

THE ENGLISH & FOREIGN LANGUAGES UNIVERSITY
HYDERABAD

RESEARCH ACCELERATION CENTRE

RESEARCH CLUSTER 4
TECHNOLOGIES OF LITERARY PEDAGOGY

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YEAR 1 : PRELIMINARY WEBINAR

**QUESTIONS OF THE LITERARY
Discourse, Institution and the Context**
(in honour of D. Venkat Rao)



20th and 21st JANUARY, 2022

Principal Investigator: Dr. K. Lavanya

Advisory Members

Prof D. Venkat Rao, Dept of English Literature, EFLU
Prof T. Samson, Dept of English Literature, EFLU
Prof Lakshmi Haribandi, Dept of Translation Studies, EFLU
Prof Malati Mathur, School of Humanities, IGNOU, New Delhi
Prof T. Sriraman, (retired) EFLU

Webinar Schedule

Day One: 20th January, 2022

Inaugural (10 AM - 11 AM)

Academic Sessions : 40 min presentation, 20 min discussion

Session 01 (11:15 AM - 12:15 PM)

Chair: Professor J P Dimri, formerly with Department of Russian Studies, EFLU

Speaker: Dr Korada Subrahmanyam, Professor of Sanskrit (retd.), The University of Hyderabad

Topic: Universality of Indian Literary Theories and Criticism

LUNCH BREAK

Session 02 (2:00 PM - 3:00 PM)

Chair: Dr Vivek Dhareshwar, Srishti Manipal Institute of Art, Design & Technology

Speaker: Dr Milind Wakankar, Professor (Humanities), IIT Delhi

Topic: Asanga's *Madhyanta Vibhaga Bhasya* (MVB)
1.2: Reading for Difference after Venkat Rao

Session 03 (3:15 PM - 4:15 PM)

Chair: Dr Kailash C Baral, formerly Professor, English & India Studies, EFLU

Speaker: Professor Kapil Kapoor, Chairman, IIAS Shimla;
Formerly Professor, JNU

Topic: Aesthetics and Values in Indian Thought

Session 04 (4:30 PM Onwards)

Poetry Reading and Discussion

Sharmistha Mohanty

Poet, fiction writer, founder-editor *Almost Island* journal

Webinar Schedule

Day Two: 21st January, 2022

Session 05 (10:00 AM - 11:00 AM)

Chair: Professor Pramod K Nayar, Department of English, The University of Hyderabad

Speaker: Dr Vivek Dhareshwar, Scholar-in-Residence, Srishti Manipal Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Bengaluru

Topic: Remarks on the De-forming of the Practical

Session 06 (11:15 AM - 12:15 PM)

Chair: Korada Subrahmanyam, Professor of Sanskrit (retd.), The University of Hyderabad

Speaker: Dr M S Chaitra, Senior Fellow, Centre for Educational and Social Studies, Bengaluru; Director & Fellow, Aarohi Research Foundation, Bengaluru

Topic: Colonialism, European Experience and Reading Indian Texts

LUNCH BREAK

Session 07 (2:00 PM - 3:00 PM)

Chair: Professor T Samson, Department of English Literature, EFLU

Speaker: Professor P V Amith Kumar, Department of Comparative Literature, EFLU

Topic: Patanjali's Yogasutra and the concept of 'Sattva': Understanding the elimination of the 'impious' in the Indian knowledge systems

Session 08 (3:15 PM - 4:15 PM)

Chair: Professor Jibu Mathew George, Department of English Literature, EFLU

Speaker: Kailash C Baral, formerly Pro VC & Professor, English & India Studies, EFLU

Topic: 'Who are the Keats?': Questions of the Literary

Session 09 (4:30 PM - 5:30 PM)

Chair: Dr Prakash Shah, Reader in Culture & Law, Queen Mary University of London

Speaker: Dr Karli Srinivasulu, formerly Professor, Department of Political Science, Osmania University

Topic: Region, Dominance and Contestation: Cultural Politics of the Telangana Movement

VALEDICTORY

Velcheru Narayana Rao (Krishnadevaraya Professor of Languages and Cultures of Asia, Senior Fellow at The Institute for Research in the Humanities, University of Wisconsin-Madison)

Professor Nizar Ahmed
Professor T R S Sharma

Students, colleagues, friends and admirers and critics of D. Venkat Rao

Concept Note

Is Literary Theory/Criticism an independent, an allied, or a sub-discipline of literary studies? What is its relationship to literature? What is its role in literary pedagogy? These questions have been asked and answered copiously from within the context and sites of *production* of Theory/Criticism, i.e., the West, but seldom from within the context of its *reception*, non-Western cultures.

The discipline of Literary Theory/Criticism that thrives today (spanning the classical Greco-Roman to 20th century European and American schools of theory) is a European legacy stemming from its intellectual histories and ways of perceiving the text and the world. The celebrated 20th century Theory Wars in Europe and America were essentially fraternal-sibling conflicts within theological/philosophical/political pasts and presents; in these academic skirmishes, interpretive theories and their concomitant methods rose and fell, replacing or reinstating concepts and ideas, underscoring the reach and importance of Theory. Concurrently, a distinct anti-Theory movement also flourished, at least from the 1970s, comprising largely formalist, stylistic, aesthetic, politically conservative and neo-conservative revivalisms as a reaction to what were perceived as political/ideological, non-literary approaches. In the 21st century, with the rise of Cultural Studies, more and more disciplines are enlisted as 'theoretical approaches', and Theory itself is expanding its terrain beyond the literary. In such a scenario, how are non-Western cultures located in this framework of conflict? What are their stakes in the Theory/Culture Wars? Are they simply co-opted as subjects of 'cultural studies'? Are they mere receivers and propagators of this European legacy of Theory/Criticism? Do their own inquiries into literature and the discourse of criticism, if any, get any attention and space?

Departments of English and Indian literatures in Indian universities since Independence have been diligent and enthusiastic role-players in inherited and received colonial and neo-colonial battles over 'literature' and 'criticism'.

The vast body of extant reflections from precolonial India seem only of historical or theoretical interest and are invariably appraised through 'modern' lenses, while the roots and conceptual bases of this 'modernity' are barely engaged with. The colonial impact conditions the way native literary-cultural experiences are accessed. While there exists a (partially) native-inspired pedagogical approach of communicating the 'pleasure' of a text, Literary Theory/Criticism as it is practiced in academic institutions today is the *frame* through which literary experience is examined. Understanding the cultural, philosophical and conceptual origins of this frame is essential to *seeing* the frame instead of *seeing with it*. This, in turn, enables the task of understanding the myriad, thriving, literary-cultural forms of India that are informed by and respond to the extant body of reflections and inquiries from at least the 2nd to the 17th century in India.

The possibility of grasping today the shared sense of the literary (and its backgrounds) that circulated across Sanskrit and the other bhashas throws up challenges. What resources and approaches are required? How is this to be achieved from within the contexts of the institutional, discursive structures implanted from the West? And how would it shape praxis and pedagogy?

This seminar is envisaged as an attempt to take up this task. The aim is to review and compile the available work in this area, and to chart a course for building upon it. The following core areas of inquiry are identified for invited speakers to share their insights:

- Literary Theory / Criticism and Pedagogy
- Literary Theory / Criticism and Literature
- Non-Western Alternatives to Theory
- Comparative Poetics
- Indian Poetics
- Critical Assessment of the Field: Raghavan, Krishnamoorthy, Kane, Coomaraswamy, K.C. Pandey, Mukund Lath, S.K. De, V.S. Seturaman, Kapil Kapoor, etc.
- Critiques of Western and Swadeshi Indology