ভারতীয় প্রযুক্তিবিদ্যা প্রতিষ্ঠান খড়্গপুর
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DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP

Humanity, Hope & Utopia

Creating Future Epistemologies & Pedagogies

Under the Shri Gopal Rajgarhia International Fellowship Programme



22–24 February 2027 | **HYBRID MODE**

SPEAKER

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The Speaker & the Conversation



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Western Epistemology provides the ground for the production of knowledge required for the Imperialist or colonialist domination. Colonial stratifications or orderings that simultaneously stress the centrality of Europe and marginality of the non-western territories across the world arise out of & express Aristotle's taxonomy & the scientific empirical rationality of Enlightenment. However, the question is whether essentializing Western Epistemology as colonial will be more ethical than claiming that only some assemblages of it account for the production of colonial knowledge? Wlad Godzich view that "Western thought has always thematized "the other as a threat to be reduced, as a potential same-to-be, a yet-not-same", might provoke us to align with the former. Added to this is the persistent failure of the West to work out a new relation with the people inhabiting the non-west, a relation divested of the colonial stereotypes. Such a failure mirrors the frightful limitations of Western Epistemology. Mignolo shows how Western epistemology creates the illusion of being the Zero-point epistemology or a Universal knowledge, but it conceals the local-provincial location of subjects who yield such a knowledge. Mignolo indicates how it is the unproblematic persistence of the colonial tropes and stereotypes in west's relation with the non-west that makes it necessary for one to stress the geo-historical location of knowledge production. Turning Descartes's dictum inside out Mignolo states: "rather than assuming that thinking comes before being, one assumes instead that it is a racially marked body in a geo-historical marked space that feels the urge or get the call to speak, to articulate, in whatever semiotic system, the urge that makes of living organism 'human' beings".

However, while colonial thinking such as "the first world has knowledge, the third world has culture; Native Americans have Wisdom, Anglo-Americans have science" PERSISTS we cannot deny that the critical assemblages of what Simon Bignall calls the new humanities are celebrated world-wide for their robust anti-colonial orientation. However, with these assemblages we not merely encounter the double pincered potentiality of Western Epistemology, but we also see how this potentiality is turned into Janus faced contradictions when it is appropriated by neoliberal apparatuses to serve multiple ideologies & interests. This is because despite their inherent machinism these assemblages remain constitutively open to perverse manipulation of all kinds. For instance, to view Deleuze & Guattari's conceptual assemblages as thought experiments may not be adequate enough, rather each one of them betrays the potential to be intelligibly or sagaciously used for initiating a revolutionary praxis against capitalism. However, Deleuze & Guattari's "critical cabinet" or "tool box" remains open to neoliberal piracy so much so that authors like Andrew Galloway coin phrases such as Peak Deleuze to indicate excessive populist appropriation of Deleuze & Guattari's thinking. Similarly, if the inherent suppleness or plasticity of scientific reasoning can be turned towards rewilding technology or producing what Sloterdjik calls homeo-technology, the same suppleness can be manipulated by an interplay of neo-liberal powers to yield what Sloterdjik calls allo-techniques.

Towards future epistemologies

Latour's cosmopolitics & Chakraborty's planetarity, in this sense, take a perverse leap towards becoming creative allies of neoliberal apparatuses. By planetarizing human agency Chakraborty doesn't merely agitate the claim that human actions are accountable for planetary crisis. Rather he goes on to ethically validate human exploitation of nature. Similarly, by repositioning affective routes & passages for emancipation or transcendence as infinite networks Latour doesn't merely destroy the hope of our expulsion from global discontents, but also generates fresh impetus for the techno-humanist, digitally networked progression of neoliberal capitalism. Moreover, planetary Studies & cosmopolitics is represented by an exclusivist attention to non-humans. Driven by thinkers like Deleuze & Guattari, Whitehead, Bruno Latour, Dipesh Chakraborty, Quentin Meillassoux & Ray Brassier such configurations performatively align with post-human thesis which promotes an absolute rejection of human. Such a rejection is offered, according to thinkers such as Fukuyama, so that Western epistemology could covertly function as a supplemental ally of digital networks serving the techno-fascist or feudal teleology. The constant conflict between Western epistemology anticapitalism and pro-capitalist orientation only turns it into a frustrating battle field. This stresses the need for joining the decolonial struggle for epistemic reconstitution. However, decolonial thinking has been subjected to a plethora of unsettling criticisms too. Though decoloniality imagines indigeneity as a kind of non- colonial=non-anthropocentric 'clearing' ideal for pursuing the teleology of epistemic reconstitution, such a clearing is purely imaginary in relation to Earth which is essentially a 'matter flow, matter energy & matter movement'. So, if Western epistemology stands as a portmanteau of frustrating ambivalences, decoloniality offers us pluriversal heterotopias or kaleidoscope of fresh discontents. What a scenario like this reflects is the failure of epistemology to offer us any kind of therapeutic alternative. In such a case, how do we create new foundations for creating radical epistemology or thinking "thoughts" or how do we invent a new critical grammar, reason or an aesthesis, which cannot be burdened by provinciality of historical particularisms or co-opted by ideological or capitalist networks, & remains cut off from the deadlocking deconstructive/reconstructive ethicality. Our international workshop will not merely take a step towards finding a way-out of such massive & equally messy epistemological failures. Rather it will treat these failures as opportunities to carve out new passages for creating future epistemologies & pedagogies which can accommodate the grammar of humanity, hope & utopia.



Registration Information

LAST DATE

15 February 2027

REGISTRATION FEE

Rs. 3,000

For Research Scholars and Faculty Members

ENQUIRIES

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Participants are required to arrange their own accommodation.