

### Dan Thottakara Seminar on Life Writing

Title:	Dan Thottakara Memorial Two Day Seminar on Life Writing
Date:	28.03.2016 to 29.03.2016
Venue:	Fr. Melesius Hall
Focus of the Event:	Research Methodology
Organizing Body:	Department of English
Resource Person:	Dr. Sheeba K.M., Dr. Sherin B.S., Sathyaraj Venkatesan
Total Number of Attendees:	55



#### *Event Report*

The Dan Thottakkara seminar since its inception focused on frontier areas in literary studies and critical theories. The 2016 edition of the seminar focused on inscribing life: Life Writing across cultures and times. Fr Manager inaugurated the seminar. The first plenary session was led by Dr. Sheeba K M from the Department of History, who spoke on Every Day Literary Negotiations of a Malayali Woman. The afternoon plenary session was an interrogation on Gender, Genre and Historiography: Mapping the Feminist History in India through Autobiographies. The session was led by Dr. Sherin B.S from EFLU Hyderabad. Dr. Sathyaraj Venkatesan from the Department of Humanities NIT,

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Trichy lead a session on Scripting Lives and Drawing Wounds: Autobiography and Comics. Paper presentations were done in the afternoon session.



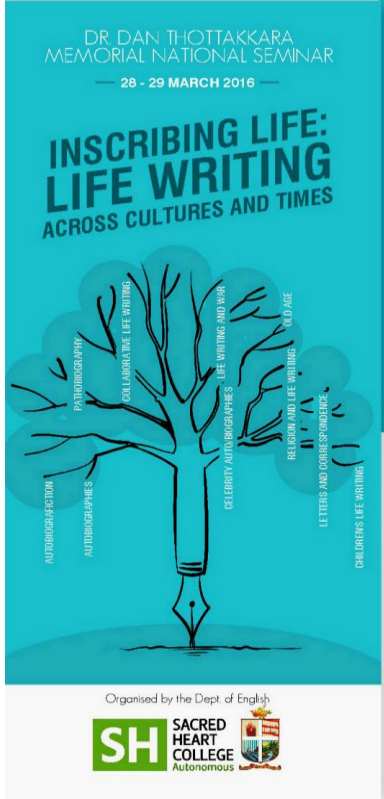
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*Additional Pictures*



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*Event Brochure*



The Dan Thottakkara National Seminar was launched by the Department of English in 2000 to keep alive the memory of the late scholar. Since its inception, the seminar has focused on frontier areas in literary studies and critical theories and has attracted scholars from all over India. This year's seminar explores Life Writing and Autobiography as an area of inquiry and discernment.

Late Rev. Dr. Daniel Thottakkara, a scholar in American Literature and Transcendental Philosophy was a member of the faculty of English at Sacred Heart College and served as Principal of the college from 1988-91. His vision has been foundational in the modernization of the college. The Dan Thottakkara Memorial National Seminar is instituted with the support of Rev. Fr. Dan's family.

The Department of English cordially invites you to the two day seminar and calls for your creative contributions in the form of scholarly papers and discussions to enliven the sessions.

Prof. Dr. C. S. Francis  
 Head of the Department of English, Sacred Heart College.

Contact: Mr. Aravind R. Nair, Convenor  
 (Dan Thottakkara National Seminar)  
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**Inscribing Life: Life Writing across Cultures and Times**

Gertrude Stein's remark, that 'Anything is an autobiography points to the self-revelatory nature of any species of art. Through extrapolation one may argue that any human endeavor is also one of self inscription. The term life writing attains significance when it comes to denote that body of work whose primary motivation is to inscribe life. Life-writing is the reflection of our efforts to capture transient lived experience in more permanent (literary and extra-literary) forms.

The wide ambit of life writing includes biography, autobiography, memoirs, documentaries, blogs and posts on social media. These have likewise inspired a wide variety of critical responses. Though having a long tradition of engagement with life writing, critical discourse on life writing was institutionalized in 1970s. In his essay, 'Autobiography as De-facement', Paul de Man famously concludes that "the distinction between fiction and autobiography is not an either/or polarity but...finally undecidable". Poststructuralism

went so far as to auger the end of autobiography as it transitioned into "fictions of the self" (Michael Sprinkler).

In its encounter with feminism, life writing (women's autobiography in particular) has been examined as site for negotiation between women's self representation and their historical representations as idealized and/or invisible. Postcolonial fiction has drawn upon the techniques of autobiography in such works as Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (being the autobiography of Saleem Sinai), Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and J.M. Coetzee's *Foe*. Complementing these are autobiographical texts with postcolonial discourse at their core such as Sara Suleri's *Meatless Days*, Bell Hooks' *Bone Black: Memories of Girlhood* and Henry Louis Gates Jr's *Coloured People: A Memoir*.

