PRINT, COLONIALISM AND THE EARLY MALAYALEE PUBLIC SPHERE: DISCOURSES OF LANGUAGE REFORM AND LINGUISTIC NATIONALISM (1820-1920)

A dissertation submitted to the University of Hyderabad in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of

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IN

TRANSLATION STUDIES

by

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I, **Niveditha K** hereby declare that this dissertation entitled **"Print, Colonialism and the Early Malayalee Public Sphere: Discourses of Language Reform and Linguistic Nationalism (1820-1920)"** submitted to the University of Hyderabad in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Translation Studies embodies veritable research work carried out by me under the guidance and supervision of Prof. Shivarama Padikkal, Centre for Centre for Applied Linguistics & Translation Studies(CALTS), School of Humanities, University of Hyderabad. It is a research work which is free from plagiarism.

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Table of Contents

Declaration

Certificate

Acknowledgements

A Note on Translation, Transliteration and Suffixes

Introduction **1**

Chapter One **In the Age of Translation: Viewing Language in a Changing World** **15**

Chapter Two **Print, Missionaries and Colonial Philology: Staging the Vernacular as an Object of Study and Reform** **56**

Chapter Three **Language as a Site of Self Fashioning: Publishing Ventures by Malayalees and a Growing Sentiment of Nationalism around 'Swabhāsha'** **105**

Chapter Four **The Vernacular Public Sphere and the Discourse of Linguistic Reform** **157**

Chapter Five **The Making of a Mother Tongue: Discourses of Reform, Purism and Linguistic Partriotism** **213**

Conclusion **251**

Bibliography **259**

A Note on Translation, Transliteration and Suffixes

All translations from Malayalam into English are mine, unless otherwise mentioned. While transliterating Malayalam words, phrases and titles into English, I have followed the spoken and heard form and not the standard or written form, except in those cases where there is already an accepted transliteration available. In the case of names of authors, if authors themselves have spelt their names in a particular way, I have followed that spelling.

Following several scholars who have worked on topics related to Indian languages and literatures, I too have used Malayalam words with English suffixes, in certain instances, especially in the case of pluralization. For example: Bhashas, Attakathas, Mutts etc.

Introduction

In February, 1921, an article titled "Matrubhashasneham" (Love for the Mother Tongue) by an anonymous author, published in the Malayalam newspaper *Nazrani Deepika* declared: "There is nothing to be ashamed of, even if one's mother tongue occupies a very inferior status, for it remains to be his mother tongue; hence it is his special duty to respect it like one's own mother and to strive for its upliftment."[1] Two months later, in April 1921, the first All Kerala Political Conference convened by the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee (KPCC) took place in Ottappalam, in the erstwhile Malabar District of Madras Province. This 1921 Conference was the first venue for the integration of Congress activities spread across the three territories which later constituted the linguistic state of Kerala, viz. Malabar, Cochin and Travancore. The Nagpur Session of the Indian National Congress[2] held in 1920 had already passed a resolution to form provincial committees on linguistic basis through which its newly proclaimed objective of "attainment of Swarajya"[3] had to be achieved and the 1921 Conference derived its energies from it.

The tone in which the above- mentioned article talks about Malayalam- the 'mother tongue'- and the strategy involved in the political decision to form a KPCC on linguistic lines in order to carry forward the cause of 'India's national struggle' for freedom show the degree to which a Keralite/ Malayalee sub-national identity based on language was developed by the

[1] "Matrubhashasneham," (Love Towards Mother Tongue) *Nazrani Deepika*, February 21, 1921 quoted in Moozhoor, *Nasranideepikayum Malayalasahithyavum*, 45.

[2] The 35th Annual Session of the Indian National Congress at Nagpur presided over by C. Vijayaraghavachariar is a notable event in the history of India's independent movement for it emphasized on the objective of the organization as attaining of 'Swaraj' or self- rule by all legitimate and peaceful means. It also decided to achieve this through organizing people under Provincial Congress Committees formed on the basis of language.

[3] Freedom or self-rule

1920s. The same passion involved in proclaiming the love for one's mother tongue was to act as the instrument of political unity to bring together various sections of people who were politically divided as Travancoreans, Kochites and Malabarians and who above all had a primary allegiance to numerous religions, castes, sects and several other sub-groups to which they belonged.

This patriotic passion shown towards "one's own tongue" by people like the author of "Swabhashasneham" could be easily translated into political cohesion based on the idea of "self-rule," since his anxiety about the "inferiority" of his "tongue" which he was trying to overcome was, in fact, a fear about one's incapability to overcome the servility imposed by a foreign colonial power. As Tejaswini Niranjana has pointed out, the cultural translation of native lives that were presented through colonial ethnographies and translations had an underlying asymmetrical relation between the coloniser and the colonized embedded in them.[4] By approaching translation as a metaphor that can be used to define the unequal power relations that determined the condition of the colonized, various colonial ethnographies, translations and administrative accounts can be considered as products of an unequal exchange between local-specific categories of the colonized world and the 'proposed humanist universals' of standard European knowledge practices which were already established during colonial rule.

A feeling of inferiority about one's customs, religious practices, languages, food habits, knowledge systems etc. that was created in the indigenous people's minds through such colonial ethnographic and administrative discourses often worked as a catalyst for 'reform' or at times led to the 'revival' of what was to be later perceived as 'one's tradition.' "The metaphor

[4] Tejaswini Niranjana, *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism and the Colonial Context*, (Berkley: University of California Press, 1992), 66-74.

of the colony *as* a translation, a copy of an original located elsewhere on the map"[5] was a popular image that was in circulation about the indigenous life-world and society. The political call for 'swarajya' or self-rule that surfaced in the early 20th century was therefore preceded by the era of reform/ revival when the colonized had to equip themselves with those material means and symbolic representations that were necessary to counter the colonial critique about different domains of their 'private' life. These late 19th century- early 20th century efforts in "self-fashioning"[6] undertaken by the 'native' colonial subjects, irrespective of the categorizations like reform or revival, in turn played a crucial role not only in re-aligning existing social relations but also in the subjectivity formation of a new class of national elites.

The administrative systems and knowledge practices devised in the transactions between Europeans and these upper-caste native intellectuals in turn became hegemonic as they came to define the socio-cultural boundaries of the regions/ sub-nationalisms. Mona Baker's work which examines the intersection of narrativity and translation, shows the ways in which narrativity can normalize "the accounts it projects over a period of time, so that they come to be perceived as self-evident, benign, uncontestable and non-controversial."[7] The effect of narrativity in normalizing certain accounts becomes relevant in the context of various colonial transactions of the 19th century where missionaries, administrators and natives were involved. The 'mother tongue' mentioned in the article, to which a speaker of Malayalam was supposed to pay his respect, was itself the product of such a 'tradition building' process in the era of reform/ revival. Therefore, the colonial transactions in print produced narratives that translated the romantic notions about the organicity of the tongue which normalized the status

[5]Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi, "Introduction: Of Colonies, Cannibals and Vernaculars" in *Post-Colonial Translation: Theory and Practice*, eds. Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi (London: Routledge, 1999), 5.
[6] A term used by Stephen Greenblatt to describe the upper-class individuals' efforts in constructing their identities according to certain socially acceptable standards. For details see Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).
[7]Mona Baker, *Translation and Conflict: A Narrative Account* (Oxon: Routledge, 2006), 11.

of Malayalam as a commonly inherited wealth of Keralites by projecting it as an integral feature of the Malayalee identity.

I

The Story of an Imagined Malayalee Nation

The formation of Kerala as a separate linguistic state- as a political unit defined on the basis of Malayalam as the important spoken tongue of the region- happened in 1956; but the outlines of a Malayalee nation as a print induced- "imagined community" had been drawn much earlier, almost by the early years of the 20th century. The foundations of this community were laid when Charles Mead, a printer-turned missionary established the first press under the auspices of the London Missionary Society in the erstwhile princely state of Travancore in 1820. Then, in 1821, Benjamin Bailey founded the Church Missionary Society press in Kottayam and cut the first 'Malayalam' types in Kerala, which later led to the proliferation of materials in the vernacular language. The increased use of printing technology as a part of native entrepreneurial ventures gradually created a Malayalee reading public and resulted in the "perpetuation of stereotypes" in print that led to the imagination of a linguistic community, where "the vernacular type-script was the prominent one."[8] The personified image of Malayalam language as the 'mother,' named as Kairali, was one among the several stereotypes that were perpetuated along with the typescript of the Bhasha on the printed page which facilitated the creation of what Benedict Anderson refers to as the print induced- "imagined community."[9]

[8] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London: Verso, 2006), 39-48.
[9] Ibid.

As pointed out by Lisa Mitchell, the personified image of the 'tongue' which began to appear in various 20th century narratives by the cultural elites of Southern India depicted it as a feminine character; and this was the image which naturalized the bonds between the land and its inhabitants as one that is mediated through their spoken language.[10] At the same time, the notion put forth by Sudipta Kaviraj that "pre-modern communities" tended to be "fuzzy" owing to their "unenumerated"[11] nature would point to the fact that these 20th century narratives about the primordial bonds between the people and their 'mother tongues' were the products of a colonial modernity. The transition from a multilingual society in which heteroglossia was the norm to one in which the well-formed idea of a linguistic nation based on a monolingual Malayalee identity was established is examined in this regard. Apart from certain socio-political changes which led to the consolidation of multitudes of scripts and dialects over a period of time, nothing in the pre-colonial times was sufficient enough to realize the evolution of a fully developed sense of linguistic identity.

Rama Sundari Mantena observes that most of the philological studies which were undertaken in the 19th century both by colonial linguists and missionaries took up the task of standardizing as well as modernizing the "unruly vernacular languages" of India since it was inevitable for "the easy management" of a set of immensely diverse territories.[12] The impact of colonial philology which introduced new kinds of discussions about languages by popularizing these very new modes of viewing/ speaking about languages through printed materials and through modern school education is noteworthy. The missionary accounts about Kerala indicate the presence of an easily perceivable hierarchy of linguistic codes existing in

[10] Sumathi Ramaswamy, *Passions of the Tongue: Language Devotion in Tamil India (1891-1970)* (London: University of California Press, 1997), 32-50.
[11] Sudipta Kaviraj, "The Imaginary Institution of India" in *Subaltern Studies VII*, eds. Partha Chatterjee and Gyanendra Pandey (New Delhi: Oxford University Press,1993), 26.
[12]Rama Sundari Mantena, "Vernacular Futures: Colonial Philology and the Idea of History in Nineteenth-Century South India," *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 42, no. 4 (2005): 513-34.

the 19th century, where the difference between the prestigious variety, Grantham/ Samskrutam[13] and the common people's vernacular, often referred to as the Bhasha[14] point towards an existing diglossic situation. Malayalam or Bhasha was projected as an inferior tongue owing to its putative status of a mixed language; its lack of originality and the lack of 'refinement' of its speakers that were seen as the corollaries of their supposed subservience to Arya- Brahmins.

An attempt at examining the manifold ways in which ideologies pre-determine textual production can open up for us the manner in which political interests and varied machinations of power get involved in the shaping of various discursive practices and representations. The 19th century romantic ideas about 'language' which were popular in Europe were disseminated among the people of Kerala through the technologies of domination, viz. print and colonial education. These novel ideas in circulation were effective in convincing the indigenous elites about the inherent connection between the "progress and modernity" achieved by a populace and the state of language(s) which they spoke and inherited. The slavish pasts of their language(s) and the consequent lack of refinement in the lives of its/their speakers were identified as the reasons for their socio-political inferiority by the indigenous cultural elites of Kerala. This 'realization' acted as the impetus behind their objective of attaining 'language reform.' Hence, as the technology of print gradually reached native hands, their primary objective was to create a counter-discourse in print to oppose the hegemonic colonial discourses which portrayed the vernacular, its people and their cultures as inferior.

[13] Sanskrit or the code which had the social authority as the 'sacred tongue.' Also referred to as the Devabhāsha, which continues to be the term often used while referring to Sanskrit

[14] The vernacular was often simply referred to as 'Bhasha' other than in certain rare cases where terms like Malayānma or Malayāyma were used.

This anti-colonial discourse which was the product of a colonial modernity began to occupy the centre-stage of an evolving Malayalee literary sphere by the end of the19th century. It can be said that the native discourses of reform/revival which marked the era of Kerala's "social and cultural renaissance" were in a way the tools for furnishing an indigenous modernity. The indigenous cultural elites, who were active in the early Malayalee public sphere while attempting to revitalize the indigenous values and practices, relied upon the models of European modernity and translated those models in order to project "a nation in the making." In other words, it was these upcoming 'translations of modernity' under colonialism that gave rise to a new "political-cultural discourse of nation and nationalism."[15] The native literate Malayalees felt that the 'language of the old-world' was inadequate to define their own 'modernities,' to express the experiences and needs of their transforming life-world and to experiment with models of 'a modern Malayalee subjecthood.' Hence, a re-examination of prevailing social institutions and cultural norms had to be accompanied by various discussions on reforming Malayalam and to make it suitable for creating a new literary sensibility. Therefore, the efforts of these native intellectuals to equip the Bhasha with the necessary wherewithal which could raise it to the status of a 'modern tongue' started from the second half of the 19th century, when the printed vernacular began to be used by them as an instrument to translate European modernity.

