UGC International Conference

Of the Indian: Literary Constructs and Responses – Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century British Literary Works

March 14-16, 2015

Department of English & Comparative Literary Studies is glad to announce a UGC International Conference on “Of the Indian: Literary Constructs and Responses – Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century British Literary Works” in collaboration with the Alumni Association of the Department on March 14-16, 2015.

The academic year 2014-15 is Silver Jubilee Year of the Department. As a part of the celebration, it has organized many programmes during this academic year like lecture series by eminent scholars, Translation Workshop, Certificate Course in General Semantics, All India Paper Reading Competition for M A students, Theatre Workshop and Film Appreciation Workshop among other events. This International Conference is a part of this celebration and it is a matter of pride for the Department that all these events are sponsored by the Alumni Association of the Department.

This Department is the only one in the Western region of India that offers as a core component courses on Comparative Literature along with English studies. It was the first English Department in Gujarat to be recognized with SAP-DRS by the UGC.

The Concept Note of the Conference

English studies today is a varied mix of not just literatures written and translated in(to) English but also a venture into other disciplines like class, race and gender studies, theatre and cinema studies, and ‘Theory’ which in itself is an inter and cross-disciplinary matrix of knowledge domains not just of the traditional humanities and natural sciences but also of the cutting edge cyber world. But once it used to be works written by the British authors. This might seem simpler today but was obviously not amenable to simplistic interpretations. Within the rubric of our discussion, defining just the term ‘Anglo-Indian’ was a matter of not a little consternation from writers as famous as V.S. Naipaul and critics / teachers as revered as C.D. Narasimhaiah. Most certainly, the term referred to a period but it is equally certain that periodizing literature is beset with many problems. On the other hand, a fact like 2015 being the sesquicentennial year for two important, widely read and prescribed British writers – W.B. Yeats and Rudyard Kipling – both of whom, in their own ways were influenced by / responded to India, is a reality which ought to make us in the English fraternity throw a backward glance to reassess their works and critique them in the postmodern and postcolonial obtaining situations we find ourselves today.

It is rightly assessed that English literature really came of age in the late nineteenth century aided by the rise in the urban population and rate of literacy, development in printing and distribution of books, emergence of periodicals and magazines, gain of a vast market in the colonies, and the overall increase in the mobility of men, machines and ideas. India was an important site in this
phenomenon of the rise of English literature, especially with the fact that this subject was part of the curricula in higher education before it was introduced in England. It is at this time that a literary India was constructed (one is reminded just of the many Raj novels among other things) by the West even to an English educated Indian, one more intriguing than the real India. And it was this English educated Indian minority that first responded – in awe as well in subtle and not so subtle disagreement – to this image of India by the West. It is in this context that the Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies, SU, Rajkot has thought of organizing a Conference with the afore-mentioned theme where the sub-areas might include yet not necessarily be confined to:

1. A critical reassessment of W.B. Yeats in his sesquicentennial year, especially that of the influence of and his responses to India
2. A critical reassessment of Rudyard Kipling in his sesquicentennial year, especially that of the influence of and his responses to India
3. Indian responses to Yeats’ responses on India
4. Indian responses to Kipling’s responses on India
5. A critical reassessment of E.M. Forster, especially that of the influence of and his responses to India
6. Indian responses to Kipling’s responses on India
7. A critical reassessment of George Orwell, especially that of the influence of and his responses to India
8. Indian responses to Orwell’s responses on India
9. The question of cultural imperialism in the literary works of late nineteenth and early twentieth century British writers
10. Non-canonical British writers of this period
11. Non-canonical genres (British and Indian) of this period

Prof. Prashant Sinha, Former Head, Department of English, Pune University, Pune, would deliver the Key-note address in the Conference.

We invite papers in about 2500-3000 words, written in latest MLA style on the issues/areas mentioned above. Selected papers would be later published in a book form.

All the prospective participants are requested to send the abstracts of their papers in about 300 words by 15th February, 2015. An email response would be sent by 22nd Feb., 2015. Participants whose abstract is selected would then have to email their full paper by 1st March, 2015. We request all the participants to email their Abstracts and Papers in word file on the following email ids, as attachments. All the participants are also requested to fill up the attached registration form and send it with a Demand Draft/ Multi city cheque of Rs. 2,000/- in favour of Head, Department of English, Saurashtra University, Rajkot, by 1st March, 2015. Those who have donated Rs. 10,000/- and above to the Alumni Association of the Department, would be required to pay 50% of the registration fee only. Those who need accommodation must indicate along with their abstract by 15th February, 2015, so that we can do the needful.
Rajkot is well connected by road, rail and air. It is 225 Km from Ahmedabad. There are several tourist attractions around Rajkot, like Somnath, Dwarika, Porbandar and the Gir Forest, all within 200 kms from Rajkot. Rajkot remains pleasantly warm in the month of March.

Things to note:

2. Full papers by 1st March, 2015.
4. Email Contacts:

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Kamal Mehta

(Head)

Sanjay Mukherjee

(Conference Coordinator)