As we approach the third decade of the twenty first century, Life Writing seems to be gaining ground over traditional fictional narratives. The Nobel Laureate in Literature for 2015, Svetlana Alexievich, is a life writer whose "polyphonic writings" chronicle disasters such as Chernobyl. Other recent work in Life Writing presents such diverse concerns as trauma narratives on the Holocaust, illness narratives and memoirs about ageing or death of loved ones. That Life Writing is in the prime of its life is beyond doubt. This seminar is an attempt to contemplate works which, according to James Olney, comprise the "symbiotic matter of memory and narrative".

We invite scholarly papers for presentation on (but not limited to) topics such as:

- Historical accounts of Life Writing
- Life writing as history
- Life writing and Digital spaces
- Autobiographical – fictional life writing
- Pathobiography – Disease narratives
- Age and Life writing
- Motherhood
- Old Age
- Children's life writing
- Letters and Correspondence as Life writing
- Life Writing and War
- War poems, narratives as life writing
- Religion and Life writing
- Biography/Autobiographies of religious figures
- Celebrity Auto/biographies
- Collaborative Life Writing.

**PROGRAMME**

Venue: Fr. Melesius Hall, Sacred Heart College, Thevara.

**Day 1 (28th March 2016)**  
 Registration: 9:00 AM Onwards

**Inaugural Session**  
 10:00 AM: Inauguration  
 10:45 AM: Tea Break

**Morning Plenary Session**  
 11:15 AM: World and the Word: Everyday Literary Negotiations of a Malayali Woman.  
 Speaker: Dr Sheeba K.M., Associate Professor, Dept of History, SSUS, Kalyadi.

12:30 PM: Discussion  
 01:00 PM: Lunch Break

**Afternoon Plenary Session**  
 02:00 PM: Gender, Genre and Historiography: Mapping the Feminist History in India through Autobiographies by Dr. Sherin B. S., Assistant Professor, Dept. of Comparative Literature, EFLU, Hyderabad

03:00 PM: Discussion and Interactive Session  
 03:30 PM: Tea Break

**Day 2 (29th March 2016)**

**Morning Plenary Session**  
 10:00 AM: Scripting Lives and Drawing Wounds: Autobiography and Comics by Dr. Sathyaaraj Venkatesan, Assistant Professor, Dept of Humanities, NIIT, Trichy.

11:30 AM: Tea Break  
 11:45 AM: Discussion  
 12:00 PM: Paper Presentations Session 1  
 01:00 PM: Lunch Break

**Afternoon Plenary Session**  
 02:00 PM: Paper Presentations Session 2  
 03:00 PM: Tea Break  
 03:15 PM: Valedictory Session

Please send your full papers to [english@shcollege.ac.in](mailto:english@shcollege.ac.in) on or before 26th March 2016.

You can address your queries to  
 Mr. Aravind R. Nair, Convenor (Dan Thottakkara National Seminar)  
[aravindnair@shcollege.ac.in](mailto:aravindnair@shcollege.ac.in), Mob: 9400 61 05 05

Dr. Francis C. S., Head, Department of English  
 Sacred Heart College, Thevara, [csfrancis@shcollege.ac.in](mailto:csfrancis@shcollege.ac.in), Mob: 9446600336

For route information, please visit our website: [www.shcollege.ac.in](http://www.shcollege.ac.in)



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*Event Attendance Sheet*

Sacred Heart College (Autonomous), Thevara

**Dan Thottakara Seminar**

Two Day Workshop on Writing Research Articles

28.03.2016 - 29.03.2016

Sl. No	Name	Signature
1	K. M. Johnson	<i>[Signature]</i>
2	Tom C Thomas	<i>[Signature]</i>
3	Rajesh James	<i>[Signature]</i>
4	Bijo N. Mathew	<i>[Signature]</i>
5	Aravind Nair	<i>[Signature]</i>
6	Sunil K. V.	<i>[Signature]</i>
7	Fr. Sabu Thomas	<i>[Signature]</i>
8	Shijo Varghese	<i>[Signature]</i>
9	Fr. Joseph Varghese	<i>[Signature]</i>
10	Rajesh M	<i>[Signature]</i>
11	Fr. Sebastian John	<i>[Signature]</i>
12	Sumy S.	<i>[Signature]</i>
13	ROSE MARY JOSE	<i>[Signature]</i>
14	SRUTHI S KAKKATTIL	<i>[Signature]</i>
15	ANNMARIYA JOSE	<i>[Signature]</i>
16	MILU TESS KURIAN	<i>[Signature]</i>
17	NAMITHA ELIZABETH SMART	<i>[Signature]</i>
18	GEO MATHEW	<i>[Signature]</i>
19	DENNIES JOSE	<i>[Signature]</i>
20	ZAAHIRA KALUMANGOTHI	<i>[Signature]</i>
21	VISHNU PRAKASH	<i>[Signature]</i>
22	CHANDNI BABU	<i>[Signature]</i>
23	DONA BOBBY	<i>[Signature]</i>
24	AISWARYA M ASOKAN	<i>[Signature]</i>
25	MINNA JOSE	<i>[Signature]</i>
26	ANN OOMMEN	<i>[Signature]</i>