On the one hand, the colonizers considered indigenous languages, marriage practices, medicinal systems etc. as constituting the "inner" domain of native culture that was to be left free of any direct interventions from them; on the other hand, the 19th century missionary and administrative efforts to learn and teach Indian languages as well as to proselytize in them had

[15] E.V. Ramakrishnan, "Language, Power and Ideology: The Changing Contexts of *bhasha* in India," in *Language Policy and Education in India: Documents, Contexts and Debates*, eds. M. Sridhar and Sunita Mishra (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 63.

already turned out into a scheme to systematize the vernacular resulting in the stabilization of speeches. The printed form of the Bhasha which acted as a new medium and symbol of indigenous cohesion was also one that was designed by the missionaries primarily for pedagogical and ecclesiastical purposes. This new vernacular prose, labelled later as "Padiri Malayalam," which literally means 'the Malayalam of foreign Christian priests,' was meant to render the contents of the Bible and other Protestant texts as well as to transfer the ideas of European science and other western knowledge systems. Therefore, it also followed the structure of European prose models to an extent.

The expansion of missionary education and new practices of literacy created a considerable number of private readers who could read and understand Malayalam, which continued to be referred to as Bhasha, in many instances. The formation of literary associations meant for versification, like the Bhashaposhini Sabha, which later grew into public platforms for deliberations was the next important step in the formation of a nascent vernacular public sphere. This was followed by the publication of magazines under the aegis of these Sabhas (associations) which discussed a variety of matters related to indigenous social and cultural life. The discussions about language-reform that commonly appeared in the pages of early literary magazines in Malayalam were endeavours to 'reform the existing vernacular' or were aimed at 'devising a new language' which could become the 'instrument of reform.' At the same time, as observed by Partha Chatterjee, the 19th intellectuals who thought about the language as belonging to that "inner domain of cultural identity" wanted to devise a new 'reformed vernacular' which was to be kept sacred and free from any colonial intervention.[16]

[16] Partha Chatterjee, "Whose Imagined Community?," *Empire and Nation: Essential Writings (1985-2005)*, (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2014), 28.

The powerful coterie of Sanskritists who actively participated in the discussions of the early Malayalee public sphere firmly believed that the Bhasha was dependent on Sanskrit and had to derive its energies from that 'language of gods.' Hence their efforts to 'revitalize' the Bhasha were based on encouraging compositions in a Sanskritized Manipravalam form or to render classical texts of Sanskrit verse epics into the vernacular tongue. These revivalists also took up the task of re-aligning the existing discursive practices in Sanskrit, to make the sacred tongue capable of accommodating the new utilitarian communicative needs of the time. In the meantime, efforts to invent a 'language of indigenous reform,' was on its way; and the advocates of vernacular-reform were in search of a new set of categories necessary for re-shaping indigenous experiences and creating a modern subjectivity. Yet, the interesting fact worth noticing here is that, though both these endeavours by the elite intellectuals were meant to shape a purely indigenous idiom of /for interaction, and were, therefore, 'tradition- building' efforts, the premises of these reform efforts were largely based on principles which were fairly modern in character. This reminds us of Chatterjee's observation that "nationalist thought appears to oppose the dominating implications of the post-enlightenment European thought at one level and yet, at the same time, seems to accept that domination at another."[17]

Thus, the efforts to devise a new vernacular taken up by the latter group resulted in revising the very ethical basis of certain established notions about textuality that were prevalent in Kerala until the 19th century. This transformed the pre-existing notion of the literary text as something that is to be circulated among a limited audience into one which stressed on the 'public' nature of texts based on the 'notion of a publicized use of language.' A series of discussions about the need to re-shape the literary tongue according to the principle of

[17] Partha Chatterjee, "Nationalism as a Problem in the History of Political Ideas," in *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (London: Zed Books, 1986), 37.

"universal accessibility" were the major reason behind the introduction of this new ethics of language and textuality. This led to the eventual democratization of the literary sphere which was largely constituted by the Manipravalam poetic texts composed and read by the upper-caste elites until the mid-19th century. Efforts to popularize a less Sanskritized register and to promote a prose based on 'commoners' speech' were the important milestones of this language-reform.

The other task of reformists, i.e. devising a new language suitable for socio-cultural reform was one which was meant to compensate for the lack of uniformity in the existing use of the linguistic sign. A new philosophy of language-use that was based on the fixity of reference or on the singularity of the sign was adopted. It gave importance to standardization of forms and meanings from the level of orthography and morphology to further higher levels of language-use. The signs used in Malayalam language which had already undergone certain levels of orthographical and morphological systematization, after the Bhasha acquired the status of a print language, were to be standardized further, in order to establish a uniform medium of communication that could bring a uniform Malayalee linguistic community into being. Reducing the diversity in linguistic forms resulting from dialectal differences present in speech was a necessary condition for shaping a uniform medium of printed and written communication. The necessity to overcome a multiplicity of linguistic forms like sociolects and caste-lects, reflecting the existing socio- political hierarchies was another major objective.

The new ethics of language- use, communication and textuality which underscored these efforts at language reform were instrumental in the democratization of the rudimentary public sphere which existed at the beginning of the 20th century. Though on a limited scale, they facilitated the participation of members from erstwhile lower classes and castes in the

coming years by overthrowing the hegemony of Sanskritic verse and accompanying knowledge systems in the realm of the 'public' and installing a new Malayalam prose in its place. The Malayalam language which first defined the unity of a reading public in the Bhasha and later became the symbol of an evolving Malayalee national identity, functioning as the object that defined the Malayalee past, was thus created through processes which translated the ethical principles of Western modern textuality into the indigenous context during the era of reform.

II

A modern way of imagining linguistic communities and the consequent perceptions about linguistic identity as the essential category of individual identity were shaped by colonial ethnographies and through the writings of indigenous cultural elites who lived in the 19th century. In this context, an attempt to throw light on the pre-existing forms of identification processes which were amorphous in nature can effectively dismantle the claims of primordiality that are often attributed to many modern linguistic communities and territorial units, in the context of post- independence India. The first chapter of the thesis presents a brief review of the nature of linguistic and territorial identifications which existed prior to the 19th century as well as details of processes which slowly transformed identities across centuries. The major shifts in terms of identity ascriptions and the new processes of self-identification that happened towards the turn of the 19th century are discussed in this connection. It is followed by a review of various changes that were brought about in the society by the initial missionary and colonial interventions in the region that occurred up until the early decades of the 19th century.

The ideologies that accompany the introduction of print in colonial societies have an important role in furthering those pre-modern linguistic identities which are already in their initial stages of evolution. The impact of colonial philology which introduced and popularized new kinds of discussions about languages- certain new modes of viewing/ speaking about languages etc. through printed materials and through modern school education- is noteworthy in this regard. The manifold debates about language that were inaugurated in the evolving Malayalee literary sphere of the late 19th century, and which continued until the early decades of the 20th century were the result of these philological discourses available in print. The second chapter examines such developments which led to the standardization of/ creation of a homogenous Malayalee identity and the accounts which had a crucial role in the making of the 'modern Malayalee self' by the beginning of the 20th century.

A plethora of cross- linguistic activities ranging from efforts in lexicography and the compiling of grammars to promoting translations resulting from various colonial and missionary transactions enabled the inhabitants of the region to view their language through a new lens of 'objectivity' given by the European sciences. Questions that were raised about the "modernity of the vernacular language and its speakers" and the diversity of native approaches to this issue established the unquestionable existence of a vernacular identity attributable to a large section of indigenous population erstwhile divided on many grounds. The third chapter elaborates on the factors that led to the upholding of a homogenized identity for the first time and discusses how the concept called 'swabhasha' (one's own tongue) became a vital component of this new identity, playing a crucial role in the "self- fashioning" of the new middle class. The active interventions of this class, which flourished under the continuing patronage of the feudal monarchs and their associates in designing a "de-facto canon" for Malayalam, in undertaking translations and making grammars, dictionaries and histories for

the Bhasha etc. resulted in defining the attributes of a modern region in the making. Such native interventions, especially in the domains of culture, language, literature etc. are also discussed in the chapter.

The fourth chapter aims to trace the changing nature of journalism in Malayalam immediately after it shifted to native hands and also to examine the times of active 'native journalism' that come later and continue until the end of the 19th century. The exploration of certain new commercial possibilities of print by the cultural elites of the region resulted in the gradual development of a public platform of interaction in the newly devised and popularised common language of Malayalam by the 1880s which deserves attention. A close examination of various articles published in the early magazines and newspapers like *Bhashaposhini*, *Malayala Manorama*, *Vidyavinodini* etc. is attempted to delineate the nature of contents published in them. The annual report of Bhashaposhini sabha, which was the major literary association of the time also throws light on to the way the discourses on history and reform of the land, language and the people were getting shaped. Apart from probing into the means through which Malayalam acquired the status of the 'common people's Swabhasha,' i.e. one's own language, the chapter also traces how it was transformed into the language of expression of both the religious and political selves of the people by the 1920s, by winning over the sacred classical languages of the priestly and aristocratic classes.

The discourse of 'reform' that was widespread in the era of the renaissance was derived from an urge to be 'modern' and was not something that was restricted to the realm of language per se, since the effect of colonial modernity was visible in all realms of indigenous life. The question of language-reform that was raised in this context was in fact the search for a new vocabulary and revised structures of communication, since it turned out to be the preliminary

move in defining ‘a modern Malayalee individual self’ and in defining the ‘unique civilizational heritage’ around which a ‘nascent vernacular nationalism’ could be woven. The fifth chapter focusses on how a sentiment of linguistic patriotism also grew out of an emerging linguistic pride and discusses the development of purist tendencies which constantly reminded the speakers of the need to preserve the ‘natural capacities’ of the mother tongue by preventing it from being eroded off. The mechanisms that contributed to the personification of language in the image of a mother including the portrayal of her in differing ways by several Bhashabhimanis are also described. The chapter also traces the patterns of arguments through which the urgency to protect one’s mother tongue was foregrounded, that is the manner in which the history of the feminine tongue was constructed and narrated.

The concluding remarks of the thesis foreground the idea that the discourse of language-reform was constituted by opinions about both the ‘reform of language’ and about the ‘language of reform’ which were two opposing forces that constituted the ‘modernity of Malayalam language.’ It is argued that the multiple printed versions of the spoken tongue that acted as models of the reformed language and which were seen to be emblematic of an expanding Malayalee reading public could not become capable of interpellating a standardized modern Malayalee self. Therefore, the impetus of the 20th century debates which focussed on devising the standard literary tongue was to install the models of a standardized modern Malayalee self and to popularize it as the identity marker of an expanding Malayalee reading public. Therefore, the notion of the Malayalee linguistic identity that was evolving by the 20th century, like most other modern linguistic identities, was one which had to rest on the idea of the speaker of this standard printed language, who in turn happened to be the standardized Malayalee subject of reform created by the discourses of modernity, and who is a representative of the larger public of Malayalee readers.

Chapter 1

In the Age of Transition: Viewing Language in a Changing World

Identities of various kinds that are taken up by any individual or group of individuals at any point in history are worth notice, because any identity is not simply an attribute which is used by 'others' as a marker to single out a person or group of persons. Rather, they are also categories to which individuals or groups would have a sense of belonging. New forms of identities take shape as well as existing ones disappear in time. The chapter aims to delve into the transition in the ways of 'identification' that occurred across a few decades in the Indian sub-continent, especially in the south –western part of the peninsula which resulted in certain modern identity formations. The slow transition of the region from a society of "unenumerated communities" and "fuzzy linguistic boundaries"[18] where language continuums existed to one which had more stricter demarcations of linguistic communities with the passing of time will be discussed in detail. As pointed out by Lisa Mitchell[19] and Sumathi Ramaswamy,[20] many claims that were extended about the primordial existence of linguistic nations in their current forms by the speakers of Indian languages became seminal to the discourses of nationalism woven around South Indian languages in the twentieth century. In the Indian context, such a modern way of imagining these linguistic communities itself was shaped by colonial ethnographies and through the writings of indigenous cultural elites who lived in the nineteenth century. In this context, an attempt to throw light on the pre-existing forms of identification processes which were amorphous in nature can effectively dismantle the claims of

[18] Kaviraj, "The Imaginary Institution of India," 20-26.
[19] Lisa Mitchell, *Language, Emotion and Politics in South India: The Making of a Mother Tongue* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009).
[20] Ramaswamy, *Passions of the Tongue*.

primordiality that are often attributed to many modern linguistic communities and territorial units, in the context of post- independence India.

Since the introduction of various colonial systems of knowledge production was facilitated by the East India Company and later under the British government, the colonial intervention in the socio-political arenas of the Indian subcontinent starting from the 18th century which had an important role in bringing this change needs to be discussed. These knowledge systems became tools to compartmentalize the indigenous population into a few limited, but strictly outlined categories which was also crucial in this stage of transition to a new set of identities. Statistical methods and censuses introduced as colonial administrative practices did 'interpellate' the colonial subject to a set of pre-given categories of existence in terms of physical features, languages spoken, education, wealth, social status, gender and various others.

While these categories neatly divided the Indian populace into certain fixed assemblages conferring upon them particular identities, language also became one criterion based on which people could be grouped. The missionaries who had arrived earlier in the territory, even before the establishment of the Company's rule, had also made similar efforts in classifying the 'natives' and in defining them as speakers of one particular language or other. People living on the Malabar coast were identified as speakers of 'Malayalam' through these processes, though Malayalam was referred to as an inferior tongue compared to many other languages spoken in Southern India. Consequently, Kerala was carved out as a separate linguistic region on the basis of a separate tongue by the beginning of nineteenth century, making it distinct from the larger politico-cultural milieu of Tamilakam.

