

Shakespeare and Cervantes lived in the tumultuous times wherein the modern world we still inhabit was being shaped. Their oeuvres are points of entry into the early modern; many of their preoccupations in theme and style are our preoccupations still; they have been influential in shaping both the vocabulary and the terrain of the practice of literary studies we have inherited. This seminar is an attempt to examine the project of their legacies and their afterlives in a land far away from the sixteenth century Europe they shared, yet never physically met in.

A key question we hope to consider is the very project of commemoration and memorialization in our faraway lands. How, in the wake of the four hundredth year of their passing, shall we theorize the systems and structures of history, memory, love, literary affect and archival power that on the one hand ensure that theirs is a legacy that will endure, but at the same time also not fall prey to an overly reverential practice of memorialization (unfortunately often transmitted through our own local pedagogy, critical apparatus and publishing industries), that canonizes and fossilizes this legacy? What about our own easy habits of accepting terminologies like the "modern" itself? Are there other paradigms that might serve us better in trying to understand these writers and how we might usefully (or solely for pleasure) understand these writers?

Cervantes' incursions into the finished world of the chivalric are despondent, but also equally, scathingly ironic, not the sorrow of longing but the excitement of new worlds is perhaps upon him, as can be expected of subjects of an empire that had just discovered America.

At the same time, Quixote's picaresque journey is itself a journey into a past that never was, provoking immediately the question of literary memory. Other Cervantes books have not been as popular as Don Quixote (arguably the most translated novel in the world today); is it their more moral narratives that have stood in the way of their mainstream literary memorialization?

Simultaneously, the new structures of statecraft and governmentality emerging out of laicization and the resources afforded by these new colonial hinterlands along with the liberties and the restrictions of Gutenberg's new world necessitate that "the Renaissance man" who emerges from their writings isn't always whole, more Hamlet and Lear than Everyman, more quixotic than heroic. How then, shall we productively argue with Lionel Trilling's statement of 1950: "All prose fiction is a variation on the theme of Don Quixote."

Similarly, Shakespeare's dramatic world, peopled by complex individuals, be they heroes, hustlers, eavesdroppers, villains has withstood the hurly-burly of interrogation and interpretation in many genres and mediums, and is still being reinvented. Indian artists have found use for him within popular culture, in films as wide-ranging as Kaliyattam and Haider, for example, as also in lesser known but nevertheless extraordinarily powerful forms like Suniti Namjoshi's which turns the tables on the Tempest, in a fashion no less extraordinary than Octave Mannoni's re-assessment of what this play could mean in the colonies, when she recasts Caliban as the lesbian lover of Miranda just under Prospero's myopic uninterested gaze. These are all suggestions of an approach to the long shadows these writers cast without slavish reverence.

The seminar is very much interested in the "afterlives" that the literary texts and oeuvres of Shakespeare and Cervantes have had. How have their works been received, studied, appropriated, canonized, forgotten, adapted, even censored, over these last four hundred years; equally, what in these works has enabled them to remain in cultural conversation this long?

The following lists, not exhaustively, some areas that will be considered:

Processes of literary memory; their relationship to changing political/social formations and historical periods, literary movements.

Practices of reception, translation (including into different genres or modes), canonization, adaptation, citation, archiving; commentary and criticism.

Synchronic and diachronic examinations of oeuvres/texts/themes; relationship of these oeuvres/texts/themes to historical processes and social changes.

Technologies that allow these literary afterlives to disseminate into newer modes.

Themes of the individual, interiority.

Close literary and textual analysis; performance studies; analysis of genres, modes, media studies.

Modernity, the modern; alternative, or not-so-dominant modalities or historical frameworks for thinking about these writers and their texts.

Academic Speakers

Shri Navtej Johar, renowned Bharatnatyam dancer and Sangeet Natak Academy awardee

Professor Vibha Maurya,
University of Delhi

Professor Shirshendu Chakrabarty,
University of Delhi

Professor Soumyabrata Choudhury, JNU

Professor K. Madavane,
JNU, Chingari Theatre

Professor Sambuddha Sen,
Shiv Nadar University

Professor S. P. Ganguly, JNU

Dr. Vijaya Venkataraman
University of Delhi

Film Screening and Discussion: *Kaliyattam*
(with English subtitles)

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## Student Competitions

**17.01.2017**

**Beat the Bards (12:00–1:30 pm )**

Pick any genre you can finish writing in within  
an hour – even a novel(la)

**18.01.2017**

**How Quizotic be Thee? (8:30–11:00am)**

Theme-based quiz. Teams of 2 members. Intra  
and inter-college team entries welcome.

**19.01.2017**

**Student Panels (11.00–12.30)**

2,000-word papers welcome on any aspect of  
the theme from currently registered UG/PG  
students from all universities. Full papers to be  
emailed to [gargilitsoc@gmail.com](mailto:gargilitsoc@gmail.com) by  
**15.01.2017** for review.

**Go(ne) Graphic (12:30–1:30pm)**

Create sequential graphic art with your own  
materials; reinvent the creations of the masters  
in another medium. Solo participation only.

**Shake them Frills (4:00–5:30pm)**

Cosplay meets good old-fashioned Stage Play.  
Characters from Shakespeare and/or Cervantes  
Renaissance Gear or 21st Century. Mix and  
match clothes and tongues as you please!  
Individual participation or a maximum of  
3-member groups welcome.  
**Attractive prizes await in all events!**

**To Register:**



**Literary Society Gargi College**

**For inquiries contact :**

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Art credit: Mansee Dhapola

## Commemorations, Legacies, Afterlives: Remembering Shakespeare and Cervantes



"The eyes those silent tongues..."

**SEMINAR & LITERARY FESTIVAL**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**  
**GARGI COLLEGE**  
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