

Writing the Divine: Reading the *Kathamrita* text(s) as a Performance

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Abstract

Performance studies as a critical perspective views and analyses any human act as a performance. No act, thus, can remain innocent on its own. Such analysis resists any homogenising attempt employed to nullify politically loaded, planned and enacted performances; and brings out their inner dynamics, dialectics and dichotomies without any bias. *Kathamrita* is primarily a printed text that holds within its corpus both the orally transmitted knowledge of the guru and its written depiction by the scriptocentric recipient – author. The essay views the author of the *Kathamrita* as a performer by attempting an exploration of the narrative strategies employed by him to ‘construct’ the text. The politics of mediation plays a crucial role in this creation which itself becomes a performance in that process. Following a brief outline of the history of the work’s publication, this paper explores how the text itself becomes an act of narratorial performativity where the author function does not remain an innocent recorder of the guru’s daily events but also builds up a repository of autobiographical elements. From the point of view of narratology, the essay tries to find the nuanced moments in the narrative that can establish the text as a conglomerating point of time, memory, desire and representation of the author himself. Also, certain critique of the text like that of Sen and Kripal are taken up to provide alternative readings from the perspective of performance theory.

Keywords: *performance theory, author, text, narratology, memory, time.*