Missionary influx from the West into the Malabar Coast dates back to the 16th century and began with the arrival of various Jesuit groups who followed the Portuguese invasions of late 15th century. Various missionary groups which had landed in the South- Western coast of the Indian peninsula from the seventeenth century onwards began codifying different aspects of the indigenous life and knowledge systems. The earliest dictionaries, grammars, primers and historical accounts of the languages spoken by the people of the peninsula were contributions on their part and they did play a crucial role in the emergence of new identities in that age of transition. Rigid structural boundaries were gradually attributed to the language which slowly opened up certain possibilities of relating to one's tongue in new ways. The classification of locally spoken dialects and sociolects by the Jesuit missionaries into manageable numbers also led to the negation of prevailing multilingual and heteroglossic environment. Though prose works in the commoner's tongue were composed for the first time by these missionaries, the selection of the prestigious Sanskritized variety written using Grantham script for printing the language, though on a minimal scale, had far reaching consequences.

A brief review of the linguistic and territorial identifications which existed prior to the nineteenth century as well as details of processes which slowly transformed identities across centuries are included here. The major shifts in terms of identity ascriptions and the new identification processes that happened at the turn of nineteenth century are taken into consideration in this connection. This includes a description of certain socio-religious changes that occurred prior to colonial times and the influence that they had on the evolution of speech forms and writing practices in the region till nineteenth century. A review of the changes effected by the initial missionary and colonial interventions that occurred up until the early decades of the nineteenth century is also included.

Identities Prior to the Nineteenth Century: Multilingualism, and the Language Continuums

South Asia in general and the Indian subcontinent in particular were plurilingual regions in pre-colonial times. Language varieties or dialect chains which were spread across geographical areas where slight differences between neighbouring varieties of tongues existed was the normal state of things almost till the end of eighteenth century. These differences gradually accumulated over a distance to result in mutually unintelligible varieties. The ways in which people who lived in pre-colonial times could have connected themselves to these dialect chains that existed around them and the means for which each dialect or linguistic code could have been used by them according to differing purposes and realms of interaction are also worth examination.

Hierarchy of tongues in a world with fuzzy boundaries:

Language is considered as one of the most significant criteria for determining an individual's identity, in the present-day world. Benedict Anderson's work makes it clear that the oft-invoked relation between people and the languages they speak has a lot to do with the imagining of territoriality and nationhood in modern societies.[21] As and when the relation between languages and people-groups gets redefined, there would be an accompanying change in social relation too from time to time. The politico-economic transformations that any society undergoes also have an important role in this regard. The overall shifts that have occurred in the way 'community' as a category in general was being imagined with the passage of time also needs to be thought about, while mapping the changing relations between people and the languages they speak and in tracing the evolution of linguistic communities on a temporal axis. In her study on the Hindu- Muslim religious identities in pre-colonial India, Cynthia Talbot

[21] See Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

states that, "Identity formation in praxis always involves both processes- the articulation of group boundaries that excludes others and the development of internal criteria for solidarity."[22] She mentions about the possibility of certain rudimentary forms of "Othering" that could have been existing in medieval times among small populations owing to conflicts or battles which could have accounted for an internal solidarity among those groups which could have later developed into full-grown religious or linguistic identities in the post-colonial era. At the same time, she asserts that the number of people who would have thought about themselves as members of a particular community or linguistic culture in those times would have been negligible and even so, the depth of their attachment to a language would have been relatively shallow.[23] Referring to pre-colonial linguistic identities, she also adds that, "More relevant than the question of whether territorially based language communities existed in pre-colonial India is the issue of linguistic allegiance."[24] That leads us to ask, if language was an identity marker, was it a marker of collective cohesiveness for a considerably large population, of any sort?

The difference in the imagining of community identities in pre-colonial and post-colonial India could well be marked by an evolution of clearly drawn out community boundaries that happened towards the end of the nineteenth century, whereas the pre-colonial and pre-modern communities tended to be fuzzy. Sudipta Kaviraj explicates the fuzziness of the pre-colonial communities in India, prior to the arrival of western modernity and ideas of present-day nationhood, as defined in two dimensions.[25] At one point, the fuzziness of many of the communities was accounting to the fact that some collective identities were not territorially based. For instance, the currently existing Malayalee linguistic identity which

[22] Cynthia Talbot, "Inscribing the Other, Inscribing the Self: Hindu- Muslim Identities in Pre-Colonial India," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37, no. 4 (October, 1995): 699.
[23] Ibid., 712.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Kaviraj, "The Imaginary Institution," 20.

brings together people within a well demarcated territory, on the lines of language is based on the imaginations of a community which has got clearly drawn out politico-physical boundaries. Meanwhile, language is also assumed to be one among the most important criteria in defining regions. Malayalam was seen as a language of the people who lived within vaguely defined boundaries based on the territories ruled by the earlier kings and chieftains of the region. We may consider this as the beginning of a linguistic nationalism. At the same time, the imaginings of a monolithic Malayalee community with a distinct political boundary of its own and with a well-defined 'outsider' who speaks and possesses an 'other' tongue couldn't have occurred prior to the beginning of the twentieth century. In addition to this, it is also worth noting that the co-ordinates of the standardized spoken tongue- Malayalam became completely coterminous with the geo-political space of present day Kerala in 1956, only after the linguistic re-organization of states in post-independence times.

Whereas, in pre-colonial India, according to Kaviraj, since "contacts with people of other groups were relatively infrequent," one can assume that there was no need for such an "elaborately developed theory of otherness."[26] Therefore, it is possible that the way in which an individual would have subscribed to the notion of the 'region' might have been completely different.[27] The territorial denotation of the region termed as 'Keralam'[28] also seemed to be rather fuzzy as it happened to vary across time and was often talked about in obscure terms. Even in Francis Buchanan's accounts on the southern regions of the subcontinent, which were written down as late as in 1800-1801, the way he defined the region under the title 'Keralam' fits well with this assumption. The small paragraph added under the title begins in this way: "It is told by the people that the land between Surat and Kanyakumari is divided into two as

[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid., 20.
[28] Geographic space falling under the present-day Kerala was a part of the region broadly defined as *Tamilakam*.

Konkanam and *Keralam*. It is also said that they do not form the part of the 56 *deshams* (regions) of the *Bhārataghandam,* as these two regions are created by *Parasurāman*. A historical text named *Keralolpatti* exists, which talks about this *rājyam* (country)."[29]

The three to four lines of description that follows this definition continue to talk about *Keralolpatti*, the antiquity of the work as evident from the kind of language used in it, and the prevailing assumptions about its author.[30] What is remarkable about the description is not only the fact that 'Keralam' is denoted as a region not forming a part of the Bhārataghandam, but also the way in which the territorial space is talked about. The omission of clear-cut demarcations of where 'Konkanam' and 'Keralam' begin or end as well as the absence of descriptions of these regions in terms of the 'languages' spoken or 'people inhabiting' the regions are worth notice. The dynasties which existed till the time of colonial occupation often had 'porous borders'; and as observed by Anderson, though they might have had well defined centres, owing to these porous boundaries, "sovereignties faded imperceptibly into one another."[31] This explains the lack of descriptions about 'a region' or a 'territorial space' in terms of a common language or 'a people' who inhabit the region in such accounts. A colonial official like Buchannan, whose attempt was to collate as much data as was available on the region and its people would not have missed out any details, unless in instances where deliberate deletions or selective inclusions were to be made. It is evident that the 'Parasuraman myth'[32] which attributes the ownership of Kerala to Brahmins, which reappeared in most of

[29] M. R. Thamban and K. P. Devadas eds., *Francis Buchānante Keralam* (Francis Buchanan's Keralam), trans. Dr. C.K. Kareem (Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala Bhasha Institute, 1996),134.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 19.
[32] According to this myth, Parasuraman, a warrior sage who destroyed all the male Kshatriya-warriors and kings was advised by an assembly of learned men to hand over the lands that he had conquered to Brahmins as penitence for his sins. He did so and was blessed by the God of Oceans, Varunan and by the Goddess of Earth- Bhoomidevi. Afterwards, he went to Kanyakumari, threw his axe into the ocean and a piece of land rose up from the ocean at the place where his axe landed. According to the myth, Parasuraman then brought 64

these documents was the consequence of the selective inclusion of myths prevalent in the Brahmin-dominated society of the times. The absence of an account of or at least a mention about the language which could have unified the region/ territory and its people can only point to the absence of such ways of imagining/ describing the region during those times.

Not only the absence of strictly marked territorial boundaries, but also the unenumerated nature of these communities was a factor that caused the fuzziness of community identities.[33] Thus Kaviraj states that the people's sense of community might have been multiple and layered and fuzzy since they lived in an unmapped and unenumerated world. Kings often ruled non-contiguous and heterogeneous populations for long periods of time[34] and hence the idea of political identity and territorial unity were also contingent. As Dirks has argued, "In pre-colonial India, the units of social identity had been multiple, and their respective relations and trajectories were part of a complex, conjectural, constantly changing political world. The referents of social identity were not only heterogeneous; they were also determined by context. Temple communities, territorial groups, lineage segments, family units, royal retinues…sectarian communities, even priestly cabals were just some of the significant units of identification."[35] In an unenumerated and unmapped world, the use of language was also stratified in several ways and within a rubric of assortments; many other affiliations could have superseded that of the linguistic.

The practice of using a single linguistic code as the medium of communication in all realms of interaction, across all sections of the population in a region was also absent in those

Brahmin families from the North and made them settle there and this land later on became Kerala of the present-day.

[33] Kaviraj, "The Imaginary Institution," 26.

[34] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 19.

[35] Nicholas Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2006), 13.

times. Not only could an individual be proficient in using multiple linguistic codes, but also the nature of the spoken code varied across individuals occupying various social positions in the same region. In addition to this, the prevalence of multiple ways of writing down the same spoken code using various scripts and numerous spoken varieties that were far different from the literary genres that formed the prestigious varieties, defined the times. Rajan Gurukkal makes the observation that while inscriptions of various kinds made sense to some groups of people, including scribes, merchants and monks in terms of letters, they just had a symbolic function for many others who perceived written matter as a cluster of visible signs for various qualities such as dedication, religious merit, honour, status, power and authority, depending upon what their concern was.[36] Thus language was rarely an identity-marker that could invoke and reiterate any notion of unity and commonality among the people, even in the case of those who were living in the neighbourhood.[37]

The Malabar Coast on the south-west of the Indian subcontinent in the pre-colonial and pre-print centuries was marked by the multiplicity of spoken codes, the existence of an array of variant forms in writing and the gradation of linguistic codes in use within caste and regional groups, as well as by the presence of specialized codes that were used for inter-group communication. Kanippayyoor Sankaran Nampoothiripad goes into detail about the Āchārabhāsha that was to be used in the communication between people of different castes and of different social hierarchies in his autobiography *Ente Smaranakal*. According to this hierarchical code, while a Nampoothiri Brahmin referred to one's house or place of dwelling as 'Mana' or 'Illam,' a lower caste person had to refer to the same using words like 'Pura,' 'Chetta,' 'Koora,' 'Chala' etc. Moreover, ways of referring to oneself or addressing each other

[36] Rajan Gurukkal, *Social Formations of Early South India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012), 170-72.
[37] Kaviraj disputes the idea of 'language as a given marker of the region's unity' by saying that while unity and the conferring of the name on a region are performed by a 'unified' language, the unity of this language itself is a new construct.

as well as the vocabulary that was used to state matters ranging from simple things to matters of importance varied across caste and community groups. Various accounts by missionaries and historians that talk about the people and the land throw light on the prevalence of multilingualism and heteroglossia as well, pointing towards the hybrid nature of identities that was natural during those times.

All the terms that appeared in use in most of the early references to the linguistic code of the region, viz. *Malayāzhma, Malayānma, Malayāyma, Nichabhāsha, Malayāmpech, Malabārbhāsha* or simply *Bhāsha* are invariably defined in their difference from the high variant. The high variant which is often referred to as *Grantham* or *Samskṛtam* , used as a general cover term for the prestigious variety among the available linguistic codes, functioned as the marker of social authority- as a 'sacred tongue' or 'the language of gods.'[38] Many of the *Purāna-Ithihāsa Kavyas* of the Hindu upper castes and much of their religious literature and philosophical debates of the times got inscribed in this register, and for a long time remained inaccessible to a larger section of the society which did not have access or had limited access to the same. The script that was used for inscribing that prestigious variety was also referred to as 'Grantham' in most cases.[39] A letter concerning some Indian manuscripts sent from Fort St. George by Mr. George Lewis in the late 17th century to Rev. Dr. Arthur Charlett describes 'Grandum Character' as "the character used by the Malabar Bramines."[40] Since the followers of Christianity who are thought to have reached and settled in South India as early as first century AD were from places where Syriac was spoken, the language of religion and liturgy

[38] Devabhāsha was and continues to be the term often used while referring to Sanskrit.
[39] The influence of Grantham on the various other writing systems of southern India resulted in the transformation of scripts resulting in hybrid orthographic practices which finally led to the evolution of scripts of the present modern languages in the South. Bramines is to be read as an orthographical variant of Brahmins.
[40] George Lewis, *Philosophical Transactions (1683- 1775): Vol. 20* (London: Royal Society, 1698), 422.

and hence the 'sacred language' for these early Christian settlers turned out to be Syriac.[41] Groups of Judaic descendants in the land worshipped in Hebrew while, the Muslim settlers and followers of Islam in the region revered Arabic as the divine tongue of the prophets and of *Quran.* Thus, an array of or at times, a hierarchy of multiple linguistic codes: both of the sacred and mundane varieties prevailed in the same region, out of which the occurrence of each one was defined by specific fields and contexts of interaction. While countless spoken *bhashas* or *bhasha* variants flourished in the realm of verbal interactions with corresponding written forms, access to each of the above- mentioned sacred tongues were limited to certain classes of people within each of the religious/ community groups mentioned earlier. So, there existed a hierarchy of tongues as there were social differences and hierarchies amongst the people.

