



Department of English
Pondicherry University



National Seminar on
**Towards the Subaltern in Knowledge:
Literature, Nature, Culture, Society, & Media**

20th & 21st September 2018

Organized by:

Department of English

Pondicherry University
Puducherry-605014

Host Department

Established in 1986 in Pondicherry University on the salubrious East Coast of India, the Department continues to attract students and scholars from all over India for its M.A., and Ph.D., programmes since its inception. With its special focus on Comparative Literature, it has so far produced around 80 Ph.Ds and 340 M.Phils besides a massive exodus of PGs. The Faculty of the Department with their diverse research areas and publications on topics of contemporary relevance remain at the forefront of innovative research and erudition. The Department also caters to the language and communication needs of students from other departments, running special courses on language and communication skills and an add-on PG Diploma in Professional Communication in English. The Department runs a Research and Journal Alert Forum providing platform for students and Scholars to present their research findings and creative talents.

A Two- day National Seminar has been envisioned by the Department of English on 20th & 21st September 2018. It will have its focus on *“Towards the Subaltern in Knowledge: Literature, Nature, Culture, Society, & Media.”*

Objectives

The main objective of the Seminar is to arrive at a new semiotics of knowledge available in all narratives/discourses in humanities and even in sciences, for which the seminar- will (1) analyze the literary, cultural, media, digital and even science narratives in relation to their appropriation of peripheral elements, styles, techniques etc in their production of knowledge, (2) explore the impact of peripheral ways of living on contemporary life, (3) examine the mixture of genres (mainstream and marginal) within which experimental/innovative trends have occurred/do occur, (4) expose more fully how the 'centre' entails decentering and re-centering itself in all forms of narratives, (5) validate a larger socio-cultural context and avenue for understanding the insertion of the subaltern elements in knowledge production in all spheres of life, and for exploring how structured knowledge replaces the traditional essentialistic knowledge.

Relevance of the Seminar

In the contemporary world evolved out of the recent semiotic revolution, all of us are convinced of the fact that knowledge is not inherent but only constructed. Traditional knowledge is essentialistic, being based on elements that are considered central but contemporary knowledge is constituted with elements drawn from the peripheral. Knowledge is then not static to be discovered but dynamic to be invented. Knowledge is not eternal or universal but only temporary and evolving. Knowledge uses the peripheral elements in reconstituting itself and proves to be fluid.

The centric knowledge moves towards the periphery and the peripheral knowledge becomes central. Jacques Derrida doesn't say non centric but says that the centre can be at the margins. In today's world, all knowledge systems are moving towards the subaltern. Science today takes into account the sub-atomic particles in dealing with the behavior of atoms etc, Music is moving towards the folkloric forms and all popular music tries to erase the thin veneer that separates the classical and the folkloric. And dance is not restricted to the diametrically allotted space anymore and is trying to incorporate all free-styles and space. Post-modern art celebrates the violation of the conventional grammar of aesthetics. Even modern food menus are moving towards the subaltern- 'barbeque' (raw chicken just burnt) which was viewed barbaric earlier. Contemporary literature, in both print and digital versions, also violates all canonical rules and celebrates the mixture of not only genres but also languages - both formal and the slangs. In the present knowledge systems where peripheral elements are let in, every image finds its own centre in all spheres. Without our own consciousness, knowledge has already moved towards the subaltern. With the solidified structures getting decentered, the primal factor is not at the centre but at the margins. All revolutionary thinkers of the modern times - Freud, Marx, Husserl, Foucault, Derrida and others- based their theories only on the peripheral elements. With the admission of peripheral elements in the constitution of knowledge, recognition of the coloured people, the Dalits, the aboriginal people, the tribals, the transgender, the LGBT community, the sex workers, and all other marginalized groups started emerging supreme. The more peripheral elements are in, the more knowledge reconstitutes itself. All this is to explode the hegemony of traditional knowledge to vindicate the fact, "All the parts of a given system are as important as any other part. All human beings are as important as any other human being in a given social system. ("யாதும் ஊரே. யாவரும் கேளிர்")

In fine, the Seminar will attempt to persuade the readers/participants to expand their understanding that knowledge in all respective spheres reconstitutes itself by moving towards the subaltern elements, by showcasing how knowledge in the contemporary narratives/discourses/world centres the periphery and vice versa.

Thrust areas for Discussion:

- 1. Mainstreaming the margins-Literary collages**
- 2. Erasing the classical-folklore divide in arts.**
- 3. Cultural confluences**
- 4. Recognition of the marginalized voices**
- 5. Media discourses- Representing the unrepresented**
- 6. Changing patterns of everyday life.**
- 7. Celebrating taboos-Food and dress**
- 7. Aesthetics in transition.**
- 8. Trans-textuality**
- 9. Trans- gender /sexuality**
- 10. Trans-media, Simulation, New media**
- 11. Nature, Culture, and Society in Literary and Media narratives**



Any other theme related to the main theme.

Registration Fee:

Faculty Members: Rs. 1000

Students/Research Scholars: Rs. 500

Faculty members & Research Scholars of Pondicherry University are exempted from registration fee.

Abstracts (with the Name, address, contact number and email id) are to be sent to the Organizing Secretaries before 29th July 2018 by email (subalturnseminar18@gmail.com).

Abstracts without any of the above details will be summarily rejected.

Travel and Accommodation:

We hope that you will be able to take care of your travel and accommodation. However accommodation will be arranged (payment to be borne by the participants) for outstation paper presenters, if intimated in advance. A list of private Guest Houses and Hotels with tariff and contact details will also be mailed to the participants along with the abstract acceptance Letter so that they can book online also.

Conference kit, Working lunch and local hospitality will be provided.

Last Date for sending abstracts: 29th July 2018

Confirmation of acceptance: 06th August 2018

Full papers are to be sent before 30th August 2018

Full papers will be accepted for presentation only after strict anti-plagiarism check.

Papers selected after peer review will be published by a leading publisher with ISBN number.

Chairperson : Dr. Clement S Lourdes, Professor & Head

Organizing Secretaries : Dr.T.Marx & Dr. Binu Zachariah

**Members : Prof. Sujatha Vijayaraghavan
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