



Department of English & Comparative Literature Central University of Jammu, Jammu

Schedule for National Seminar: 30th – 31st March, 2017 (Thursday - Friday)

Day 1 Inaugural Session (10:30 a.m. – 01:00 p.m.)

- 10:30 am – 10:35 am: Lighting of the Ceremonial Lamp
- 10:35 am – 10:45 am: Welcome Address by Prof. Deepsheekha Kotwal,
Head, Dept. of English
- 10:45 am – 10:55 am: Introductory Remarks by Prof. R.S.Bhatnagar
President, Daya Krishan Academic Foundation
- 10:55 am – 11:35 am: Keynote Address by Prof. Makarand R. Paranjape
Centre for English Studies, School of Language,
Literature and Culture Studies, JNU
- 11:35 am – 11:50 pm: Inaugural Address by the Chief Guest
Jenab Syed Altaf Bukhari
Hon'ble, Minister for Education, J&K Government.
- 11:50 pm – 12:00 pm: Presentation of Mementos
- 12:00 pm - 12:10 pm: Presidential Address by Prof. Ashok Aima,
Vice Chancellor, Central University of Jammu, Jammu
- 12:10 pm – 12: 20 pm: Vote of Thanks by Dr. M.A.A.Farooq
Assistant Professor, Department of English
- 12: 30 pm Group Photograph

Concept Note

It has been increasingly felt in literary circles around the world that aesthetic value in literature is relegated to the margins of literary criticism in contemporary times. As we face moral, spiritual and environmental nihilism, it calls for serious introspection on the part of indigenous critics and aestheticians to debate the relevance of value and beauty in literary aesthetics. Some of the important names in modern Indian philosophy and literature preoccupied with literary aesthetics are: Abhinavgupta, Rabindranth Tagore, Aurobindo, Mohammad Iqbal, Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Dayakrishna, Sadat Hasan Manto, S.R.Faruqi.

The main thrust of the seminar is to foreground the aesthetically inflected responses to literature and the emerging interface of the philosophical and religious to counter the present literary discourse on the 'death of the author,' of history, god and civilization. Underlining the mammoth importance of aesthetics for an artist, Barnett Newman says, "Aesthetics is for the artist as ornithology is for birds." Oscar Wilde defined aestheticism as "a search after the signs of the beautiful . . . through which men seek the correlation of the arts . . . more exactly, the search after the secret of life". Plato believed in beauty as a *form* and [that] beautiful objects incorporate proportion, harmony, and unity among their parts. Similarly, in the Metaphysics, Aristotle found that the universal elements of beauty were order, symmetry, and definiteness.

During the first half of the twentieth century, a significant shift took place in general aesthetic theory which attempted to apply it in various forms of art, including literary and visual. This resulted in the rise of the New Criticism school and the debate concerning *intentional fallacy*. Early twentieth-century artists, poets and composers challenged existing notions of beauty, broadening the scope of art and aesthetics. In 1941, Eli Siegel, the founder of Aesthetic Realism, said that "The world, art, and self-explain each other: each is the aesthetic oneness of opposites."

According to the *Natyashastra*, the goal of arts is to empower aesthetic experience and deliver emotional *rasa*; entertainment is an effect, not the primary goal of arts. In many cases, art provides relief for those exhausted with labour, distraught with grief, or laden with misery. The most complete exposition of aesthetics in drama, songs and other performance arts is found in the works of the Kashmiri Shaivite philosopher Abhinavagupta (c.1000 CE). He suggests that aesthetic experience is something beyond worldly experience and has used the word '*Alaukika*' to describe it. Rabindranath Tagore believed that beauty does not emanate from the outside, rather it energizes and enriches the mind and helps us behold our inner light.

The aesthetic has been indispensable in projects seeking to articulate “something else” of the literary. The de-emphasis of literary aesthetics is certainly not unique to the field of current literary discourse. While the constructed nature of race, gender, nationality, sexuality, colonialism among others have been featured in the spotlight of literary discourse, other equally constructed practices such as formal conventions, literary devices, genre particularities, and figurative language are more likely to be left out. In a germinal expression against this lacuna, George Levine in “Reclaiming the Aesthetic” impresses upon necessity of keeping a critical eye on “what constitutes the ‘literary’” in order to “rescue it [the literary] from its potential disappearance into culture and politics.”

The seminar contributes to the effort by demonstrating the vitality and the volatility of “aesthetics” in literary discourse. It calls to breathe new life into the aesthetic by situating it as a central player in literary analysis. It aims at demonstrating the concept’s long history of usage from classical philosophy to contemporary critical theory. It highlights the multiplicity of meanings found under the concept—how the aesthetic “stands for” numerous uses, meanings (such as beauty, pleasure, the sublime, ethics or aestheticism—that emerged from different moments of Western and Oriental literary history.

The seminar is organized by the Department of English and Comparative Literature, Central University of Jammu in collaboration with Daya Krishna Foundation. Papers on the following and related themes are invited from scholars and academicians across disciplines:

Postmodern literary Aesthetics

Ideological Appropriations of Aestheticism

Aesthetic and the Theological in English and German Romantics

Beauty and the Question of Salvation in the Secular age

Oriental Aesthetics and Responses to Nihilism

Muslim Aesthetics and Persian Classics

Ontology of the Beautiful and Indo-Muslim Criticism

Oriental Aesthetics and the Absurd

Sufi Aesthetics

Kashmiri Literature and the Metaphysics of Beauty

Kashmir Shaivism

Aesthetic Dimension of Daya Krishna's Thought

Aestheticism in the works of Abhinavgupta