At the same time, *Chentamizh* which marked its distinction as the language of literature in many parts of Southern India reigned above all other linguistic variants in authority, since many of the classics which emerged in that particular register enjoyed a high stature throughout the southern part of the peninsula. Many of the literary works that supposedly fall under the *Saṉgam*[42] literary tradition were composed by the kings and local rulers who lived within the territorial space of present day Kerala too. These rulers who composed literary works would have lived at a time when the south western coastal region could not claim any kind of individuality or distinctness either on political or on social grounds.[43] Below this was the stratum of various spoken tongues confined to constricted regional spaces, and many written forms found in inscriptions which were different in diction from that of the scholarly varieties. The historian Rajan Gurukkal holds that popular texts of the times were all orally composed

[41] E.M.S Nampoothiripad, *Nammude Bhāsha* (Our Language) (Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala Bhasha Institute, 2008), 27.
[42] Also known as Sanga Ilakkiyam is the ancient literature of Tamilakam spanning roughly from the period 3rd Century B.C. to 3rd Century A.D.
[43] Nampoothiripad, *Nammude Bhāsha*, 22.

and were not written down for many years. All the hagiographic works were oral compositions based mostly on oral traditions.[44] Since royal proclamations, literary compositions of court poets and other genres of artistic creations were being inscribed in *Chentamizh* from the ancient times, it could enjoy the status of the elitist code above many spoken varieties, even in the south-western coast, and its prominence extended up to the middle ages.[45]

The wide variety of spoken codes which were spread across the southern regions of the subcontinent included those which showed dis/similarities between each other on accounts of geographical contiguity or distance, as in the case of dialects, and also varieties which reflected social gradations in their very structure as in the case of sociolects. Describing the language of early label inscriptions, Gurukkal observes that:

> We are not sure whether all the people who figure in the labels could have read and understood the inscriptions all by themselves…The use of this language by the merchants and monks is a matter generally agreed upon. But the language, which is considerably different from, the old Tamil of heroic poems, does not appear to be the language of all the people of the Tamil region. The language of the heroic poems has often been considered quite scholarly and highbrow, a view that makes little sense in the case of oral compositions. The label inscriptions seem to have addressed mainly to itinerant merchants, monks and predatory chieftains who had some cultural contacts, a set of wider social relations and mobility.[46]

Orality to writing and the integration of Bhasha(s):

There were certain socio-political transformations of significance that re-structured the existing states of affairs in South India starting from mid-first millennium AD and extending to a couple of centuries further. The impact of Buddhism and Jainism which was followed by the wave of *Bhakti*, targeting at the spread of their respective religious ideals among the

[44] Gurukkal, *Social Formations*, 178.
[45] *Tolkkāppiyam,* the ancient Tamil work talks about the distinction between the high and low varieties of Tamil.
[46] Gurukkal, *Social Formations*, 171.

commoners and lower castes could thus bring about a change to the existing language scenario. Thus, the existing diverse forms of speech slowly underwent a process of integration due to the influence of certain important socio-religious factors in the succeeding years.

> The ideological aspects of Tamilakam, which Kerala also shared were a mixture of all sorts of cults and rituals from animism to anthropomorphic deities overwhelmed by the cult of the dead. The heterodox religions especially Jainism and Buddhism who had brought the art of writing and the tradition of literacy to the Tamil South were responsible for the major socio-economic and intellectual changes of Tamilakam during the period. Writing seems to have spread extensively through merchants, monks, and probably the chieftains as the tradition of label inscription would have us believe. There are a couple of label prescriptions in the Kerala pat of the Tamilakam too.[47]

The real beginning of writing in the south-western coast is with the Vāzhappalli Copper Plate and records of its kind, assigned the early part of the ninth century AD and in most cases, these were in Vattezhuttu script.[48] Kesavan Veluthat observes that, even then, writing was primarily an instrument that the state wielded for purposes of administration and the information that the bulk of the documents sought to store were generally of a 'public[49]' nature and were not meant to be locked up in safe deposit vaults of institutions or private individuals.[50] Thus there existed a well-marked distinction between the sacred or literary languages on the one hand, which could be accessed by a few sections of the society including the clergy, the chieftains, the rulers and the littérateurs and, the verbal and written codes on the other hand which were accessible and were widely used among the commoners.[51] As Talbot states, "In pre-colonial India, as in other pre-modern societies, social identities were most strongly developed among the privileged."[52]

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[47] Ibid., 251.
[48] Literally meaning 'rounded script,' it is an alphabet system developed from Tamil-Brahmi writing system.
[49] Subject to the limitation that the expression 'public' had in the context of pre- modern societies
[50] Kesavan Veluthat, *The Early Medieval in South India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011), 171.
[51] Anderson mentions about a similar situation that existed in the feudal societies of Europe where Latin and Greek were associated with sanctity whereas the vernaculars were looked down upon as under-privileged.
[52] Talbot, "Inscribing the Other," 713.

The seeping of Sanskrit, Pali-Prakrit and Syrian vocabulary into the spoken *Bhāshas*/ vernaculars happened around the turn of the millennium. Since each of these languages was associated with corresponding religions, their religious texts, legends and philosophies which were contributing ideas and concepts that formed a part of mundane affairs, their vocabulary and concepts acquired an important role in the exchange of day to day pragmatic matters. According to Talbot, there was also the fusing in of the heroic discourse that was predominant in the bardic compositions and the rise of new discursive domains and innovative expression which were primarily emphasizing spirituality, peace and order.[53]

Detailing on the literary scenario of the early centuries of the second millennium Krishna Chaitanya states thus:

> …in poetry we find deliberate creations of mixed languages. Tamil and Malayalam(?)[54] are blended with the grammatical and rhetorical canons of the former dominating. Later, when Sanskrit studies became a dominant feature of Kerala's cultural life, Sanskrit words infiltrate into the song-moulds of blended Tamil and Malayalam and alter their texture extensively. Poetry begins to be composed also in blends of Sanskrit and Malayalam(?)…Malayalam inherited a very great number of Tamilian (or Proto-Dravidian, to be more accurate) words and later took over an equally rich vocabulary from Sanskrit.[55]

This process of intermixing as well as further transformations slowly brought about a clear- cut break between the vernaculars of the south-east and the south-west of the peninsula. This got reflected in the 14th century treatise in Sanskrit titled *Lilātilakam* that talks about the linguistic and literary traditions of the period. It analyses in detail the difference between *Cholabhāsha* and *Keralabhāsha*.[56] After the advent of Sanskrit blended literary styles, the

[53] Ibid., 182-89.
[54] Actually, hinting at a variety of literary style with a higher amount of Sanskritic elements in comparison to literary Tamil.
[55] Krishna Chaitanya, *A History of Malayalam Literature* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1971), 16.
[56] Ibid., 15-16.

presence of higher degrees of Sanskritic elements happened to be the indicator of a language variety with high social standing for a considerable time period. But gradually, certain changes in the erstwhile standards became visible.

K. K. Kochu observes that texts from *Vaishika Tantram*, written in the 13th century to the later *Candrolsavam* reveal that the socio-political domination of Brahmins had begun to decline in the respective periods.[57] The spoken tongues, many a time referred to as *Koḍumtamizhs* or *Bhashās*, started to solidify into limited varieties and at the same time could effectively raise themselves to the status of literary media only in those centuries which followed the spread of the *Bhakti* movement.

> It is by the twelfth century that all these things began to change. Many folk-verbiages which merely remained as spoken tongues till that time, transformed into written languages during this time; literatures began to occur in these languages as well. New literatures appeared in Vrajbhasha which was considered as one among the Prakrit languages. This was the one that transformed into Hindi later on. New written languages viz. Marāthi, Bengāli, Gujarāti etc. in North India and Karnātakam, Telugu, Malayālam etc. in South India took form. These new written languages took birth through a long process involving the old Prākṛtabhāshās and Koḍumtamizhs undergoing formal transformations and through the mutual dissolution of many of these.[58]

The delineation of new strands of literature almost clearly visible from the sixteenth century marked by the spread of *Ārya Ezhuttu*[59] had a bearing on the shifting of social positions among those castes lower in social position than that of Brahmins. As Rich Freeman points out, "this named identity of the language seems to have come into use only around the sixteenth century, under variant forms like '*Malayāyma'* or '*Malayānma.* "'[60] K. K. Kochu adds that, "…

[57] K.K. Kochu, "Language and People" trans. Ansari M. T and P. Shyma, in *The Oxford India Anthology of Malayalam Dalit Writing*, eds. M. Dasan et al., (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012), 249.
[58] Nampoothiripad, *Nammude Bhāsha*, 28.
[59] A new form of writing which acquired importance in the region from 14th century onwards and which later on became an important ground on which the claim of distinctness of the language was argued forth.
[60] Rich Freeman, "Genre and Society: The Literary Culture of Pre-modern Kerala," *in Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*, ed. Sheldon Pollock (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), 441.

the wealth and knowledge that these traditionalists had reserved for themselves began to spread to other social groups as well. Thereafter, it was the cultural identity acquired by non-Brahmin communities, especially the *Shudra*s, which facilitated the development of language."[61] It can be inferred from these observations and also from Kathleen Gough's study that the slave population of the lower castes seems to have remained as the only large class of people to whom literacy was forbidden.[62]These erstwhile 'dialects' could attain a higher status by qualifying as literary tongues followed by the appearance of literary works in them. Even then, they were destined to be treated with a lower element of reverence for a few more centuries that followed. In short, even after the initial stages of consolidation of the Bhasha/ vernacular, neither was there a common language in the verbal form or as a common written script that could be easily attributed as a feature of the 'region' per se, nor was there the possibility for large groups of people who inhabited the 'region' (discrete existence of which is projected from the present to the past) to identify themselves as belonging to a single identity group based on any particular linguistic unit/code.

Most of the early Catholic missionaries who reached the Malabar Coast in the late seventeenth and eighteenth century including Arnos *Padiri*[63] (Father Johann Ernst Hanxleden) and Father Paulinos referred to Sanskrit as *Ucchabhāsha* or the superior tongue and observed that this variant was written down in *Granthāksharam*[64]. At the same time, they also hinted at the presence of a variety of Malayalam mixed with Tamil by using the term *Nichabhāsha*[65]or an inferior tongue. The latter used to be written in Tamil script earlier, and only later on began

[61] Kochu, "Language and People," 249.
[62] Kathleen Gough, "Literacy in Kerala," in *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, ed. Jack Goody (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 148.
[63] Malayalam term for a Chrisitian priest/ father
[64] Grantha script
[65] In certain instances, it is also referred to as Malayāmtamiḻ which means Tamil of the hilly areas by missionaries.

to be written using the Malayalam script[66] derived from the Grantham script.[67] This categorization and description of linguistic codes of the times as given in the accounts can tell us a few things: a) that there existed more than one medium of verbal as well as written mode of communication b) there was a slow, yet remarkable change in the use of scripts that stood to represent certain verbal repertoires in the course of time. Father Arnos observed that the social disjunctions that existed on account of caste hierarchies were reflected in the spoken and written codes used by the people-groups of the land as well. He therefore held the opinion that "two languages/ codes namely, *Ucchabhāsha* and *Nichabhāsha*[68] existed in Malayalam[69]" during the early years of eighteenth century. His observations were primarily based on the linguistic situation in the central part of the present-day Kerala.[70]

Further descriptions about the language variants of the region as noted down by these missionaries almost fetch us the inference that there existed a diglossic situation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The mutually exclusive demarcation of linguistic domains that existed is noticeable when it was mentioned that most of the *Kāvyams* and *Shāstrams*[71] were composed in *Ucchabhāsha* whereas *Nichabhāsha* was used for the record of accounts and for writing letters, which is characteristic of diglossic communities. As an extension to Charles Ferguson's explication of the notion of diglossia,[72] M.W.S De Silva states

[66] Malayalam script refers to Arya- ezhuth

[67] P. J. Thomas, *Malayāla Sāhityavum Kṛistyānikalum* (Malayalam Literature and the Christians), ed. Scaria Zacharia (Kottayam: D.C. Books, 1989), 108.

[68] High and low varieties respectively.

[69] Here the term Malayalam refers to the land rather than to the language; the language began to be denoted by the name a bit later in time.

[70] Arnos spent a major part of his life in doing mission work in central Kerala, at Veloor and Pālayoor churches in Thrissur district of present day Kerala, and also learned Sanskrit at Angamāly in the northern part of Ernakulam district.

[71] Kāvyam in general refers to Indian style of epic poetry and Shāstram refers to compositions related to knowledge of various kinds in general, and to scientific ones in particular instances.

[72] According to Charles Ferguson (1959), the High, H- variety and the Low, L- variety have to be two divergent forms of the same language which stand above mere dialect differences, but which stand below that level which makes them two separate languages. For more details see Charles A. Ferguson, "Diglossia," *Word* 15 (1959): 325-340.

the following: "In diglossias, certain domains only entertain the prestige variety and certain domains the vernacular. The two are never interchanged, or at least, that is the prevailing belief."[73]

A long preface on the Malayalam language which can be found in the book *Malayālam Aksharamāla (The Malayalam Alphabet)* composed in Latin in 1772 by the early missionary Clement Padiri mentioned *Grantham*, *Samskṛtam* and *Malayāzhma* as the three persistent languages of the region, whereas the first two of these three were almost similar and could be considered as the same language. It is also mentioned that *Grantham/ Samskṛtam* was used by the Brahmins to compose literary pieces and Vedic writings, whereas even the Brahmins used *Malayāzhma* in ordinary conversations.[74] The preface would in fact strengthen the ideas about the prevalence of a diglossic situation. Thus, the slow transition from a state where multiple linguistic codes coexisted, to that of a close-to-diglossic situation persisted and this happened sometime between the twelfth and the eighteenth centuries.

The presence of a range of orthographic practices including *Vattezhuttu*, *Kolezhuttu* and *Ārya Ezhuttu* till the eighteenth century across the length of the land is affirmed by studies on early scripts of southern India. The scripts originally in use in Kerala were Vattezhuttu and its later variation Kolezhuttu, both derived from *Brāhmi*.[75] The Jain and Buddhist saints are supposed to have brought Brahmi script to Kerala as a part of their efforts in propagating religion.[76] Detailing about the enquiries into the nature and state of language(s) in the south

[73] M. W. S De Silva, *Vernacularization of Literacy: The Telugu Experiment* (Hyderabad: International Telugu Institute, 1979), ix.
[74] P. J. Thomas, *Malayāla Sāhityavum Kṛistyānikalum,* 108.
[75] Chaitanya, *A History of Malayalam,*16.
[76] Rajan Gurukkal, *Social Formations*, 167; M.V. Thomas, *Mādhyamangalum Malayāla Sāhityavum* (Media and Malayalam Literature), (Thiruvananthapuram: Department of Culture (publishing), Government of Kerala, 2000), 83.

western parts of the Indian subcontinent, in the geographical area which falls under the present day state called Kerala during the sixteenth century, P.J. Thomas states:

> There is lot of scope for debates about what was the language of Keralam at that period of time (in the sixteenth century). It is true that Malayalam had become a distinct language separating itself from Tamil, before the 16th century. Yet, the composition of books and other writing activities undertaken by Keralites[77] at those times, and even after that, happened to be in Tamil script. *Āshāns*[78] at the *Ezhuttupallis*[79] in Keralam also used to teach Tamil. Writing found on the tombstones of those missionaries who died and whose bodies were buried at those times was also in the same language…Tamil was relatively a subject to be learnt mandatorily, in most of the *Kalaris.* The process of learning among common people was considered as incomplete without a proper grasp of *Vattezhuttu* commonly known as *'Nānam- Monam'.* Therefore, most of the books that were printed in Vypin, Cochin and later on at Ambazhakkad happened to be in Tamil. Though the script was that of Tamil, the language in most cases was a low variety of Malayalam. The reason for calling this as *Malabārbhāsha* is evident from this.[80]

The middle age stone inscriptions and the palm leaf manuscripts also hint at the presence of Vattezhuttu script which is considered to be the antecedent of the modern-day Tamil script. C. Sivaramamurti observes thus: "Grantha and Vattezhuttu were used in the extreme south of the Peninsula. Vattezhuttu is a form of cursory Tamil written in a peculiar slanting way..."[81] Ārya Ezhuttu happened to be the result of the influence of Grantham on Vattezhuttu form of writing and this style of writing began to gain prominence after the Bhakti movement and the spread of Ezhuttachan's works. Iravatham Mahadevan writes on the evolution of scripts:

> Ultimately, however it became necessary for Malayalam to have a script of its own, which was formed from the Grantha script. The new script which came into existence towards the end of fourteenth century AD was called Ārya-ezhuttu to distinguish it from Tekkan Malayalam- the local name for Vattezhuttu in South Kerala and Kolezhuttu, another variant of Vattezhutu in North Kerala. Even after the introduction of Ārya-ezhuttu for Malayalam,

[77] The author presupposes the existence of a 'Keralite' identity long back in time and hence the reference, where the collective identity is extended from the time when he writes in 20th century to the 16th century.
[78] They were village teachers who imparted the knowledge of basic language and arithmetic skills among the lower castes in the society.
[79] The village schools run by these *Āshāns* or *Āshātis* (female village teachers)
[80] P. J. Thomas, *Malayāla Sāhityavum Kṛistyānikalum,* 101.
[81] C. Sivaramamurti, *Indian Epigraphy and South Indian Scripts* (Madras: Government of Madras, 1966), 235.

> Vattezhuttu lingered on as it was popular among the sections of the population whose dialects were not so heavily Sanskritised as that of Namboodiri Brāhmans.[82]

Thus, the increased influence of Grantham script on the existing Brāhmi systems of writing resulted in the popularization of Ārya-ezhuttu by the seventeenth century and eventually made the script into one that was pan-regional. The dialectal variants of the Mappila Muslims of Malabar had their own literary texts flourishing in a modified version of Arabic script which resulted in a language-blend called *Arabimalayālam* by the fifteenth century. Māppilamalayālam as a language blend deriving out of Arabic influence had already taken shape as a separate written code in Arabimalayalam writing. K. O. Shamsuddeen states that, this occurred side by side with the evolution of Ārya Ezhuttu for the *Manipravālam* blend, and literacy in the Arabimalayalam variant was popularized through Madrassa training in that script.[83]

Yet, according to M.V. Thomas, the occidental missionaries who were doing proselytisation mixed the Vattezhuttu, Grantham and Tamizh scripts and wrote them all together in the same document itself.[84] Both Grantham and Vattezhuttu scripts were used in Hortus Malabaricus too. The reason for this might be the continuing popularity of Tamil Vattezhuttu among commoners even after the gaining of Grantham's wide acclaim through the spread of Ezhuttachan's works.[85]The prolongation of Tamil as the language of administration till the middle of nineteenth century, particularly in the kingdom of Travancore was also the

[82]Iravatham Mahadevan, *Early Tamil Epigraphy from the Earliest Times to the Sixth Century A. D* (Chennai: Central Institute of Classical Tamil, 2003), 212 quoted in Saraju Rath ed., *Aspects of Manuscript Culture in South India* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 195.
[83]K.O. Shamsuddeen, *Māppila Malayālam: Oru Bhāshāmishram* (Mappila Malayalam: A Mixed Language) (Trivandrum: Self-pub., 1978), 97.
[84]M. V. Thomas, *Mādhyamangalum Malayāla Sāhityavum*, 85.
[85]Ibid.

reason for the continuing prominence of the Vattezhuttu script as mentioned later by father George Matthan in his writings in the Kottayam C.M.S college magazine.[86]

The absence of any uniform linguistic practices including deficiency in terms of an invariant prose style, and the presence of multiform educational systems resulted in the lack of a monolithic literature held together and carved out under the ambit of a unified tongue. The particular views that were predominant about literature during those times were something like, "…literature as constituted by verse compositions produced by a few well-to-do persons, authored in Sanskrit or in *Manipravālam* style replete with Sanskrit vocabulary, meant to be read by the people of similar stature."[87] According to Freeman, most of the 'texts' that constituted the region's 'literature' seem not to have been primarily intended as objects for contemplation through private reading, but rather as scripts designed to guide and motivate cultural performances.[88]

P.K. Balakrishnan holds the opinion that efforts to trace elements of early prose writings from the region would end up in the excavation of literary forms that were immediate precedents to the verse forms found in the Thullal songs of Kunchan Nambiar. He says that "it was nothing more than identifying those portions of *Champus*[89] which were devoid of Sanskrit poetic devices like *Vṛttams* and labeling them as prose, just as a way to point at their inferiority."[90] The condition that somehow turned out to be favourable for the amalgamation of a common medium of interaction at least at the minimal level and extending over a considerably large stretch of area is said to be the unification of many principalities in the

[86] *Vidyāsamgraham: The Cottayam College Quarterly Magazine* 1, no. 1 (July 1864): 30.
[87] P. J. Thomas, *Malayāla Sāhityavum Kṛistyānikalum*, p. 19.
[88] Freeman, "Genre and Society," 438.
[89] It is a Sanskrit literary style of composition, which is neither verse, nor prose, but rather occupies a transition period between the two.
[90] P.K. Balakrishnan, *Chandumenon: Oru Pathanam* (Chandumenon: A Study) (Kottayam: D.C. Books, 2006), 48.

eighteenth century Travancore under the ruler Marthanda Varma. This is said to have dissolved the dialectical distinctions and aided the development of a prose of fairly uniform standard, primarily for administrative purposes.[91] Thus, the initial stages of the evolution of new channels of communication, bringing people closer 'towards and through' a more unified medium of communication, occurred partly towards the end of the eighteenth century.

Various descriptions about the multiple speech patterns and orthographic practices that exhibited, wide range of variations since they prevailed simultaneously in dominions which had shifting boundaries would clearly point to the fact that the idea of 'language' as a uniform identity marker evoking an emotional binding between the inhabitants of a territorial space was absent till the early years of nineteenth century. Instead, for the majority of the populace, languages served as sites which explicitly carried social hierarchies and possessed a symbolic value in their social function rather than acting as agents of literacy and communication. The expansive limits of the vernaculars, though intimately tied up to the diverseness of the mundane, were often confined to that of orality. This could finally secure for them, merely an inferior position in comparison to the languages of the courts and high-brow literature earmarked by discourses of power, prestige and capability to capture the 'sublime' sentiments, in the pre-colonial societies. Yet, the introduction of new administrative mechanisms bringing about altered socio-economic premises and the advent of new technologies like printing transformed the linguistic scenario in the following decades.

Arrival of Jesuit Missionaries and First Printed Books: Describing and Shaping the Vernacular

The arrival of Jesuit and Protestant missionaries on the Malabar Coast occurred at a time when the feudal society in parts of present day Kerala was highly stratified, since it was

[91] Chaitanya, *A History of Malayalam*, 166.

largely based on economic and caste inequalities. Their arrival was prior to the development of a literary or political public sphere in the region. Starting with the objective of spreading the 'god's word' in the Oriental languages, their interest in learning the vernaculars and composing texts in them extended to the task of effectively communicating with the local people and further reforming them. The series of transformations that they aimed at began with the making of grammars and dictionaries for the local languages and finally culminating in the metamorphosis of those individuals embedded in local communities into 'universal citizens'. To 'uplift' the 'natives' to the status of 'humans' who were free of superstitions by dragging them out of the various 'malicious customs' of the land was their ultimate project.

There occurred a Christian evangelical drive initiated by European missionaries and ably continued by the members of the indigenous Christian community in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries .[92] This was at a time when the Portuguese and Dutch were maintaining an upper hand in trade relations with the Rajas and the local magnates. Many seminaries were established in the sixteenth century by the early Portuguese priests of the 'Society of Jesus' at Kollam and Vypikkotta. Though they undertook religious education, teaching of languages like Latin and Chaldean Syrian as well as printing of translated books like *Doctrina Christam en Lingua Malabar Tamul,*[93]all the early works which got into print till the end of the century were in Tamil alphabet.[94] Later on, following the destruction of these seminaries by the Syrains, the Jesuits had to shift their centres of religious education. It was shifted to Ambazhakkād towards the north in the early years of seventeenth century where they

[92] Chaitanya, *A History of Malayalam*, 166.
[93] A translation of the work written by Francis Xavier in Portuguese was the first book printed in the present-day Kerala in 1578 at Kollam.
[94] G.J.V. Prasad mentions that the first book printed in Tamil was *Doctrina Christam, Tampiran Vanakkam* in 1577 and the Jesuit missionary Henrique Henriques is given the credit for its publishing. See G. J. V. Prasad, "Caste in and Recasting Language: Tamil in Translation," in *Decentering Translation Studies: India and Beyond* eds. Judy Wakabayashi and Rita Kothari (Hyderabad: Orient Black Swan, 2009), 22.

continued their printing activities in Tamil and Roman script. The Tamil- Portuguese dictionary *Vocabulario Tamulico com a Significaem Portugeza* (1679) by father Anton De Proenca is the most notable one of all the works which got into print at this new centre.[95]

The later advent of Jesuit and Carmelite missionaries like Arnos, Paulinose and Clement Padiris on the Malabar Coast which took place prior to British invasions and their settlement in the southern parts of the peninsula in the late years of the seventeenth and the early years of eighteenth centuries are noteworthy. The works of these later missionaries marked a shift to the creation of works other than religious literature, for the first time.[96] Upon their arrival, these missionaries had to face a situation where a common medium of communication cutting across all social groups, one which was capable of serving as a common language that was widely used across regions, was absent on the Malabar Coast.[97] Yet, they tried to learn the prevailing language variants for their own convenience, mostly the varieties used among commoners, by venturing to organize them as per the linguistic principles and analytic tools available to them in those times. They focussed on bringing forth materials that would aid foreigners (primarily the new missionaries who arrived on the coast) in studying the local languages, though these were produced with an eye to promoting religious conversions. The establishment of seminaries and religious centres of learning opened up an opportunity for the local inhabitants and missionaries for the mutual learning of European and local languages, thus resulting in an interplay of cultures.[98]

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[95] K. M. Govi, *Ādimudraṇam: Bhāratattilum, Malayālattilum* (*Early Printing: In India and in Malayalam*), (Thrissur: Kerala Sahitya Academy, 1998), 44-45.

[96] The first non-religious Tamil books, some Tamil primers were also printed at the Tranquebar Mission Press, sometime between 1715 and 1719.

[97] Balakrishnan, *Chandumenon*, 46.

[98] B.S. Kesavan, *History of Printing and Publishing in India: A Story of Cultural Re-Awakening, Vol. II: Origins of Printing and Publishing in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala* (New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1988), 599.

