

Foreword

I am happy to know that the Department of History of Bankura University is going to publish its Departmental journal *Review of Historical Studies*. I have come to know that academics from many different universities have contributed their scholarly essays to this new journal. I know that the department is very keen on keeping to international standards in terms of research and publication. This venture of the teachers of the Department of History, I am sure, will gradually mature into developing new horizons in historical studies.

The dissemination of historical knowledge is part of man's eternal quest for negotiating his past in terms of future, thereby inflecting the meaning of the present. In other words, the constant clash between eschatology and teleology has led us to derive the meaning of 'essence' or the Platonic βέλτιον (*'beltion*: ultimate truth). Study of history has always been a contentious battleground, the Greek 'agon', inviting intellectual wrestling and arguments. Karl Popper developed a distinctive sense of debate in his book *The Poverty of Historicism* (1957) by substantiating the failure of history in underlining the future course of civilisation; as a result, Popper posits, 'historical destiny is sheer superstition'. Although Foucault considered the nineteenth century as the century of history and the twentieth century as the century of geography (*Des espaces autres*, 1967), yet history and its correlatives of truth have again and again been re-interrogated. Stephen Greenblatt's essay 'Resonance and Wonder' (1990) may, for example, be regarded as the New Historicist critique on how history may challenge and contest humanist assumptions, thereby pre-empting the method of extracting truth from disparate factualities, dialogic functions or even sporadic referentialities. According to Stephen Greenblatt, a displayed object in a museum not only talks about itself, but initiates a discussion with the viewers responding to it from the standpoint of multiple cultural forces.

I believe the Review of Historical Studies will initiate a sustainable dialogue on multiple problematics of history. Dr Sankar Biswas, the Head of the Department, and his learned colleagues should be congratulated on their successful publication of the journal which will emerge as a significant platform for academic exchange of ideas. I wish the journal a meaningful academic journey.

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