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Ngugi wa Thiong'o and the Endorsement of Trade Unionism

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Abstract

This article examines Ngugi wa Thiong'o's portrayal of the trade union in *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari*. The article contends that Ngugi is one of the well-known African novelists who have committed his literature to the cause of the proletariat. Whereas the new Kenyan postcolonial government is portrayed in the negative, the image of the trade union is illuminated in the positive. The meaning of this is that the postcolonial government of Kenya is portrayed as an anti-people government, but the trade union is depicted as a people-based union. The article demonstrates that it is the social contradictions that make it possible for the oppressed to be conscious of their class, of what and how they will do, in order to be free from capitalist exploitation and oppression. The article reveals that the trade unionists, apart from showing their solidarity, back their demands with strike actions, belligerent protest marches/songs, and violent attacks especially in *Matigari*. The article concludes that the trade union serves as a vehicle of sensitisation, mobilisation, resistance against misrule, and social transformation.

Keywords

Trade union, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, capitalism, exploitation, oppression, resistance.

Memory, Time, History: Author's Introduction to *Adi Sankara and Other Stories*

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Abstract

This paper looks at the way in which we understand fiction as a trope, where time and space and event coalesce in such a way that we can juxtapose history and contemporary events on the same plane. Reading fiction then becomes an exercise in understanding what Arendt called the Human Condition, where the identities of women, enslaved peoples, and animals can be interpreted as a continuous process of reinterpretation. As a writer of short stories and novellas, I am particularly interested in how the trapeze of fiction gives the sociologist a free rope with which to manoeuvre every day reality in terms of a metalanguage of expectations, subversive strategies in relation to dominant narratives, where the feminist intervention is to provide not linear histories, but interpretative ones.

Keywords

Adi Sankara and Other Stories, Nelycinda, vernacular histories, consent to slavery.

Concept of Beauty: A Mirage in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*

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Abstract

The concept of beauty has been viewed variedly by different people, societies, and cultures all over the world. Beauty has been associated more with women and it has been an issue for more battles and wars rather than for peace and prosperity in human history. Though Beauty is considered to be in “the eyes of the beholder,” the society and cultural environment can change the standards of what is viewed as beauty. Among the Black-American community the concept of beauty has been immensely influenced and measured by the standards of white society and this concept of beauty mirage in turn has had devastating effects in the lives and relations of the people. Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* is a novel that has beauty as its theme other than race, gender, class, and identity crisis of the black community. In this paper an attempt has been made to trace out the concept of beauty as considered and experienced by the black women living in a racialised society and how Morrison has tried to redefine Black beauty.

Keywords

Beauty, mirage, culture, Black-American community, White society.

Class, Caste, and Economic Struggle in *Chemmeen*

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Abstract

The classic work *Chemmeen* by Thakazhi Shivashankaran Pillai is widely acknowledged as a tragic love story. This paper attempts to read the novel on the lines of Marxist criticism emphasising the class, caste, and economic struggles embedded within the novel. Taking the role of a social reformer, Pillai embedded within his works realist pictures of the society. Pillai, in *Chemmeen*, as in many of his other novels like *Thottiyude Makan* emphasises on the much needed changes to bring about a total social reformation through a classless society. This article addresses how Pillai has portrayed social struggles based mostly on economic terms and how the economy is able to define one's voice, status, and place in the society. The cultural construction of superstitions and beliefs for legitimising authority as narrated by Pillai through his many characters and incidents are elaborated in the paper.

Keywords

Caste struggle, economic struggle, social reform, Base, Super Structure, Superstitions, social revolt, legitimacy.

A Critical Reading of Select Fairy Tales: A Cultural and Social Byproduct

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Abstract

Fairy tales are an indispensable part of children's literature. They comprise fantastic characters such as dwarfs, fairies, magical wand, mermaids, enchanted castles, and many more. They are fictional in nature, but these narratives are reservoir of social and cultural knowledge. This paper analyses fairytales as the byproduct of society and culture in which they have been written. Children idolise their favourite characters and try to emulate them. These tales deeply influence the psyche of a child in his developing years and play an important role in carving his identity. They are psychological mirrors and are loaded with deeper meaning than they apparently appear. To some degree, many of us live out these old stories, without even being aware of their influence upon us in our formative years. All the gender identity development takes place through childhood is the sum total of societal and cultural notion of political correctness. These fantastic narratives teach children the notion of appropriate temperament, gesture, attitude, and action according to their gender. The concept of external beauty has also been analysed critically with reference to these tales. They project the accumulative voice of hegemony which systematically devoice a large chunk of society through its idealisation of a woman's features. It is a political move to retain power in male orbit and consciously brainwashes and formulates the psyche of the other sex in favour of male dominance and female subservience.