The literary stalwarts whose works were popular in those times included such ones like Kunjan Nambiar and Unnāyi Varrier with a few other composers of Āttakkathās.[99] According to K. R. Krishnapillai, an old time literary critic, the last category of writers mentioned above, the composers of Attakatha works, adopted a literary style in which some 'impalpable Sanskrit terms were inserted wherever required as well as in places where they were unsuitable,' as if it was a norm.[100] These works could never assist any outsider in learning the layman's tongue with which s/he has to execute his/ her day to day chores, especially a missionary from Europe who would have been a newcomer to the scene. Therefore, tools meant for mastering the local tongues were produced in the form of the earliest printed dictionaries and grammars which acted as keys to opening up the repository of Oriental knowledge for later savants and preachers from Europe, and thus eased their efforts in reaching out to the people, in turn, to influence them. Edward Said's observation about the other side of such efforts to grasp "the Orient as literally and as widely as possible" is worth mentioning here. He holds that "it domesticated this knowledge to the West, filtering it through regulatory codes, classifications, specimen cases, periodical reviews, dictionaries, grammar, commentaries, editions, translations, all of which together formed a simulacrum of the Orient and reproduced it materially in the West, for the West."[101]

In David Washbrook's opinion, mercantile and administrative groups who had interests in across-the-boundaries- transactions as well as the elite groups, which were drawn to new regional cultures were the ones who attempted to build any relations across borders.[102] Hence,

[99] A literary genre in Malayalam consisting of the text used for the performance of Kathakali
[100] K. R. Krishnapillai, "Ee Kollashatavarṣhattile Malayālasāhityam" (Malayalam Literature of the Current Century), in *Bhāṣhāposhiṇi* 3, no. 10 (Idavam month, 1074 M. E.- 1899): 217.
[101] Edward W. Said, "Orientalist Structures and Restructures," in *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2001), 166.
[102] David Washbrook, *The Emergence of Provincial Politics: The Madras Presidency 1870-1920* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1977), 72.

these were the only groups of people who were mainly benefitted from these works in print. P.J. Thomas observes in his history of Christian contributions to Malayalam literature that:

> The Catholic missionaries who inhabited places like Ambazhakkād and Varāppuzha had been toiling from long time back in the matter of compiling dictionaries and grammars. Dr. Angelos Francis, the Varāppuzha metropolitan of 1700 is the author of the oldest Malayalam grammar known till date. It turned out that his contemporary, the well renowned Arnos Padiri composed the first dictionary. The path that was cleared by these scholars was widened by the efforts of many Padiris who succeeded them.[103]

These missionary efforts at proselytization necessitated the creation of those prose works which could be intelligible for and which would attract the attention of laymen. The layman's language was described by German missionaries like Arnos Padiri (Father Johann Ernestus Hanxleden) as a 'low variety' of the vernacular or *Nichabhāsha* characteristically tinged with a high frequency of Tamil vocabulary items and used mainly by the lower castes. Father Arnos also composed a grammar of the 'high variety' of the vernacular or *Ucchabhāsha*[104] (or *Malayām-Samskṛtam* which is the local variety considered to be derived from Sanskrit) on the lines of *Siddharoopam*[105] and his poetical compositions were also replete with Sanskrit lexical items. Yet, the poetic piece called *Puthenpana* which was penned down by him, depicting the lament of mother Mary on the death of Jesus was characterized by a simplicity of vocabulary .[106] The poetic work is still widely acclaimed among the Catholics of the land and has been passed on over many generations, orally as well as in print, due to its lucidity derived from the use of commoner's tongue. That was the first instance when a low variety or the commoners' tongue was used as the medium for a written prose work in a prominent way.

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[103] P. J. Thomas, *Malayāla Sāhityavum Kṛistyānikalum,* 104.

[104] This was used in writing Kāvyams and it is mentioned that the upper castes- Namboothiris, Nayars as well as Nazranis - wrote their works in this variety, using the Grantham script.

[105] The text which was commonly prescribed as a part of elementary training in Sanskrit.

[106] Kesavan, *History of Printing*, Vol. II, 480.

At the same time, father Paulinos wrote the grammar of the commoner's languages or *Tamizh-Malayālam*[107] and father Angelo Francis had compiled a grammar in 1712, which was applicable only to the 'low variety' of the language. Samuel Chandanappalli mentions that the former grammar was not suitable to describe the highly Sanskritised written variant and hence was more useful for the missionaries in their proselytizing activities.[108] At the same time, the grammar written by Angelo Francis Padiri could enjoy the status of a premier work of the kind for a long time.[109] Missionaries like Clement Padiri, Esthappanos and others followed suit and composed their grammars and alphabets in this line,[110] while Clement Peonius Padiri is also said to have brought forth a dictionary of the language, by the end of the eighteenth century.[111] These works were in a way proposing certain fixed structural patterns for language in the place of the multiple variants of language in actual use.

The first book which was printed making use of the Malayalam alphabet, the Grantham script, in its entirity was *Nasranikalkkellām Ariyenḍunna Samkshepavedārtham* (1772), one which is popularly known as *Kumbendi* among the Catholics of the land.[112] It deals with the fundamental doctrine of Christianity and was printed using the moulds which were prepared by the Italian missionary, Clement Peonius of the Varāppuzha Carmelite seminary.[113] The historian of books, K. M. Govi states that *Horte Malabarici*, authored by the Dutch governor of Cochin Henrtric Vanrheede and printed at Amsterdam contains two prefaces. He adds that they were written by Itty Acchuthan, the 'native informer' who helped the governor in

[107] Balakrishnan, *Chandumenon,* 47.
[108]Samuel Chandanappalli, *Miṣhyanari Malayāla Gadya Mātṛukakal* (Models of Missionary Malayalam Prose), (Thiruvalla: Kraisthava Sahithya Samithi, 1975), 20 and P. J. Thomas, *Malayāla Sāhityavum Kṛistyānikalum,* 108.
[109]A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala History and its Makers* (Kottayam: D.C. Books, 2008), 188.
[110]P. J. Thomas, *Malayāla Sāhityavum Kṛistyānikalum,* 108.
[111]Menon, *Kerala History*, 188.
[112]K. M. Govi and A. K. Panikkar eds., *Malayālagranthasoochi-Onnām Vālyam* (Glossary of Malayalam Books - Volume One), (Thrissur: Kerala Sahithya Academy, 1975), 3.
[113]Kesavan, *History of Printing*, Vol. II, 614.

composing the work; one preface is inscribed in Vattezhuttu and the other in Malayalam/ Grantham script.[114] Yet, as Grantham was mostly selected for the purpose of printing, it could gradually push back all other varieties of scripts that were in use among the people during the time.[115] Then onwards, almost all later printing efforts on the coast used this script which finally established the distinctness of the 'western dialect' from Tamil and the more popular Vattezhuttu inscriptional forms, thus announcing the stage of proclaiming its identity.

An important fact that is to be noticed regarding these Jesuit and Carmelite missionary printing efforts till the late eighteenth century is that, though the first printing in Grantham happened under the auspices of mission houses, the volume of printed materials that was produced in the peninsula remained meager and only a select target audience could catch hold of these materials. In the case of the first printed work, *Samkshepavedārtham*, its author Clement Padriri is said to have brought 200 copies of the book for distribution to various churches in Kerala.[116] This makes it clear that printed works in those times were aimed at a specifically select audience and were circulated in limited numbers.

Thus, in the place of many spoken vernaculars, a few selected variants/ dialects/ sociolects appeared in print and in this case predominantly printing in Grantham script prevailed. Minimal amount of typographical fixity which was the basic prerequisite for the rapid advancement of learning was achieved to a certain level by the beginning of the nineteenth century through the increased use of fonts based on the Grantham script in printing. Since most of these early missionary treatises on language and compositions in the local language varieties were supposed to be handed over to other missionaries and were to be used

[114]Govi, *Ādimudraṇam*, 87-88.
[115]Ibid., 88-89.
[116]Kesavan, *History of Printing*, Vol. II, 614.

for teaching students at seminaries, these would have hardly made any direct impact on the lives of common people. At the same time, as held by Joseph Errington, by offering "unequal access to print-mediated forms of speech," these mission centres paved the way for engendering "differential senses of language-linked identities,"[117] though this might have been a much later effect. Yet, none of these missionary works aimed at proposing a linkage between a language and any specific ethnicity which can be mapped onto a closed territorial space since their efforts in describing languages were largely limited to the purpose of aiding their proselytization efforts.

Colonialism, Its Institutions and the Language of Command: Using Language as a Key to 'Native' Knowledge Systems

The weakening of Dutch and Portuguese influences over different parts of the sub-continent and the gradual strengthening of British power over the region by the late eighteenth century, finally leading to the British colonial conquest, resulted in the emergence of a new set of power relations. The effective exercise of colonial power was inevitably tied down to gaining a sound understanding of the colonized and hence a proper acquisition of knowledge about the colonized society, since it was an essential requirement in the management of the colonial subjects. Various attempts by the British colonialists in India to gain mastery over the Indian languages is something significant as their efforts in the (re)-structuring of Indian languages also contributed to reshaping the 'native' ways of perceiving their own world.

At a time when the East India Company had nothing more than trade relations with the rulers of the land, the local interpreters or *dubāshhis* acted as mediators who assisted the

[117]Joseph Errington, "Colonial Linguistics," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 30 (October, 2001): 26.

transactions.[118] In the first century of the East India Company's occupation of Madras, Englishmen rarely learned the Dravidian languages indigenous to the South, except, one supposes, a few phrases needed in the kitchen, garden and the bedroom. According to Thomas Trautmann, they barely even knew the names of South Indian languages, calling them *Malabar* and *Gentoo* languages, or *Malabars* and *Gentoos*, rather than Tamil and Telugu up to 1800 or so.[119] As Bernard Cohn puts it:

> The classifications of the Indian languages used by the British were vague and shifting, reflecting both geography and function. "Malabar" referred to the language spoken by fishermen and boatmen on both the Malabar and Coromandel coasts, and was by extension used as a label for the language spoken in what is today Tamilnadu…In the light of the political history of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the British regarded Marathi, Persian and "Moors" as important languages in South India.[120]

The initial importance that was attributed to Sanskrit over any other Indian language was also a reason behind the lack of attention towards most languages of the Southern region in the beginning. Trautmann states the Orientalist misconception of the times, a historicizing reading as every 'truly Indian word was traceable to a Sanskrit verbal root, original noun, or particle, and that all others not traceable to them were later and foreign imports.[121] This idea that was prevalent among the British Orientalists of the times forced them to neglect many of the languages in the south to a certain extent. Perhaps, they might have picked up this idea from the local pundits, whose doctrine of Sanskrit as an eternal language had also influenced many scholars and philologists from Europe. Yet, as the status of the British changed gradually from that of traders to colonial settlers and rulers, the British administrators began to think that the important job of translation could not be entrusted to Indian interpreters anymore. William

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[118]P. Sudhir, "Colonialism and the Vocabularies of Dominance," in *Interrogating Modernity: Culture and Colonialism in India,* eds. Tejaswini Niranjana, P. Sudhir and Vivek Dhareshwar (Calcutta: Seagull, 1993), 336.
[119]Thomas. R. Trautmann, *Languages and Nations: The Dravidian Proof in Colonial Madras* (New Delhi: Yoda Press, 2006), 117.
[120]Bernard. S. Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 33.
[121]Trautmann, *Languages and Nations*, 119.

Jones wrote about the conditions which turned the colonial attention to Persian and other official languages of the land:

> The servants of the company received letters they could not read and were ambitious of gaining titles of which they could not comprehend the meaning; it was found highly dangerous to employ the natives as interpreters, upon whose fidelity they could not depend; and it was at last discovered that they must apply themselves to the study of Persian language…The languages of Asia will now perhaps be studied with uncommon ardour; they are known to be useful, and will soon be found to be instructive and entertaining.[122]

This distrust and the inescapable need to be proficient in the official and administrative languages which was crucial to sustain a military regime in the colony were the reasons which in turn led to the acquisition of a new set of linguistic skills. Moreover, when the empire was being carved, the Court of Directors sent an order that the public proclamations were to be in different Indian languages;[123] provisions to encourage the knowledge of country languages also were made.[124] The languages which initially attracted their attention were Persian, the language of Indian politics and Sanskrit, the language of Indian law and lore, as these would suffice the needs of the hour.[125] J. Mangamma states that the regional languages and the importance of communicating to the people in those languages were also recognized later.[126]

Alastair Pennycook holds that the British studies of Indian languages, literatures and thought aimed at the objectification and use of Indian languages as instruments of rule, and to have a better understanding of the "peculiar" manners, customs and prejudices of Indians to

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[122]Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms*, 23.
[123]Revd. James Long, "Record No. 174"in *Selections from Unpublished Records of Government (1748-1767)* ed. Mahadevaprasad Saha, (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1869), 81.
[124]Revd. James Long, "Record No. 594" in *Selections from Unpublished Records of Government (1748-1767)* ed. Mahadevaprasad Saha, (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1869), 392.
[125]Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms*, 23-32.
[126]J. Mangamma, *Book Printing in India: With Special Reference to the Contribution of European Scholars to Telugu (1746-1857)* (Nellore: Bangorey Books, 1975), 83.

gather information that was necessary to conciliate and control the peoples of India.[127] The colonial discourse acted as a tool by which "during the colonial period large parts of the non-European world *were produced* for Europe" through those "imbricated sets of questions and assumptions, methods of procedure and analysis, and kinds of writing and imagery."[128]

According to Mary Louis Pratt, 'contact zones'[129] in which "peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality and intractable conflict"[130] are sites where new subjectivities are constituted and where many get erased. The colonial forms of knowledge that were introduced following the British occupation of the Indian subcontinent were locations where the "Orient was produced in relation to the West and was described in terms of the way it differed from the West. Said argues that these colonised countries were described in ways which denigrated them, which produced them as a negative image, an 'Other,' in order to produce a positive, civilised image of British society. Each new text which was written about the Orient reinforced particular stereotypical images and ways of thinking."[131]

The earlier philological studies undertaken at Fort William College at Calcutta posited the idea that all the languages of the subcontinent were somehow or the other related to and derived from Sanskrit. The studies on South Indian languages that were undertaken by William Carey and his findings along these lines were proved as futile by linguists of the Madras Literary Society. As a part of the expansion of colonial administrative machineries, a College

[127]Alastair Pennycook, *English and the Discourse of Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 1998), 76.
[128]Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean (1492-1797)* (London: Methuen, 1986), 2.
[129]A term used by Mary Louis Pratt to describe the sites of colonial encounter.
[130]Mary Louis Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 8.
[131]Sara Mills, *Discourse* (London & New York: Routledge- New Critical Idiom, 2004), 107.

to train civil servants was to be deployed in the south and the Madras Literary Society was established afterwards, thus completing the Madras School of Orientalism. Linguists of the Madras School of Orientalism like A. D. Campbell and Francis Whyte Ellis were the ones who proved that the South Indian languages of Dravidian origin were not derived from Sanskrit.[132] The tabling of the Dravidian proof had to make its way against the 'linguistic unity of India' view that dominated Calcutta, and its announcement of the separateness of South India and its people from the rest of the subcontinent on philological lines, rung the bells in the British quarters, urging the need to channelize their attention towards the creation of separate administrative mechanisms for the region.

