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Imaginations of Pleasure: Against a History of Desire in Kerala

Muraleedharan T.

Abstract

This paper seeks to explore some of the historical incidents that appear to have critically engaged with and, perhaps, restructured the perceptions of sexuality in Kerala. The term sexuality here refers not only to the relational practices but also to the imaginations of desirability and pleasure. Herein, the research will revisit some well-known historical conjectures that appear to have crucially transformed the structures of desire in Kerala. It explores the coherences, convenient classifications, and breakages through which sexuality and desire have been historically and politically mapped in Kerala, delineating specific moments in the region's many time-spaces that posit contestations of established discourses on/of desire.

Keywords

Desire, Performativity, Sexuality, Gender, LGBTQIA+ Histories

Writing the Woman/Reader: Reading, Gender and Self-Fashioning in B. Kalyani Amma's *OrmayilNinnu*

Meera C.

Abstract

Discourses and practices at the intersections of gender and reading have fascinated historians of reading since the 1980s. The present paper seeks to analyse the reminiscences of reading in B. Kalyani Amma's (1884-1959) memoir *OrmayilNinnu* (1964), which recounts her distinct engagement with objects, spaces and contexts of reading in the late 19th and early 20th century Travancore. The paper engages with the textures and tensions in the narrative as the sites at which the non-unitary figure of the historical woman reader gets articulated. It further places the fashioning of a gendered reader-self in the text against ideations of femininity and propriety that emerged as crucial within discourses on women and reading during the time. Exploring how the narrativisation of reading in the text becomes tied to gendered presumptions and prohibitions, the paper looks at how, for historical women readers, the practice of reading and the textualisation of reading experience becomes intricately linked to their conflicted negotiation of gender roles and their fraught inhabitations of modernity.

Keywords

Woman Reader, History of Reading, Book History, Gender; Modernity, Keralam

Social Reform, Law, Gendered Identity Among An Oppressed Caste, the Ezhavas in Travancore

Meera Velayudhan

Abstract

Undoubtedly the most widespread mass movement that Travancore witnessed, the social reform movement among Ezhavas arose in the context of the emergence of new social classes in Travancore from among non-dominant castes and communities. The Ezhava social reform movement sought to unite all sections of their caste through a common law of inheritance. As ‘low castes’ struggling to assert their identity and dignity, the Ezhava social reform movement’s campaigns were directed not only towards enhancing the educational and occupational status of the Ezhavas, but also to free them from the social shackles or customs, many of which were considered as imitations from the upper castes. This paper looks at the discourse within the Ezhava social reform movement in 1919 on matriliney, inheritance, form of marriage and the campaign for a law of succession and marriage for Ezhavas which was predicated on a distinct construction of gender. The discourse around the Ezhava Law Committee’s attempts to enact laws of inheritance, succession and form of marriage suggest both an attempt to build a community identity, its ‘reputation’ and ‘status’ as well as the subordination of women by controlling the relations, including property relations, between the sexes within the emerging unit of the family.’

Keywords

Caste, social reform, matriliney, gendered identity, inheritance, property relations

കേരളത്തിന്റെ ആധുനികതയും ജാതിശരീരവും

രേഖാരാജ്

സംഗ്രഹം

കേരള ആധുനികതയെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള പൊതുക്കൽപ്പനകളിലും അക്കാദമികചർച്ചകളിലും നിറഞ്ഞു നിൽക്കുന്ന ജാതിശരീരമെന്ന ബിംബത്തെ തീർത്തും അവഗണിക്കുന്ന പ്രവണതയെ ഈ ലേഖനം ചോദ്യം ചെയ്യുന്നു. മലയാളി ആധുനികതയുടെ സാംസ്കാരികവും വൈജ്ഞാനികവുമായ അടിവേരുകളിൽ കേരളത്തിന്റെ ജാതിഘടനകളും ലിംഗനിർമ്മിതികളും പുലർത്തിവരുന്ന സ്വാധീനം ഇവിടെ പുനർനിർവചിക്കുന്നു. മാറി വരുന്ന ജാതി സമവാക്യങ്ങളെ ചെറുക്കുന്നതിൽ, ദളിത്-സ്ത്രീ സ്വതാവിഷ്കരണ രാഷ്ട്രീയത്തിനുള്ള പങ്ക്/സാധ്യതകൾ പരിശോധിക്കുന്നു.

