

# Negotiating “Marginal” Subject Positions: The Dynamics of Class and Culture in the English Department Discourse of a State University in Sri Lanka

Thilini Prasadika<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

*Despite or perhaps because of the long and prestigious history, there is an emergent discourse among the English Department alumni and Faculty that English studies are in crisis in university today, because “standards” have to be lowered, changed or broadened to accommodate a “radically different” kind of student. Whereas earlier students were from middle or upper middle class, Anglicized, urban, professional milieu, now prospective students are much more diverse, and many are even first-generation undergraduates. This study attempts to trace the “evolution” (or transformation) of the English Department students of a state university as they try with varying degrees of “success” and varying social and psychological costs to negotiate a more or less “nonconventional” socio-cultural background and value system that is imperative for gaining acceptance.*

**Keywords:** *Non-conventional, Privileged space, English Department, Value system, Negotiation*

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<sup>1</sup> Department of English, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka