort William following the establishment of British Imperial power in India. Fort William symbolized British power in India as also the emerging practical need for suitably training of the East India Company's servants for various administrative tasks to be performed in India. The latter was achieved with the establishment of the Fort William College. The author has brought out the significance of Fort William in the history and culture of colonial Bengal.

Nilay Saha's article on "The Bengali Almanac as a source of information on Indian trade and commerce in modern times" is a unique study of its kind. Hitherto, almanacs have been commonly used for ritual and astrological purposes, governing a wide range of everyday manners and customs observed in Hindu society. Their use in recovering information on the material lives of various classes has been highlighted only recently. In this article, the author apprises us of the diverse ways in which almanacs were used for the purposes of advancing trade and manufacture in colonial Bengal

Ananda Bhattacharya is an archivist who has helped bring back to life several important and rare texts. In the article "Remembering Komagata Maru", he reminds us of an extremely important facet of our anti-colonial struggle that was waged outside the shores of India. Coming closely in the wake of or recently concluded commemorative celebrations of the Jallianwallah Bagh tragedy, this justly takes us back to the daring and dramatic incidents involving militant and patriotic Indians who waged war against the mighty British Empire and withstood reprisals from the racial and discriminatory policies adopted even by the US and Canada.

Deepika's article "Contextualizing Multiculturalism and Minority Rights in the Indian Constitution" is an

intensive study on the problems facing minorities and their implications for the issues of civil rights within a democracy and the problems of governance. She argues that minority rights are deeply intermeshed with the traditionally celebrated cultural pluralism in India and therefore need protection along lines laid down by our Constitution.

Nandan Dasgupta's "The Making of Michael Madhusudan Dutta's *Meghan Bodh Kavya* (1861): Little Traditions and Others" is an interesting study in literary history. Madhusudan Dutta, a poet of distinction in early modern Bengal, was deeply innovative and rebellious. To him goes the credit of first experimenting with blank verse in poetry. In this article, Dasgupta reveals to us not only Dutta's novel reading of the Ramayana tale surrounding Meghnadh but also his penchant for borrowing across several lesser known cultural traditions based on the Ramayana narrative.

Shams Tabrez writes on "Transmission of Islamicate learning: Institutions of Personal Appurtenances in Mughal North India". In this paper he discusses the

modalities through which Islamic learning and knowledge were transmitted in the Mughal period. In this context, he rightly highlights the pivotal played by the personal charisma surrounding the teacher and scholar and the extent to which the transmission of knowledge became a complex world of its own.

Finally, there is the article on "The Horse in the Mughal State Formation: The Making of Imperial Political Culture" by R.P. Azad Chaudhary. Chaudhary apprises us of the importance of the horse and cavalry to the Mughal army and to war strategies adopted by the state. The increasing use of the horse, particularly of superior foreign breeds, considerably increased the effectiveness of the Mughal army as a fighting unit. Interestingly enough, Chaudhary also alerts us about the use and importance of the horse in social exchanges within the ruling aristocracy and how possession of this extremely useful animal itself often determined administrative, military and political rank.

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