

Language, Law and Literature: Exploring Words and Worlds **25th September 2021**

Online symposium on “Language, Law and Literature: Exploring Words and Worlds” was organized by the department of English, RGNUL Punjab in association with Re-Markings, Biannual Refereed International Journal of English Letters. Prof. Nibir K. Ghosh, Chief Editor Re-Markings and Prof. Prasannanshu, Director Centre for Linguistic Justice and Endangered Languages, NLU Delhi deliberated on the interdisciplinary aspects of law and literature. Prof. G.S. Bajpai, Vice-Chancellor RGNUL, reflected on relationship between law and literature in his inaugural address. He accentuated the role of literary works in elevating cognitive skills and unravelling social mores of the world. Alluding to the writings of Justice A P Shah, Justice Krishna Iyer, Franz Kafka, Oscar Wilde and Charles Dickens, Prof. Bajpai focussed on the connection between law and literature. Ms. Chanima Wijebandara, Judicial Officer, Sri Lanka and Guest of Honour, talked about the humane, philosophical and ennobling effect of literature. Prof. Ghosh eulogised the academic initiative of RGNUL which underlined the importance of literature for students of law.

The inaugural session was followed by Prof. Prasannanshu’s discourse on importance of law, language and literature in legal education. While speaking on the topic “Law, Language and Literature in the Context of Legal Education and Profession”, he referred to the well-structured oration of Cicero and the importance of good communication skills in the legal profession. Prof. Nibir Ghosh highlighted the epistemological benefits of reading literature. “Narratives,” he said, “have the power to change perspectives.” He observed, “Books are the life long companions of men.” Prof. Nibir K Ghosh spoke on the topic, “Why Literature Matters in the Study and Practice of Law?” “Parables and experiences of great men illuminate minds and leave an indelible imprint on the readers,” he remarked. Citing the works of W.H. Auden, Mahatma Gandhi, Frederick Douglass, August Wilson, Wordsworth and Nani Palkhivala, Prof. Ghosh observed that reading literature emancipated minds. Prof. Nibir Ghosh encouraged the participants to read literary works and invited paragraphs/opinions on the topic “Words and Worlds”. He announced that the best five perspectives would be published in *Re-Markings*. Dr. Navleen Multani, Assistant Professor of English and PRO RGNUL Punjab, talked about the significance of artistic works and indispensable role of language in

comprehending the substance of law. While dwelling on the theme of symposium, she said, “Words in literary works explore customs, authority, power, paradoxes of equity and legitimacy to provide understanding of morality, law and justice.” Quoting Jacques Derrida, she emphasized on the power of words. Dr. Tanya Mander, Assistant Professor of English, spoke about the importance of language and relevance of examining the intersection of law and literature. After the technical sessions, the ensuing interaction navigated from discussion on role of forensic linguistics in court proceedings to court language and law in literature. The discussion session was moderated by Namah Bose, Pranit Singh and Raghav Arora. Dr. Navleen Multani extended a vote of thanks.

167 participants, including faculty and students, attended the symposium.