PhD course / workshop at the University of Tromsø – The Arctic University of Norway

August 17–19, 2016

Translations: indigenous, religion, tradition, culture

Translations may be linguistic, cultural, corporeal, spatial, temporal, and much more. Today this concept is used in a wide variety of ways within and across different academic disciplines to describe or explore processes of replacement or exchange. It brings attention to moves that are made to make something available, by at once transporting and transforming this something, from one frame and form to another. For example, according to the anthropologist and historian James Clifford (2013: 48):

> Translation is a term for cultural processes that are profoundly dialogic and, like articulation, without closure or guarantee. [---] The theory/metaphor of translation keeps us focused on cultural truths that are continuously "carried across," transformed and reinvented in practice.

Both scholars and others perform translations regularly as part of shifts between different vantage points, modes, codes, and contexts. The purposes of translations may be multiple, in academic projects as well as in daily life. They may be made to communicate, to bridge, to compare, to analyze, or to constitute, implement, change, sponsor, or shield something, or for numerous other reasons. Translations may be disputed or taken for granted, but, as Clifford (2013: 48) also points out, they are "always uneven."

This PhD course focuses on translations that are performed *by means of* the category "indigenous" in combination with categories like "religion," "spirituality," "tradition," "knowledge," and "culture," as well as associated vocabularies and schemata of classification.

The category "indigenous" plays highly significant roles in a broad range of contexts today, not just in numerous local, national, and regional settings but also on a global scale. The categories "religion," "spirituality," "tradition," "knowledge," and "culture" are perhaps even more common in contemporary hegemonic ways of speaking about the orders of the world. Academicians, politicians, and ordinary people alike make frequent use of these tags in diverse projects of translation. Studies of particular instances or trajectories of translation in which "indigenous" is used in combination with any of these other categories, as academic apparatuses, as political instruments, or as everyday tools of orientation, identification, and communication, may shed new light on creative and critical processes of entity-formation, entity-maintenance, and entity-questioning.

This course includes perspectives from the study of religions, history, cultural history, anthropology, indigenous studies, and philosophy, but the foundational issues that are raised makes it relevant also for PhD students from other academic disciplines. Students with research projects that do not contain translations with "indigenous" may participate with papers that focus on comparable translations by means of other categories. The discussions of case studies and theories of translation will enable the students to bring more reflexivity to their own projects, and aid them in developing critical approaches to both empirical matters and theories.

Keynote by Marisol de la Cadena (California, Davis) and lectures by Greg Alles (McDaniel), Greg Johnson (Colorado, Boulder), Arkotong Longkumer (Edinburgh), Kari Aga Myklebost (Tromsø), Nils Oskal (Kautokeino), Olle Sundström (Umeå), Bjørn Ola Tafjord (Tromsø), and John Ødemark (Oslo).

PhD students are required to present a paper in which they relate their own research to the topic of this workshop.

ECTS credits: 5

A list of readings will be distributed in advance.

Deadline for registration: June 1, 2016.

For more details and registration, contact Bjørn Ola Tafjord (bjorn.tafjord@uit.no) or Siv Ellen Kraft (siv.ellen.kraft@uit.no).

This PhD course / workshop is part of the activities of the research project "Indigenous Religion(s): Local Grounds, Global Networks"