**NATIONAL SEMINAR**

5TH NOVEMBER 2020

*Organised by*

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH & DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES IN COLABORATION WITH IQAC**

**Man ⇔ Nature: Through the Lens of Ecocriticism**

CONCEPT NOTE

*“Ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment”* (Cheryll Glotfelty)

Since man is the cause of environmental degradation, he has to be the solution too. The seminar is an attempt to refocus on the centrality of interdependence and interrelatedness of all lives and nature on planet Earth. In the recent and in the not so recent times Humans have exhibited traits of the anthropocentrism by placing themselves in the center of the Universe and thereby forcing the other (Nature and Other species) to the margins and planet Earth pushing them to the precipice of ecological calamity. Politics, development, colonialism, culture, market economy have all contributed to this problem. Because of the multi-disciplinary nature of the problem an ecocritical approach to its study and solution is appropriate and necessary.

Ecocriticism came into prominence in America in the 1980s and was rooted in Transcendentalism. In Great Britain it was referred to as Green Studies and was rooted in Romanticism. In India in 1980 ecocriticism was introduced with a course entitled “Tamil Poetics” in Madras Christian College. In 1996 the course was renamed “Ecoliterature”. Around this time many writers focused on how the natural world was fast disappearing and how literature needs to take up this discourse. Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring explained how DDT entered the food chain and killed birds. William Rueckert’s “Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism” engages with literary and popular culture and works toward eliminating the divide between nature and society. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm’s *The Ecocriticism Reader* focuses on global warming and conveys that literary ecology portrays and influences man’s interaction with nature. Lawrence Buell in *Writing for an Endangered World: Literature, Culture, and Environment in the U.S and Beyond* seeks to blur the compartments of nature and culture, existing vs constructed. Jonathan Bate’s *Romantic* *Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* talks about how Wordsworth’s poetry and his philosophy of nature should be read. According to Lawrence Buell environment and place are social, cultural and ideological entities. Portrayal of landscapes, he maintains, goes through filters like that of literature and ideology. He also directed attention to the fact that literature can help create environment consciousness. Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) brought out a magazine called Interdisciplinary studies in Literature and Environment (ISLE), to study the relationship between humans and the natural world. Since its inception in early 1990s it has brought environment and environment related concerns and theories centerstage.

Like all other movements history of ecocriticism has also been mapped in waves. First wave concentrated on creative representation of nature, as in the Romantics in Great Britain and in non-fiction writings in America, such as ‘Walden’. The second wave focused on engaging with the problems of environmental concerns and debating about them. The third wave brought environmental concerns on the Global agenda. While criticizing global capitalism it tried to generate a mood of ‘common destiny’. The fourth wave is about Eco Materialism. It goes beyond humans to include the animals and the material world.

Literature and nature are inseparably intertwined since the time of oral narrative. Nature is the backdrop in which stories unfold, metaphors from nature express man’s state of mind and emotions. Birds and animals have been used in parables and children’s stories. Writers like Wordsworth, Shakespeare, Thoreau, John Muir, John Burroughs and Theodore Roosevelt, have emphasized how nature can contribute to intellectual and spiritual growth.

It will be a fruitful endeavor to consider how nature is referred to and treated in various popular forms/ mediums of narratives. The crisis staring at the earth requires a re-vision of the representation of nature in literature along with other disciplines of study such as Cultural Studies and Feminist Studies. Ecocriticism can play a crucial role in helping us to become more aware of how we interact with nature. There is a need to re-examine human perception to nature and wildlife and change the anthropocentric approach that we have developed over the years. Apart from critically examining existing literature, new literature needs to be developed based on scientific research and understanding the changing socio-political narratives, so as to effectively address genuine environmental concerns in a truly interdisciplinary manner.

Sub Themes suggestive but not limiting to:

* Nature in Literature
* Nature in Popular Culture
* Nature in Indigenous Literature
* Eco poetry
* Ecology in Indian Traditions and Culture
* Environment and Development
* Colonialism and Environment
* Material Ecocriticism
* Ecocriticism and Natural Calamities
* Ecocriticism and Narrative of Resistance
* Narratives of Environmentalists/ Activists
* Feminism and Ecocriticism

**Call for Papers**

Original and unpublished papers are invited on any of the sub-themes given above or not given but related to the main theme.

The abstract of the paper in not more than 300 words should be mailed to [sgndenglishseminar2010@gmail.com](mailto:sgndenglishseminar2010@gmail.com), not later than 25th October 2020 along with the following information: -

a) Author

b) Affiliation

c) E-mail

d) Title of the abstract

e) Abstract

f) Keywords

The acceptance of the abstract will be communicated through email within a week of the receipt of abstract. Accepted abstracts would be required to submit a full draft-paper in 3000-4000 words, referenced according to the 7th edition of MLA stylesheet to be submitted in MS word by October 30th, 2020.

*Seminar Organizing Committee:*

**Patron**

Dr. Gurmohinder Singh (Principal, SGND Khalsa College)

**Co-Convenor:**

Dr. Gita Lakhanpal and Dr. Bhagwant Kour (Department of English)

Dr. Ashish Thomas (Department of Environment Studies)