

Editorial

The current number of *Summerhill: IAS Review* begins with the text of 17th Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan Memorial Lecture delivered by Professor U. R. Ananthamurthy. Is being a writer in a regional language a limitation? Certainly not, maintains Ananthamurthy. Writers as varied as Shakespeare, Dante and Milton used the regional dialects as did the Kannada poets Pampa and Kuvempu. The contesting streams of *Desi* and *Marga* have happily commingled in Indian literature from Kalidasa to Tagore and to this day. It is through the regional elements that these works acquire universality. Using the spatial metaphor of a house with a frontyard and a backyard he argues that Indian literatures in the bhashas have a frontyard and a rich backyard supplied by abundant oral narratives. We must realize that it is the 'unwritten backyard' which is the source of revitalization of our languages.

Madhavan K. Palat surveys the intellectual journey of Eric Hobsbawm (1917-2012), a historian with wide ranging interests and a cosmopolitan thinker who will be remembered for his panoramic works about the modern world. He was a Marxist, and much enamoured of the European Enlightenment, but without the pretensions of doctrinaire Marxism. As a social historian he wrote for the public not just for the guild, though at times in his passion for justice he glossed over the many injustices that took place in the Soviet Union under Stalin. Palat demonstrates that his major works are constructed around the three defining attributes of European civilization, class, nation and empire.

Geoffrey Davis describes the social imaginary of the indigenous people and underlines the lack of recognition of their rightful place in various parts of the world. He emphasises the fact that- like the Maori in New Zealand and North African Indigènes-the First Nations Soldiers met with unequal treatment after the war. However, as the counter-discourse the written texts of the indigenous literature, informed by oral narratives, significantly challenge master narratives as the falsities of an imperial history.

The interpellative phase of British rule in India went through a complex process of mediation, and was sustained, to a large extent, by textuality. Daniel Roberts in his paper offers the critiques of colonial education in two novels by Krupabai Sathianadhan, a south Indian woman whose Brahmin father had converted to Christianity. Roberts carefully examines the affiliations and overlaps which determined the construction of colonial education. What interests him is the disruptive nature of religious conversion that called into question some of the secular verities of empire. He also analyses the contested nature of Christianity in its impact on native elites who were converted to it.

It was Goethe who famously championed the cause of *Weltliteratur* and found Shakespeare, along with Raphael, Mozart and Napoleon as 'figures so alluring that everyone strives after them.' Richard Allen's paper takes a view of World literature as a special mode of apprehending reality projecting the unifying and universal view of the world, as he evaluates the novels of Raja Rao within this framework.

The focus of Uma Das Gupta's paper is Tagore's attraction for the heritage of Buddha and their shared vision for humanity. Tagore, whose thinking also arose out of his disenchantment with West's aggressive nationalism, had profound faith in the unity of man and the unity of races, so close to the essence of Buddhism, which is reflected in the inclusive humanism in several of his works.

Meena Alexander's essay explores the intimate relationship between landscape and poetry. Self and subjectivity, however elusive, have their being in a shared world. Writing from her own experience she describes the magical process of poetic creation as registering a transmutation of subjectivity while the self with all its mundane baggage vanishes.

The ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka has had its impact on its literature and the cinema. The diasporic films, in particular, marked by strong elements of alienation and dislocation (felt by Tamils who have had to leave the country and start a new life abroad), have taken up this cause vigorously which is the theme of the insightful essay by Geetha Ganapathy-Doré. The cinematographic representations, she argues, gain salience through decentering and countering the official narratives. For a world that is getting increasingly unsettled there are lessons to be learnt.

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