

Special Feature: Comparative Cultures



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Editorial Note

While culture provides a context for the formation of identities, it perpetually involves a discursive negotiation between the boundaries of deterministic ideas. Considering the vast range of plurality operative within the categories constituting the distinction between 'we' and 'they'; it is through a dialogic nexus that cultural identities are constructed, retained, moulded and re-constructed. Any attempt to fossilize culture into a fixed meaning would amount to an ahistorical oversimplification. Since cultural memory is something more than a mere nostalgic obsession with relics from the past, comparative studies of culture involve the past but in a

dialogic relation with the present so that culture is understood as an ever-evolving dynamic experience with fluid boundaries and definitions. This requires an inclusive approach that would study a specific culture in terms of its nuanced layering of multiple discourses beneath all uniform and homogeneous labellings that pass as its representational tropes in the mainstream. The across-boundary dialogues between the margin and the centre continually provide a cultural icon with its accepted meaning.

The Special Feature of Caesurae Vol 6:1 takes up Comparative Cultures as its theme. This covers critical essays on comparative religious studies, fusion food, art and architecture, new cultural formations through processes of migration and mingling. This immediately contextualizes the elements of cultural identity in terms of their evolution across time and space, so that their positionality itself becomes a subject of critical analysis. Since the politicization of linguistic, religious and ethnic meanings ignores the plurality and multiplicity of a culture by manipulating its zones of inclusion and exclusion; our attempt is to study the very course of this zone-formation that would define a culture in terms of both what it is and what it is not.

About the Editor

Dr. Arghya Dipta Kar is a professional painter and academic. He completed his doctoral research at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, on comparative religion, and has several research publications on Tantra and is on the editorial board of an international journal on Indic Studies in USA. He has recently joined the Caesurae Editorial Board on invitation for the journal's new chapter on Indic Studies to be published from July 2025. He teaches English Literature in a college affiliated to Calcutta University.