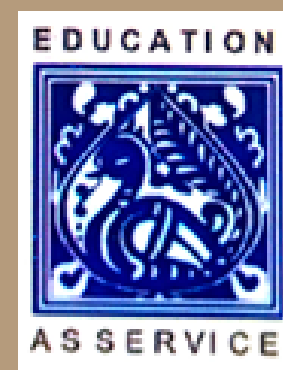


CALL FOR PAPERS



Myth, History and Culture

Two Day ICSSR sponsored International Seminar organised by
Department of English (VASANT KANYA MAHAVIDYALAYA
KAMACHHA, VARANASI-221010)



PRESENTATION

22-23

January 2024

SUB THEMES

- ✓ Myths and Reality
- ✓ Myth and History
- ✓ Mythopoeia: Myth Making and Retelling
- ✓ Indian Myths, Legends and Fables
- ✓ Myths and Symbols in Art and Philosophy
- ✓ Psychological and Social Dimensions of Myths
- ✓ Myth and Film Studies
- ✓ Folklores, Orality and Culture
- ✓ Orient and Occident Myths: Similarities and Differences
- ✓ Myth, Religion and Rituals

IMPORTANT DATE

25th Dec 2023	2nd Jan 2024	3rd Jan 2024	10th Jan 2024	15th Jan 2024	22-23 Jan 2024
Abstract submission	Abstract acceptance	Registration Opens	Payment deadline	Full paper deadline	Conference date

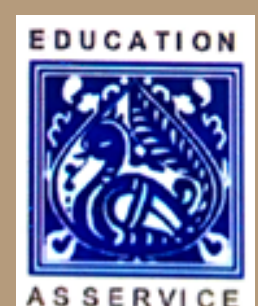
REGISTRATION FEE

- ✓ Faculty and Academicians 1500 INR
- ✓ Research Scholar 1000 INR
- ✓ Students 800 INR
- ✓ International Participants 25 USD

📍 Venue : Seminar Hall, VASANT KANYA MAHAVIDYALAYA

Organized by

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
VASANT KANYA MAHAVIDYALAYA
KAMACHHA, VARANASI-221010
(Admitted to the privileges of Banaras Hindu
University)
(Institution Accredited 'A' by NAAC)



Submission Link

<https://forms.gle/Eq4yfU2Sbxz9hs8YA>

Convener : Dr. Purnima

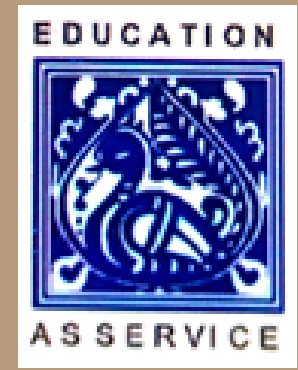


Email : Seminarengvkm@vkm.org.in



Phone : 6393688515

About The College



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The college, established in 1954, Vasant Kanya Mahavidyalaya is situated within the premises of the Theosophical Society at Kamachha, Varanasi. Having been the Karmabhumi of none other than the great visionary, Dr. Annie Besant, it has a glorious past. Adopting the motto “Education as Service”, the college seeks to blend the principles of tradition and modernity. The college was accredited “A” by NAAC in its second cycle of accreditation. Admitted to the privileges of Banaras Hindu University, it has been able to carve a niche for itself among the topmost institutions of the country dedicated to women's education. The college now runs Ph.D, Post-graduate and Undergraduate courses as well as Diploma courses sanctioned by UGC.

Abstract

“Myths get thought in man unbeknownst to him” (Levi Strauss), thus opening new dimensions of understanding life. Although, for modern societies, the term “myth” stands for an imaginary tale, an untrue story, a legend, a superstition etc. for ancient societies who existed before written culture, myths were narrations of “the ultimate origin of reality” and were not tales but true stories. This fact indicates that mythology remains an essential area of interest for humanities like history, culture, philosophy, psychology, sociology and socio-cultural anthropology, whose practices developed within the framework of rituals, myths, customs and traditions, indicating that myth and mythology have pervaded into daily life, that they have turned into a reference guide, sometimes due to their guiding spirit and sometimes by being a tool for social control. Orient and Occident myths help us understand the culture and history of a particular people. For example, the study of Indian and Greek mythology can tell us a great deal about the values and beliefs of the ancient Indians and Greeks. It can help us understand the world around us providing explanations for things that we may not be able to comprehend. Many myths and legends try to explain allegorically natural phenomena, such as the changing of the seasons or the movement of the stars. Whether we realize it or not, mythology is still a part of our world. By understanding mythology, we can better understand ourselves and the world around us. Without the knowledge of mythology and iconography, the history of art can not be interpreted, nor could art criticism be done. Through the proposed seminar, we will be able to explore the multiple dimensions that myths open for us and how myths can be read inter-textually and inter-disciplinarily and help us understand our history, tradition and culture.