Trautmann holds that the College at Fort St. George was later proposed as a solution to the problems of language in colonial Madras and it became the major centre of comparative philology in South India.[133] Established in 1812, the College was founded to train British civilians, just out of the British Isles, in the vernaculars of Indian peninsula. As a part of the supervision of matters related to the teaching of languages for the civil servants at the college, a committee was also set up, which was responsible for looking after those matters including the conducting of examinations for these civil servants.[134]

In order to aid the training of civil servants in local languages, a considerable amount of printed materials including elementary text books, primers and grammars were to be published.[135] Meanwhile, the selection of languages which were to be taught and for which these primers and textbooks need to be published was done jointly by linguists at the Madras

[132]The Dravidian proof itself appears in the dissertation on Telugu authored by Ellis. N. B Halhed had earlier supported the idea that Sanskrit was the mother of all the languages of the Indian subcontinent.
[133]Trautmann, *Languages and Nations,* 116.
[134]S. Muthiah, "The college on College Road," *The Hindu- Metro Plus*, (Chennai edition) Feb. 18, 2002.
[135]Cohn describes it as the grammar factory of the 19th century, where the need for mastering the languages of India is derived out of the goal of mastering India as experienced by English colonizers.

Literary Society and by the members of the committee who took the aid of local pundits proficient in the vernaculars.[136] The government helped those who undertook the preparation of books that could aid the learning of Indian languages, especially the Europeans who prepared a few of the texts, by purchasing a certain number of printed copies from the authors.[137] So, many grammars, dictionaries and primers took shape out of the necessity to facilitate the smoother execution of various colonial policies by avoiding possible resistance from the people, rather than out of an innocent motive to describe the vernaculars.

New dictionaries and grammars for Tamil and Telugu were compiled and printed as per the directions of the committee, whereas the committee's opinion regarding Kannada and Malayalam was that they were "very inferior dialects."[138] The committee also noted that "the 'mental slavery' to which the Nambudiri Brahmins subjected the aborigines of Kerala 'prevented the development of Malayalam language and literature."[139] Earlier, when the college of Fort William was established in 1800, professors of Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Marathi were to be appointed,[140] but the need for a Malayalam munshi was never picked up. However, in the case of Fort St. George, as Kannada and Malayalam were spoken by large populations under British rule, some provisions had to be made for learning and teaching them.

The establishment of British rule directly over Malabar and indirectly through Regents in the princely states of Travancore and Cochin towards the end of the eighteenth century had also necessitated the production of more and more dictionaries, grammars and ethnographic materials, about its subjects, yet not simply as tools for mapping out indigenous culture, socio-

[136]Trautmann, *Languages and Nations,* 154-75.
[137]Mangamma, *Book Printing in India*, 84.
[138]Trautmann, *Languages and Nations*, 129; Herman Gundert also describes Malayalam language as a branch of Tamil which is termed as *Bhoomilam*, and he considers it as a subsidiary language to Tamil.
[139]Ibid., 128-29.
[140]Mangamma, *Book Printing in India*, 84.

political peculiarity and customs. These were part of a series of colonial endeavours which had the intention of carving out a perceivable structure from the unasserted array of reality in front of them in order to check the possible insurgencies by the colonized subjects. R. Drummond's (1799) and F. Spring's (1839) grammars both titled as *Grammar of Malayalam Language* were primarily meant for teaching the vernaculars to the officials of the English East India Company.[141] These were aids which would open up new channels of communication in the colonial contact zone.

Assembling of related vernaculars under a single label or within the limits imposed by grammars, syntaxes etc.as well as under the assumed similarity and difference of vocabulary items along with hierarchizing the tongues were essential part of the process. The publication of *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South-Indian Family of Languages* in 1856 by the missionary-linguist Robert Caldwell which was crucial in the academic establishment of Dravidian family of languages proves this. While listing out 12 languages under the section, "Enumeration of Dravidian Languages," Caldwell also went on to classify them into 6 'cultivated dialects,' viz. Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu, Canarese, Tulu and Kudagu or Coorg and 6 'uncultivated dialects,' viz. Tuda, Kota, Gond, Khond or Ku, Oraon and Rajmahal. The latter set of tongues are distinguished from the former by stating the reason that, "they are entirely uncultivated, destitute of written characters, and comparatively little known."[142] Further, while mentioning the need to bring forth a Comparative Vocabulary of the Dravidian Languages in his Preface to the second revised edition of the *Grammar*, Caldwell talks about the need to distinguish the roots found in just "the four most distinctive languages- Tamil, Telugu,

[141]Chandanappalli, *Malayāla Gadya Mātṛukakal*, 21.

[142] Robert Caldwell, *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages,* 2nd Revised ed. (London: Williams and Norgate, 1856; London: Trubner & Co, Ludgate Hill, 1875), 37. Citation refers to the Trubner & Co, Ludgate Hill edition.

Canarese and Malayalam."[143] Categorization of a larger set of languages into cultivated and uncultivated, and the further selection, study and teaching of a few 'distinctive' tongues among these are noteworthy. The colonial language policies and language planning in fact nourished a few selected tongues among an array of spoken and written variants since such hierarchical models of languages was imperative for administering vast varieties of population speaking multiple dialects. The necessity to identify and study a limited number of tongues in detail arose from the practicability of administering the colony in a few languages so that various purposes including training the British civil servants, preaching Christian ideals and imparting education to the native populace could be met easily. Others were squeezed into these limited labels by casting them as dialects or variations of these select categories, promoting the printing of texts in those few languages and finally enhancing training in these limited number of languages. Thus, the colonial intent to assort the multilingual setting for the purpose of using languages as keys to indigenous knowledge systems and as aids in administration indirectly effected the shift from a multilingual situation to a state of limited number of languages.

In the list of printed books and books ready for printing at the College press, we see the primacy of Tamil and Telugu; however, Kannada is not neglected completely.[144] Yet, Malayalam which was identified as an 'inferior tongue' was excluded from the list of major languages to be taught at the college, in the beginning. The colonial records also show that "Malayalam study (in the college) started on the 7th of May, and Marati on the 1st of July, 1814…Every junior civil servant on his admission shall select for study one of the languages under mentioned- Tamil; Telogoo: Malayalam: Carnataca: Mahrata: The Board will use college establishment to pursue their studies in the languages."[145]

[143] Ibid,
[144] Trautmann, *Languages and Nations*, 140-43.
[145] *Parliamentary Papers on East India Affairs,* Appendix I, 1827 quoted in Mangamma, *Book Printing in India*, 103.

The benchmark that gave rise to most of these remarks was the opinion of the Committee that "Tamil, the principal dialect of Southern India," specifically high Tamil, was "the key to all other dialects of Southern India."[146] Caldwell has also noted that, "All along the Malabar Coast Tamil intertwines with Malayalam,"[147] which was a distinct remark considering the way in which he segregated the two languages as independent entities as different from the hierarchical model involving models of 'purity' and 'corruption,' as proposed by Ellis and others. These official efforts to document and teach the vernaculars of South India created a new way of speaking about or viewing languages which was hitherto not so common among the colonized.

The distinct politico-geographical units of the south-western coast and the people inhabiting the region were brought together under the single unifying principle of a language label, for the first time through Caldwell's grammar, as he defined "*Malayālam* as the language spoken along the Malabar coast, Chandragiri near Mangalore to Trivandrum."[148] Caldwell also stated that "Though the coast was for many ages more frequented by foreigners than any other part of India…Malayalam people continue to be of all Dravidians the most exclusive and superstitious, and shrink most sensitively far from contact with foreigners. *Malayālam* is also called *Malayāzhma*, another form of which is *Malayāyma*, but both words are substantially the same…Appellative noun corresponding to *Malayālam* or *Malayāzhma* is *Malayāli*, a man of Malayālam, a mountaineer."[149]

[146]Report of the Committee- MPC 10 Dec 1811, para. 39 quoted in Trautmann, *Languages and Nations*, 125.
[147]Robert Caldwell, *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1856), 16.
[148]Ibid.
[149]Ibid.

The linguistic and textual decisions about racial groupings had far reaching material consequences which affected the rights and lives of indigenous peoples and the impact of economic change, discoveries etc. helped "growing numbers of people to think about themselves, to relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways."[150] The result of all these developments was an enormous change, truly a linguistic revolution. Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam which had played a distinctly subordinate role to Persian and Hindustani in government culture and practice, were brought to the fore and treated as a set of languages indigenous to the South, as distinguished from the languages brought to the south by conquest.[151] Thus the idea of fuzzy and unenumerated communities was by then gradually replaced by fresh imaginations of geographically well demarcated and numerically estimated collectives, with their imagined histories traced back into the past. Thus, the initial steps in the direction of creating various linguistic community identities were taken by missionaries and colonial administrators of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[152]

A neat compartmentalization of the existing motley of tongues into a hierarchical model in which the prominent languages at the primary level were further classified into a series of dialects which constituted a secondary level was the result. Not only were the spoken variants subsumed under one category or the other, but corresponding literary works and litterateurs also had to be assigned a specific label of one category or the other. A mentionable example is that of the eight great poets of Telugu, the ashta-dig-gajas of Krishnadevaraya's court and Krishnadevaraya himself who lived in the eleventh century, who came to be celebrated as specifically Telugu poets. Rather than considering the poets as representatives of the rich multilingual literary culture that existed at Krishnadevaraya's court, they began to be

[150]Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 36.
[151]Trautmann, *Languages and Nations*, 134.
[152]Tharakeshwar V. B., "Colonialism, Nationalism and the "Question of English" in Early Modern Kannada Literature" (PhD Diss., University of Hyderabad, 2002), 115.

considered as specifically Telugu poets, that too only by the end of nineteenth century which coincided with the personification of languages as objects of adoration, pride and devotion and as specific subjects worth studying.[153] Moreover, regions began to be demarcated by languages which were supposed to be 'indigenous' to them and a vivid marking out of the 'foreignness' of people speaking 'another' tongue within a region also happened around the time. As Sumathi Ramaswamy remarks, "Concepts about a language among its interested speakers are rarely neutral or innocent; they are produced at specific historical moments, they are generally linked to efforts to create or retain power and control, and they change through time."[154]

Lisa Mitchell has pointed out that the distinction between language as a medium and language as a marker is of central importance in understanding how languages have been experienced historically.[155] Languages which had been commonly thought of as mediums/ tools for expressing thoughts and as instruments of literary pleasure began to be pictured as things possessing attributes like 'birth and death,' 'development and inferiority,' in turn thus being projected as organic entities. As Cohn observes, the command over Indian languages was intimately linked to the development of a language of command. He states that "British studies of Indian languages…involved the objectification of Indian languages as instruments of rule to understand better the "peculiar" manners, customs, and prejudices of Indians, and to gather information necessary to conciliate and control the peoples of India."[156] This dual imperative explains the connection between the development of language policies, dictionaries, and teaching materials and the construction of the image of self and other. The same principle also resulted in the later shift from the shared usage of a specific, named linguistic medium in the

[153]S. Nagaraju, "Emergence of Regional Identity and Beginnings of Vernacular Literature: A Case Study of Telugu," *Social Scientist* 23, no. 10/12 (1995): 8-23.
[154]Sumathi Ramaswamy, *Passions of the Tongue*, 77.
[155] Mitchell, *Language, Emotion and Politics,* 48.
[156]Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms*, 46

earlier periods to the explicit invocation of a language and the literature produced in the language as markers of one's identity.[157]

Maps, censuses and museums designed the colonial state's style of thinking about its domain. The colonial government needed to make each and everything under its rule visible, with a special number.[158] Tapati Guha- Thakurta has also pointed out the rise of antiquarianism in colonial India during the nineteenth century and how the concept of antiquities became "a marker of the period's persistent bid for complete, comprehensive knowledge" about things ranging from 'whole monuments' to relatively insignificant fragments including manuscripts and inscribed slabs.[159] Along with the rise of a tendency to prioritize "antiquities as the 'only reliable source' for India's history" was the extra emphasis that began to be placed on "the accuracy of description and documentation, on the production of a thorough visual and textual record" since this was shown "as an essential requisite to an ordered body of knowledge about these monuments."[160] The subsequent debates on the languages of the south and the emergence of linguistically grounded identities in the late nineteenth century was to some extent the result of specific colonial administrative practices based on some of such elaborate philological findings (which took place during the Ellis years, from 1812 to 1819) based on an antiquarian spirit. A glance at the 1881 "census statistics on nationality and language" would show its culmination in "language beginning to be used to define nationality."[161] Therefore, the combined efforts of colonial officials and the mission houses in the spread of new forms of knowledge as well as in the dissemination of novel ideas among the colonized people, about their own existence and social identity prompted them to look upon themselves and their fellow

[157]Mitchell, *Language, Emotion and Politics*, 48.
[158]Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 201.
[159] Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2007), 3-4.
[160] Ibid.,4.
[161]Mitchell, *Language, Emotion and Politics*, 60.

beings in a new light. This prepared the initial ground for the emergence of new identity groups towards the end of nineteenth century and the initial years of the twentieth century, especially one which is based on language, even though the idea of a bounded linguistic group remains to be more of an abstraction rather than an observable reality even today.

