

Edited by Chi P. Pham, Chitra Sankaran, Gurpreet Kaur

# Ecologies in Southeast Asian Literatures

*Histories, Myths and Societies*

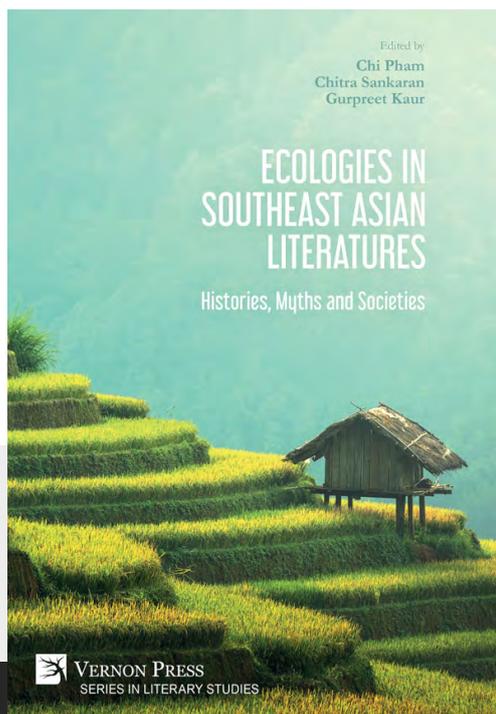
SERIES IN LITERARY STUDIES

## Summary

Ecocriticism in relation to the Southeast Asian region is relatively new. So far, John Charles Ryan's *Ecocriticism in Southeast Asia* is the first book of its kind to focus on the region and its literature to give an ecocritical analysis: that volume compiles analyses of the eco-literatures from most of the Southeast Asian region, providing a broad insight into the ecological concerns of the region as depicted in its literatures and other cultural texts.

This edited volume furthers the study of Southeast Asian ecocriticism, focusing specifically on prominent myths and histories and the myriad ways in which they connect to the social fabric of the region. Our book is an original contribution to the expanding field of ecocriticism, as it highlights the mytho-historical basis of many of the region's literatures and their relationship to the environment. The varied articles in this volume together explore the idea of nature and its relationship with humans. The always problematic questions that surround such explorations, such as "why do we regard nature as 'external'?" or "how is humankind a continuum with nature?", emerge throughout the volume either overtly or implicitly. As Pepper (1993) points out, what Karl Marx referenced as 'first' or 'external' nature gave rise to humankind. But humanity "worked on this 'first' nature to produce a 'second' nature: the material creations of society plus its institutions, ideas and values." (Pepper, 108).

Thus, our volume constantly negotiates this field of ideas and belief systems, in diverse ways and in various cultures, attempting to relate them to the current ecological predicaments of ASEAN. It will likely prove an invaluable resource for scholars and students of ecocriticism and, more broadly, of Southeast Asian cultures and literatures.



## About the editor

**Chi Pham** (PhD) is a tenure-researcher at the Institute of Literature in the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences. She completed her PhD in Comparative Literature at the University of California, Riverside (USA). Her dissertation, her researched articles and conference presentations examine Vietnamese literature and politics. Of late, Chi has become increasingly interested in the field of literature and the environment; she chaired the organising committee of the second ASLE-ASEAN conference in Hanoi (January 2018), for which she put together the call for papers. Chi's native knowledge of Vietnamese culture and literature adds a dimension of authenticity.

**Chitra Sankaran** (PhD) is an Associate Professor in the Department of English Language and Literature, NUS. Her research interests include South and Southeast Asian fiction, feminist theory and ecocriticism. In 2012, she published *History, Narrative and Testimony in Amitav Ghosh's Fiction* with SUNY Press. Her other publications include monographs, edited volumes on Asian Literatures, chapters in books and research articles in IRJs including *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, *ARIEL*, *Theatre Research International*, *Journal of South Asian Literature*, *Australian Feminist Studies* and *Critical Asian Studies*. She is an invited contributor to the *Oxford History of the Novel in English (OHNE)* series. She is currently working on ecofeminism in South Asian and Southeast Asian fictions.

**Gurpreet Kaur** (PhD) has recently finished her PhD in English and Comparative Literatures from the University of Warwick, UK. She received her BA (Hons) and MA degrees in English Language and Literature from the National University of Singapore. Her research, publications and conference presentations centre on postcolonial ecofeminism, South Asian and Southeast Asian fiction, film and gender studies.

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