Abstract

This paper critiques the tendency to exclude the widely present symbol of the caste body from popular imaginaries and academic debates around Kerala modernity. The paper seeks to redefine the influence of caste structures and gender constructs on the cultural and epistemological roots of Malayali modernity. It examines the possibilities of a politics that articulates the identity of the Dalit woman, and explores the role it can play in resisting changing caste equations.

Keywords

Kerala Modernity, Caste, Dalit Womanhood, Dalit Feminist Politics

Cookbooks from Keralam: Creative Adaptations and In-scriptions of Alternative Modernities

Gigy J. Alex

Abstract

Against the critical backgrounds of neo-postcolonialism and cultural studies, the *cookbook* genre may be located as ‘disseminators’ of a specific *modernity of taste* that is closely tied to the circulation of feminine identity, efficiency, and gender-expectations in Keralam. The micro-narratives that permeate food writing are crucial to this endeavour, as food cultures, gastronomic principles, and genealogies of food mark a significant area where “recipes and cookbooks used food to familiarise housewives with the new logic of the modern household” (Berger, 2013: 1632). The current paper studies the rhetorical strategies of the *cookbook*, and its transformations of the architectural spaces of the kitchen, discourses on mechanisation and new technologies, and its reification of ‘legitimate’ worldviews about social behaviour, family management, and gendered roles in contemporary Keralam.

Keywords

Cooking, culinary modernities, feminine identity, cookbooks, gastronomy

Television Modernity and Mediated Femininities in Keralam

Benita Acca Benjamin

Abstract

The introduction of television in Keralam in 1985 initiated new political and personal spaces and facilitated rapid transitions in the cultural, economic, social, and political spheres. In the many interstices between the histories of technological progress and socio-cultural negotiations are situated the multifarious ways in which Malayali women viewed, absorbed and tackled the fleeting images on the television screen. The political economies and gender dynamics in Keralam would give insight into the power structures that mediated women's engagements with television when it was first introduced. This paper attempts to look into the ways in which television modernity introduced new terrains for articulating femininities, which reflect the cultural economies and moral economies of the region. The paper will also attempt to understand women's relative position in the domestic hierarchy in and around the time when television was introduced in the region. By studying the socio-economic changes that facilitated the reconfiguration of the domestic space in Keralam, this paper attempts to contextualise the ways in which television, as an infotainment platform, influenced the gendered anxieties and desires through the reaffirmation of idealised femininities.

Keywords

Television modernity, gender, domesticity, cultural economy

Theatre: Workplace and the New Working Women

Sajitha Madathil

Abstract

This paper will aim to search the relationship between the twentieth century public sphere in Kerala that was structured through the modalities of caste and patriarchy and the lives of actresses who negotiated this space and these intersections, with gender as a seminal category. Public demonstration of education in the liberal arts was sanctioned and applauded in many branches of theatrical performance and enhanced women's social and professional credibility. These interventions by early actresses in different directions slowly merged the borders of the public and private spaces for women artists. Through the story of Palluruthy Lakshmi, this paper finds answers to the following questions: What kind of resistance did actresses have to face from caste and patriarchal hierarchical orders that governed the public spaces? How did early actresses take up this challenge?

Keywords

Palluruthy Lakshmi, Kerala Social Reform Movement, *Balan*, Malayala Sangeetha Natakam, Kerala Actresses

വള്ളത്തോൾ നാരായണമേനോന്റെ സാഹിത്യനിരൂപണം

ലക്ഷ്മി വി.എസ്.