Concept Note

It is often believed that mythology is a thing of the past, no longer relevant in our modern world. However, this could not be further from the truth. Mythology can help us understand the world around us in several ways. Every culture has its myths and legends, and these stories can teach us a lot about where we come from and what our beliefs are. By learning about the myths and legends of other cultures, we can get a better understanding of their history and their values.

Everyday experiences of modern societies, like our ancient counterparts, are shaped by folklore and mythical discourse. Both as an individual and as a society, human experience is not only associated with its immediate physical and social environment but also offers allegorical and metaphorical narratives. These stories from both the distant and near past have been influencing the political ideology of societies and reinforcing the cultural responses to particular facts and events. In his ground-breaking work *Mythologies*, Roland Barthes showed how the instruments of mass culture transformed the mere objects of everyday life into symbols and how a mythologist can decipher these symbolic meanings (Leak 1994). Throughout historical and cultural developments, human beings have attributed divine interpretations to the factors influencing them. By attributing such meanings to natural forces that were superior to them, humans also adopted the habit of structuring and symbolization. From worshipping Sheetala Mata during chicken-pox, measles and small-pox outbreaks to the rise of Corona Mata during covid-19 pandemic, depending on the geographic and cultural context, humans developed solutions for inexplicable events or situations such as illnesses. Traditional ecological knowledge is often transferred through religious rituals, Vrata Kathas and oral narratives. To specify, humans sought genuine solutions employing the daily practices and rituals that they structured around the myths and legends, which were transmitted to them through cultural heritage.

One of the strategies to explore mythical narratives is to give an allegorical interpretation to texts, which is to apply 'a metaphoric mode of understanding' to the stories that do not have 'metaphorical language' (Gibbs 2011). This strategy has long been used in the interpretation of myths, such as Homeric poems, religious texts, such as the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Old Testament, and modern novels, like George Orwell's *1984* and *Animal Farm* (Ritchie 2017). Metaphorical lore, archetypes and allegories still shape our discourse on themes like eco-spirituality, gender and caste inequality, and racism. Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* was a transforming book deciphering the complex and oppressive myths about female identity (Le Doeuff & Dow 2010) while Edward Said's *Orientalism* criticized the Eurocentric History and deciphered the myths of colonialism about 'the Orient' (Young 2004).

Legends and symbols are not discoveries that ancient societies carried out on their own; rather, they are the products of a cultural whole transmitted through generations. In this way, some of these creations spread to lands far away from their root soils, like the myth of Lord Hanuman travelled to Mauritius with the girmitiyas and was absorbed in the local milieu. Storytelling is a timeless art form that has been used to entertain, inform, and educate audiences for centuries. Many modern stories, films, and TV shows draw inspiration from mythology, incorporating elements of myth to make it more compelling and interesting by adding another layer of meaning to it.

The interaction between literature and mythology offers another interesting paradigm by shaping modern literary texts. The mythological characters of ancient South Asia, Egypt, Greece and Rome may seem exaggerated to the modern reader but by tracing the historical journey of literature, we can infer myths and legends that initially inspired tragedies and morals. From this perspective, mythology offers an essential reference for modern literature. Within the literary framework, almost all writers apply myths, mythical characters and related archetypes in their narrative for various purposes. Thus, it is difficult to understand T.S. Eliot's *The Wasteland* without understanding of Orient, Occident and Biblical myths. There are some basic similarities and differences between Orient and Occident myths. In the East, the highest priority is the society, and the individual's submission to his role within that society; in the West, priority is given to the individual, his uniqueness and his freedom from obligation to any ideology or social status but what he may choose. Therefore, Plato appealed to mythos as a pedagogical means for imparting his views through the Dialogues. On the other hand, along with the transition from mythopoetic thought to cosmological arguments, irreversible diffraction occurred in the history of ideas, and philosophy parted ways with mythos for a certain while. Centuries later, however, many theorists in both clinical psychology and contemporary philosophy made use of myth as a symbolic means of expression and pioneered a "mythic turn" in the social sciences.

To conclude, mythology forms an important part of culture, history and identity. Along with cultural and historical discourse, it can also be used to entertain and inspire people by exploring the deep, hidden aspects of human nature. Moreover, myths help us understand the human condition by providing us with stories and characters that we can identify with. We all have aspects of our personality that we are not proud of, and it can be helpful to see these aspects reflected in a mythological character. The myths of good and evil, and how these forces interact provide a better understanding of the world we live in and the people who inhabit it. This seminar would offer a confluence of scholars from across India and also from abroad to offer insight and share their views. Similar myths, symbols and motifs across cultures will help bridge cultural differences among various communities.

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Convener : Dr. Purnima, Assistant Professor, Department of English , VKM, 6393688515

Organising Secretary : Prof. Niharika Lal, coordinator, NAAC, VKM
Head, Department of English, VKM, 9838098322

Organizing Committee

Dr. Supriya Singh, Department of English, VKM, 8004851181

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