

Tamil Dramaturgy and 'Wadamodi Kuththu'

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Abstract

Tamil dramaturgy gets very little attention in Sri Lanka. One example of this is the fact that it is not included in University curricula. But more attention should be paid to this genre as being part of Sri Lankan dramaturgy. This dramaturgy is referred to as "wadamodi kuththu" in Tamil and is performed on the traditional stories familiar in Tamil literature such as the "Ramayanaya" and the "Mahabarathaya" and also about saints in Catholic stories. Wadamodi kuththu was performed for centuries in Sri Lanka's north and eastern provinces, in districts such as Batticaloa, Ampara, Trincomalee, Mullaitivu, Vavuniya, Jaffna, and Mannar. From this we can see a curiosity among rural people in the performance of "wadamodi kuththu". Generally, kuththu drama was developed close to Hindu kovils. This dramaturgy impacted heavily on the caste system. Jaffna upper class/caste people's reject "wadamodi kuththu". But Batticaloa high and low caste people liked "wadamodi". It too originated near Hindu temples. But we can identify a difference here. Jaffna Brahmin caste priests did not patronize wadamodi kuththu. But non brahmin priest and the ordinary priests patronize kuththu. High class people did not come to see "Natta kuththu". However, high caste ladies and provincial women had a different auditorium. When selecting the stories for performance in "wadamodi dramas" has many differences as rural and non-rural. Special attention here is on "Tamil wadamodi drama because its growth and expansion in Sri Lanka is according to the caste system and to capitalist development. I think "wadamodi dramaturgy" should be included in university drama curriculum. If serious attention is not paid to this, Tamil dramaturgy in Sri Lanka will die out (chandrasedkaram, 2005).

Keywords: Wadamodi, Kuththu, Natta Kuththu, Tamil Wadamodi Drama, Wadamodi dramaturgy