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Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Ms Geethu Thomas (Registration Number: 2170172), PhD Scholar at the School of Arts and Humanities, Department of English and Cultural Studies, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bangalore will defend her PhD thesis at the public viva-voce examination on Friday, 7 March 2025 at 10.00 am in the Seminar Hall, Academic Block, Bangalore Bannerghatta Road Campus, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru - 560076, Karnataka, India.

Title of the Thesis	:	The Neoliberal Experiences of Ageing in Select Malayalam Films
Discipline	:	English Studies
External Examiner – I	:	Dr Veena Hariharan Associate Professor School of Arts & Aesthetics Jawaharlal Nehru University New Delhi-110067
External Examiner – II	:	Dr Ajay S Sekher Associate Professor Department of English Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit Kalady-683574, Kerala
Supervisor	:	Dr Santosh Kumar Assistant Professor Department of English and Cultural Studies Bangalore Bannerghatta Road Campus CHRIST (Deemed to be University) Bengaluru-560076, Karnataka

The members of the Research Advisory Committee of the Scholar, the faculty members of the Department and the School, interested experts and research scholars of all the branches of research are cordially invited to attend this open viva-voce examination.

Place: Bengaluru
Date: 03 March 2025


Registrar (Academics)

ABSTRACT

Contemporary age studies is an interdisciplinary field of constant change and expansion. Studies on old age through the representations in literary and cinematic narratives have contributed significantly to the interdisciplinary and intersectional pursuits in age studies. This thesis attempts such a study by analysing six popular Malayalam films on ageing with aged characters in lead roles. It also broadens the cross-cultural dimension of age studies, focusing on the non-Western narratives of ageing, particularly in the southern state of Kerala in India. Released between 2003 and 2022, the films *Manasinakkare* (2003), *Adaminte Makan Abu* (2011), *Oru Muthassi Gadha* (2016), *Android Kunjappan Version 5.25* (2019), *#Home* (2021) and *Old Age Home* (2022) offer diverse representations of old age. The films present the contemporary realities of ageing in a period of constant flux impacted by neoliberalism and globalisation. Therefore, the research focuses on the heterogeneous experiences of ageing in a neoliberal society, where old age is considered undesirable. The study explores the intersections of old age with power, gender, place, and class in the cinematic narratives for a nuanced understanding of ageing in the socio-cultural scenario of Kerala from the early 2000s. Concepts drawn from cultural, film and age studies, particularly those of power, gender and place attachment in old age, direct the analysis. Furthermore, the broader cultural discourse of ageing that operates alongside modernity and neoliberalism in the Indian context is particularly detailed. In this process, the study traces the trajectory of the changing sensibilities in the representation of old age in Malayalam cinema over the last two decades, with special reference to the selected films. This study on Kerala's ageing population based on the diverse cinematic portrayals of old age is particularly relevant in recent times since society is becoming increasingly aware of the challenges faced by the ageing population with the advent of modernity and neoliberalism.

Keywords: *Old Age, Film Studies, Cultural Gerontology, Malayalam Cinema, Neoliberalism*

Publications:

1. **Thomas, Geethu.** "Denial of Desire: Depictions of Elderly Intimacy in Malayalam Cinema." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 25 Nov. 2024, www.epw.in/journal/2024/47/postscript/denial-desire.html.
2. **Thomas, Geethu,** and Santosh Kumar. "Aging Bodies and Necropower: A Critical Study of Geronticide in Tamil Films K.D. and Thalaikoothal." *[Sic] - a Journal of Literature Culture and Literary Translation*, vol. 14, no. 1, Dec. 2023, <https://doi.org/10.15291/sic/1.14.lc.3>.
3. **Thomas, Geethu.** "Of Grandmothers and Culinary Realms in Salt and Pepper and Silver Linings: Celebrating our Grandmothers." *Agathos: An International Review of the Humanities and Social Sciences*, vol. 15, no. 1 (28), 2024, pp. 261–74. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10968226>.