

School of Translation Studies and Training

International Seminar

Beyond Postcolonial Hermeneutics: Comparative Perspectives

March 3, 4 & 5, 2017

The international seminar, proposed to be organised by the School of Translation Studies & Training, IGNOU on March 3, 4 & 5, 2017, is envisioned in the light of the endeavours in East and West to analyse and ultimately intervene in the hegemony of Western epistemology on a global scale. Recently, Indian intellectuals have increasingly challenged the colonial paradigm in which the West is the donor and other societies like India the receiver. In this paradigm, theoretical agendas, frameworks and methodology are the prerogative of societies and institutions of the economically privileged regions of the West with the realization that ‘dominance and oppression have increasingly become the functions of categories of knowledge’. Even in the West, serious scholars are critiquing this situation. In recent years, these discussions have focussed on Western hermeneutics and literary theory as part of ‘the fin de siècle imperium of knowledge’, which have been implemented mostly through English Departments in Indian Universities, subsuming and co-opting the emancipatory ‘dalit, feminist, tribal/oral and postcolonial discourses in it’. Postcolonial discourse has to an extent served its purpose in bringing about consciousness about colonial exploitative institutions and their practices but failed to demolish them, as the postcolonial discourse is controlled and conditioned by institutions located in erstwhile colonial or neocolonial geo-physic-psyche constituencies. It was expected that ‘Postcolonial Hermeneutics’ in its true spirit would aim at exploring the possibilities of ‘integrating Indian and Western poetics’ and develop a theory or theories of interpretation from our perspective that accounts for the cultural specifics of the east and west. But it did not seem to have happened.

The objective of the seminar is neither to retrieve ‘pure horizon’ nor ‘to devise’ a postcolonial hermeneutics but to think beyond postcolonial hermeneutics. The main objective of the seminar will consist in work on the reciprocal ‘translation’ of the selected key terms, and the elaboration of a theory of postcolonial hermeneutics for practical criticism of literatures of India particularly in English. For this purpose, the act of ‘translation’ i.e. *anuvad* will continually and self-reflexively be scrutinized because of its paramount importance to Indian traditions in particular. For instance, one of the

major issues is of translating post-colonial hermeneutics into reality and of translating at least key categories into a new integrative postcolonial hermeneutics or 'compoetics' (comparative and/or composite poetics). The seminar will engage in 'translation' – understood in a metaphorical sense as a border-crossing activity. Because of its centrality in any endeavor of postcolonial theory, the act of 'translation' will be theoretically reflected with a view to the colonial context of English translations in India in general, the (political and aesthetic) conditions of Indian literatures, and its special significance for literary and poetological traditions in India which are essentially traditions of translation' and of the 'deep mutual interconnection' between Indian and English forms of expression. The literary texts as privileged sites of cultural self-reflection on the one hand shall serve as testing ground for the applicability and appropriateness of hermeneutic premises and Indian poetics, and conversely, Indian literatures—oral, written and Indian English literature shall serve as source and quarry to suggest alternative concepts which might open up new vantage points for theorising the culturally specific epistemological frames informing interpretative concepts and methods.

On these premises, the seminar is expected to take place in a dialogic manner with Indian and Western scholars comparing and discussing culturally specific poetological models with their underlying assumptions, translating the implied epistemologies and philosophies for each other, and suggesting new frameworks while critiquing the existing ones.

Dr h k sethi
hksethi@ignou.ac.in

Professor avadhesh kumar singh
avadhesh06@gmail.com