സംഗ്രഹം

സാഹിത്യമീമാംസയിൽ മൗലികധാരണകളുള്ള മികച്ച സാഹിത്യനിരൂപകൻകൂടി ആയിരുന്നു മഹാകവി വള്ളത്തോൾ നാരായണമേനോൻ. 'ആത്മപോഷിണി'യുടെ പത്രാധിപത്യം അദ്ദേഹത്തിലെ നിരൂപകനെ കൂടുതൽ ജാഗരൂകനാക്കി. ഗ്രന്ഥവിമർശനം എന്നതിലുപരി സാഹിത്യസിദ്ധാന്തങ്ങളെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള പര്യാലോചനകളിലേക്കും വള്ളത്തോൾ എത്തിച്ചേർന്നു. വള്ളത്തോളിന്റെ സാഹിത്യനിരൂപണകൃതികളെ വിശകലനം ചെയ്യുകയും വള്ളത്തോൾ എന്ന സാഹിത്യനിരൂപകനെ യഥാസ്ഥാനപ്പെടുത്തുകയും ചെയ്യുകയാണ് ഈ പഠനത്തിന്റെ ലക്ഷ്യം.

താക്കോൽവാക്കുകൾ

പുസ്തകാഭിപ്രായങ്ങൾ, കാവ്യനിരൂപണങ്ങൾ, കഥ-നോവൽ-നാടകനിരൂപണം, പരിഭാഷാനിരൂപണങ്ങൾ, അധിവിമർശനം, പക്ഷപാതരഹിതമായ വിമർശനം, ഗുണദോഷ നിരൂപണം

Abstract

Great poet Vallathol Narayanamenon was renowned critic also, with original ideas in literary criticism. The editorship of 'Athmaposhini' triggered the critic in him. Beyond reviews of books, he reached the field of Principle of Literary criticism. This article aims at the analysis of the writings of Vallathol on criticism and to denote his position as a critic.

Keywords

Book reviews, Review of Stories, Novels and Plays, Reviews of Translations, Metacriticism, Impartial criticism, Criticism pointing at the merits and demerits

കെ.ജി. ജോർജിന്റെ ചലച്ചിത്രങ്ങളിലെ സ്ത്രീ പ്രതിനിധാനങ്ങൾ

പാർവതി പി. ചന്ദ്രൻ

സംഗ്രഹം

കെ.ജി. ജോർജ്ജ് മലയാള സിനിമാചരിത്രത്തിൽ വരുത്തിയ ഭാവുകതാപരമായ മാറ്റത്തെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള പഠനമാണിത്. അദ്ദേഹം സംവിധാനം ചെയ്ത സിനിമകൾ അപഗ്രഥിച്ച്, നിഗമനങ്ങളിലെത്തുന്ന പഠനരീതിയാണ് സ്വീകരിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളത്. അദ്ദേഹം മലയാളസിനിമയിൽ മാറ്റങ്ങളുണ്ടാക്കാൻ പര്യാപ്തമായ പരീക്ഷണങ്ങൾ നടത്തി. പുരുഷാധിപത്യസ്വഭാവം നിലനിർത്തിയിരുന്ന വാണിജ്യസിനിമകളെ സ്ത്രീകേന്ദ്രീകൃതമാക്കി മാറ്റുന്നതിലും കെ.ജി. ജോർജിന്റെ സിനിമകൾ പ്രധാന പങ്കുവഹിച്ചു.

താക്കോൽവാക്കുകൾ

കെ.ജി. ജോർജ്ജ്, മലയാളസിനിമ, വാണിജ്യ സിനിമ, പരീക്ഷണ സിനിമകൾ, സ്ത്രീകേന്ദ്രീകൃത സിനിമ, പി.ജെ. ആന്റണി, സി.വി. ബാലകൃഷ്ണൻ, സൈക്കോ ത്രില്ലർ സിനിമ, ആർട്ട് സിനിമ

Abstract

This is an article on the imaginative changes brought into Malayalam film industry by the renowned film director K.G. George. His films are studied by critically analyzing them. Variety of experiments were conducted by him to experience a change in Mollywood. The male dominance in the Malayalam film industry was given a new turn by replacing them with powerful female characters.

Keywords

K.G. George, Malayalam film (Mollywood) , commercial movies, feminist films, P.J. Antony, C.V. Balakrishnan, Psycho thriller movies, Art movies.