

Homogeneity in Heterogeneity

Memory, Culture, and Resistance in
Aboriginal Literatures from Around the World

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Whither Civilisation?: The Tragedy of Homogenising Heterogeneity

KBS Krishna

Mankind created society either from a sense of self-preservation to combat the forces of nature, or with an innate sense of harmony to cultivate what they perceived as the wild. Such societies developed into civilisations across the globe. All of these civilisations represent the culture of the society (Durant 8), which is reflective of the natural resources present in the locale. Thus, cultures and civilisations are neither homogeneous nor were they ever meant to be.

However, mankind's aspiration to homogenise cultures and civilisations is a reality, and worse a menace – as such desires discount the destruction perpetuated in the name of harmony. In this context, the question that needs to be addressed is not why mankind has such desires, but whether it is still possible to preserve harmony while accepting the apparently inevitable homogenisation that is encouraged and sought after. But before progressing further, an understanding of how civilisations are created and their characteristics is necessary as it would enable an appreciation of the respect boundaries of civilisations deserve.

For Will Durant, civilisation is created to end “chaos and insecurity” (8); what is implicit in such a statement is that a world without civilisation is full of chaos and insecurity. But what is chaos, and why the insecurity?