Keywords

Fairy tale, culture, beauty myth, gender, female appropriation.

Analytical Issues in Standard Kiswahili Phonology

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Abstract

While currently Standard Kiswahili is used internationally, there are many structural issues about the language that have not been concluded. These issues are evident even at the very basic structural level, phonology. This paper seeks to bring to light such analytical issues that are evident from some of the researches done on Kiswahili phonology. The paper will discuss six issues evident in the study of Standard Kiswahili phonology. It will explore the issue of aspiration in Standard Kiswahili vis-à-vis the analysis of Standard Kiswahili phonemes. The other issue that has been controversial is on the existence, or lack of it, of pre-nasalised consonants in Standard Kiswahili. The paper proposes to explore this issue as well as show the status of such sounds if they exist. Further, the paper will explore if archiphonemes exist in Standard Kiswahili as has at times been argued, and if they do, which are they? The paper will also seek to know if there are any non-Bantu phonemes that have been included in Standard Kiswahili phoneme matrix as a result of borrowing. The status of the labio-dental nasal will also be explored with a view to establishing if it is a full phoneme or not. Lastly, the paper will seek to establish whether Standard Kiswahili has allophones. The issues mentioned here are contentious and they lead to a problem in establishing the actual number of Standard Kiswahili phonemes. This research will apply a generative theoretical approach, basing its methodology on articulatory parameters. The chief research question that this paper will seek to answer is: which analytical issues are contentious in Standard Kiswahili phonology and how can they be solved? The sources of data are books, book chapters, journal papers and dissertations written on Standard Kiswahili phonology.

Keywords

Standard Kiswahili, phonology, pre-nasalisation, allophones, nasal, archiphonemes, inventory.

Socio-economic Exclusion of In-migrant Construction Workers in Kerala: A Case Study of Thiruvananthapuram District

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Abstract

The scenario of migration, both out-migration and in-migration, observed in Kerala is unique and stands apart from the all India pattern. In-migration with its significant impact on various spheres of life is a relatively new experience in the long history of Kerala which was otherwise considered as a region dominating in out-migration. In-migration of workers into a predominantly migrating society raises a number of issues that call for in-depth research and analysis. In internal migration formal contracts of wages and working conditions are rare. In-migrant workers are widely used in almost all sectors of Kerala. The majority of in-migrants are working in the construction sector in Kerala. Not much is known about their wages, working conditions, and living conditions. It is in this context the present study analysed these issues in detail.

Keywords

In-migration, construction sector, working conditions, labour welfare.

Fostering Students' Metaskills and Competencies for Global Connectedness

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Abstract

Present education aims at providing international experiences and exposure to learners to live successfully in a globally connected society. Infusing and incorporating international dimensions in the curriculum raise various challenges for the educators in preparing students for interactions in a global labour market. Higher education should be redefined in terms of global citizenship to enhance global workforce, intercultural understanding, global engagement, and geopolitical awareness. The teachers of higher education institutions are expected to scaffold each learner for developing positive self-esteem. The learner's inhibitions for meaningful communication are to be eliminated with supportive teacher interactions. Opportunities are to be provided for learners to interact with people from various cultures and this cultural exposure amplifies their cultural competencies. Classrooms should be the thinking labs where learners experiment with their critical and creative thinking. Thus, the modern version of teacher accountability relies upon the teacher capability for fostering metaskills and cognitive competencies for global connectedness.

Keywords

Metaskills, global connectedness, volitional competencies, cognitive competencies, intercultural competencies, ethical competencies.

Effect of Occupational Stress on Role Conflict among Women Teachers in Kerala

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Abstract

The present education system is built upon the strong foundation laid by the great teachers of ancient times. The current belief in our society is that teaching is an easy job. Problem of working women are aggravated by their multiple role expectations which are commonly found in India. The dual responsibility has overburdened the working women, there by leading to multi-dimensional problems. 400 women teachers in Kerala were selected for the study and the effect of occupational stress on role conflict was found out. The mean companion and ANOVA with 3 x 2 factorial design was used to carry out the analysis. The results showed that occupational stress and role conflict among women teachers at higher secondary level is high. High occupational stress among women teachers leads to high role conflict.

Keywords

Occupational stress, role conflict, factorial design, occupational relationship, economic factor, family role, individual role, social role.