Hence the transformations undergone by the vernacular arising from the emergence of a new discourse on ‘language’ and its relation to speakers and the regions where it prevailed was triggered by colonial and missionary articulations. These early descriptions and the resultant policies that were adopted according to the new accounts of language till the mid-nineteenth century made the vernacular occupy a position that was earlier occupied by the erstwhile ‘classical’ and ‘official’ tongues. The resulting shift in its status from the language of the populace to the language of the state along with its standardization through the spread of print was a phenomenon that followed. This made unified forms of tongues accessible to larger groups, thus gradually fulfilling the conditions for creating an allegiance between people and their tongue.

Chapter 2

Print, Missionaries and Colonial Philology: Staging the Vernacular as an Object of Study and Reform

Print as a technology can 'appropriate' alternative modes of communication viz. speech or writing and can also act as a means for the dissemination of new postulations about the media in which communication itself happens.[162] As pointed out by McLuhan and Innis, when we consider the 'individual' as a product of history, the individualistic and nationalistic sentiment thriving in various social groups is considered to have been introduced by the technology of print.[163] Even though a few religious books and treatises brought from Europe by various missionaries were available in printed form in a few seminaries in the 18th century, printing as an expanding enterprise on the Kerala coast can be witnessed only from the 19th century.

The first printing presses of 19th century Kerala were funded by European Christian missionaries, the British government and the princely states.[164] The potential of this technology which was popularized in the 19th century and the impact of the ideologies that accompanied it was so immense that it could further the pre-modern linguistic identities which were already in their initial stages of evolution to the next level.[165] Print introduced new ways of storing and disseminating information which brought into being new literacy practices, necessitating alternative styles of literary productions by the scribes and the poets, and extending to the

[162] Robert Fraser, *Book History through Postcolonial Eyes: Rewriting the Script* (Oxon: Routledge, 2008), 111.
[163] James W. Carey, "Harold Adams Innis and Marshall McLuhan," in *Marshall McLuhan: Critical Evaluations in Cultural Theory, Vol II, Theoretical Elaborations*, ed. Gary Genosko (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 204.
[164] Robin Jeffrey, "Testing Concepts about Print, Newspapers, and Politics: Kerala, India, 1800-2009," in *The Journal of Asian Studies* 68, no. 2 (May, 2009): 469.
[165] Talbot, "Inscribing the Other," 714.

creation of an identity based on linguistic unity. Concomitant activities such as the publishing of histories depicting the antiquity of Kerala and the task of collecting, collating and publishing some of the earliest works of literature in Malayalam undertaken by the B.M.S. missionaries like Gundert had a significant impact on processes of identity formation among the newly literates. In addition to designing text books and introducing a missionary vernacular prose, the B.M.S. and C.M.S. schools and print-houses were also centres which manufactured discourses about the superiority of Western knowledge practices, thereby cultivating a new cultural taste among the indigenous elites.

The impact of colonial philology which introduced and popularized new kinds of discussions about languages- these very new modes of viewing/ speaking about languages through printed materials and through modern school education-is noteworthy. The underlying belief that informed these philological approaches and attitudes was that language could be looked upon as a cultural phenomenon like many others, viz. art, law or religion and could be seen as possessing an overarching presence outside the speaker and his/ her immediate existence. Words or utterances were no longer considered to be representing things; rather, they were seen as things themselves. Comparative philology's obsession with 'origins' and 'pure forms' resulted in the labelling of Malayalam as an inferior tongue, a hybrid of Dravidian features intermixed with Sanskritic elements, that was further represented as an 'uncultivated' tongue spoken by a 'Dravidian stock' who were enslaved by Arya-Brahmins. The dependence of Malayalam on Tamil was also shown to be another reason for the lack of a distinct identity for the language. The peculiarity of these colonial ethno-linguistic exercises was that language which on the one hand was projected as an organic entity connected to people's identity could also on the other hand be talked about as an object that can be shaped and worked with. Hence, the driving principle behind most of the philological studies undertaken by colonial linguists

and missionaries in the 19th century was to ‘reform’ the vernacular in order to improve the situation of its speakers. In a way, it also meant equipping the ‘native-tongue’ with the wherewithal necessary to convey the principles of Western Christianity and to use it as an instrument for the colonial “civilizing mission.”

The visual representation of the spoken tongue circulating through printed materials in the vernacular and the idea of the organic nature of languages made available through the emerging discourses of colonial philology had a great impact on the newly literates. The combined effect of the visualized and printed word which was in wide circulation and the philological interventions which proposed a historicizing view of language (projecting the attribute of progressive history to it and in turn to its speakers) gradually led to the evolution of a common linguistic sphere. The creation of a new ‘secular’ idiom free of caste-lects effected through missionary religious practices and the prioritizing of a Grantham- based script and vocabulary inaugurated by indigenous missionaries like George Matthan resulted in the evolution of a new print-mediated vernacular which in turn became the prime symbol of a newly invoked linguistic subjecthood. The dissemination of a set of novel ideas about the vernacular: about its origins, ‘foreign’ influences, degrees of purity and corruption etc. were facilitated through the teaching of printed grammars, dictionaries and through numerous articles published in missionary journals. The manifold debates on language that were inaugurated by the late 19th century in an emerging indigenous literary sphere of Kerala and which continued to shape in the following decades of the 20th century were the result of these philological discourses available in print. Hence, these developments which led to the standardization of/ creation of a homogenous identity and the accounts which had a crucial role in the making of the 'modern Malayalee self' need to be examined in detail.

The Beginnings of Print, Publishing and Education in the Vernacular

Malayalam type appears for the first time in 1686 in *Hortus Malabaricus* (Garden of Malabar) which is a treatise on medicinal plants. According to Ayyappa Panikker, the first book printed completely using Malayalam font is a catechism book titled as *Samkshepavedārtham* (Summary of the Bible) which got published from Rome and was written by Clement Pianius[166]. Yet, since neither of these works were printed in India, they were not available for wide circulation in the south-western coast. Many histories of printing, including K. M. Govi's, trace the beginnings of Malayalam printing in the Indian subcontinent to the Courier Press, Bombay. Translations of portions of the Bible from Syriac were printed by 1811.[167] The interesting fact is that Malayalam fonts of the same type appear extensively in Robert Drummond's *Grammar of the Malabar Language* printed by the same press as early as 1799 under the auspices of Fort William College. Drummond acknowledged the services of a Parsee inhabitant of Bombay, Bheramjee Jeejebhoy, in 'executing a font of types in the Malabar character'[168] in the Preface to his *Grammar*.

The establishment of a College to train European and native civil servants at Fort St. George in Madras and the preparation of vernacular study aids for this purpose led to the promotion of printing activities in South Indian languages from 1812. Shantha Ramakrishna's observation that all the aspects of colonial administration "were conducted in such a manner that the natives were not compelled to learn any language other than their own and the administrators- be it the English or the Indians- alone had to know English and one other native

[166] K. Ayyappa Paniker, *Medieval Indian Literature: Surveys and Selections Vol. I*, (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1997), 322.
[167] Govi, *Ādimudranam*, 101.
[168] Robert Drummond, *Grammar of the Malabar Language* (Bombay: Courier Printing Office, 1779), 4.

language"[169] is relevant at this point. In addition to English works, the identification of important languages out of a wide variety of vernaculars, and the texts written in them mainly for pedagogical purposes, was an important task undertaken at these colleges in Calcutta and Madras. As pointed out by Trautmann, the College of Fort St. George and its headmasters came to play a major role in the "revival of letters" in South India and in the transition from the culture of the manuscript to the editing of printed works, from royal patronage to patronage by government institutions and in opening up a market for printed works.[170] The college, led by those pioneering scholars, also began to function as a training school for Indian students who were aspiring to be teachers at a later stage. [171]

As recorded in the report of the examination committee set up at the college, F.W. Ellis, who had taken up the study of South Indian languages, inquired about the availability of Malayalam fonts of the type that was used in Drummond's *Grammar* book, and his efforts ended in failure.[172] The views of committee members and that of linguists like Ellis who were members of the Madras Literary Society turn out to be important in this regard, since they had a considerable impact on matters of further policy making. The Ellis years at the College were described as the age of the 'Grammar Factory.'[173] Though the Catholic missionaries had left many valuable books on the languages of southern India, there were still many lacunae that Ellis had to fill.[174] The Committee's report about the efforts of Ellis is cited as the reason for the lack of a considerable amount of Malayalam printing coming out from Madras College. Govi says in his history of printing in Malayalam that, "It is not wrong to judge that no

[169] Shantha Ramakrishnan, "Introduction" in Shanta Ramakrishnan ed. *Translation and Multilingualism: Post-colonial Contexts* (Delhi: Pencraft International, 1997), 14.
[170] Trautmann, *Languages and Nations*, 140.
[171] Ibid., 135.
[172] F. W. Ellis to William Erskine, March 10. 1813. Mss. 36.1.5, ff. 62-71, National Library of Scotland quoted in Trautmann, *Languages and Nations,* 143.
[173] Trautmann, *Languages and Nations*, 1.
[174] Veluthat, *The Early Medieval in South India*, 196.

Malayalam works were printed under the imprint of the college, owing to the absence of any printed proofs."[175] Yet, as per S. Muthiah's write up in *The Hindu*, Charles M. Whish's Malayalam grammar and dictionary were also among the publications that came out of the Madras College,[176] though no other details about these works could be found anywhere.

The entry of Protestant missionaries including the London Missionary Society (L.M.S) and the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) in southern Kerala, and Basel Evangelical Mission Society (B.M.S.) in Malabar, after 1813, followed by the lifting of the ban earlier imposed by the British on mission activities and proselytization, paved the way for bridging the colonial and missionary endeavours towards 'civilizing the natives.' Charles Mead, a printer-turned missionary, established the first press of this generation in 1820 under the auspices of L.M.S.; and Benjamin Bailey, the founder of C.M.S. press in Kottayam in 1821, cut the first 'Malayalam' types in Kerala. *Cherupaithangalkk Upakarartham Enkleeshil Ninnu Paribhashappeduthiya Kadhakal* (A Collection of Short Stories Translated from English for the Use of Children) was published by Bailey from this press in 1824, followed by the printing and publication of a Malayalam-English dictionary compiled by him in 1846.[177]

John Chandy considers the establishment of the C.M.S. press as "an important landmark in the cultural history of Kerala, for it marked the beginning of large scale printing in the state."[178]The press was established as per the directions of Colonel Munro, the Dewan of Travancore at that time.[179] Multiple copies of the complete Malayalam Bible and other Anglican liturgical works were printed from this press. As Elizabeth Eisenstein observes, "The

[175] Govi, *Ādimudranam*, 56.
[176] Muthiah, "The College".
[177] Kesavan, *History of Printing*, Vol. II, 620-25.
[178] John Chandy, "The Rev. Benjamin Bailey and the Kottayam C.M.S. Press" in *The Kerala Society Papers, Series 4*, ed. T.K. Joseph (Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala Gazetteers, 1930), 214.
[179] *Travancore and Cochin Diocesan Record* XXX, no. 2 (Kottayam: C.M.S. Press, February 1920), 29.

democratizing and preserving powers of print, which secured precious documents not under lock and key, instead removed them from chests and vaults duplicating them for all to see."[180] The starting of new print-houses by the missionaries as a part of their proselytizing endeavours and the upliftment of the downtrodden by starting schools for educating them etc. can be marked as important events in the socio-political history of the last five hundred years.

The shift from a universal educational model to a hierarchical educational model that occurred with the emergence of caste system in Kerala during the later Sangam period is noted by historians like Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai.[181] Until the advent of the new missionary schooling system in the 19th century, there was no common syllabus or common institutions of learning encompassing all regions, communities and castes. Historian A. Sreedhara Menon states that educational institutions meant for Hindus were broadly classified as elementary village schools or *Ezhuttupallis*, meant for educating non- Brahmin students, and *Salais* or *Mutts*, mostly situated in temple premises, which were centres of higher education and theological training meant for Brahmin students. Syrian Christian students also attended the village schools where elementary education in the vernacular and arithmetic was imparted to them, whereas Madrasas were the centres of primary education for Muslim students who could attend Arabic colleges if they wished to gain mastery in matters of theology and other systems of knowledge at a higher level.[182] From 1823, more consideration was given by the colonizers to the broadening of the reach of education to larger sections of society. Holt Mackenzie argued that the government must seek to provide education to the people. Since they began to think that education was a crucial means for the effective governance of the people, they encouraged the

[180] Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 90.
[181] Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai, *Studies in Kerala History* (Trivandrum: State Institute of Languages, 1970), 267.
[182] A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala* (New Delhi: Sterling, 1979), 281-97.

imparting of education through various means including mission schools.[183] When the British Parliament passed the East India Company's Charter in 1833 opening India to missionaries from all countries, there was an increased inflow of mission societies. In the case of northern Kerala, German missionaries from B.M.S. arrived in 1830s and used their overseas resources to finance a printing press.[184]

Ananda Wood states that these missions opened many local level primary schools which made education accessible to the people of downtrodden castes, and the curriculum taught in them was different from the earlier system of learning, which was restricted to the intensive study of relatively few texts and cultural forms that could be called as the 'classics.'[185] Reforms in scripts and orthography were initiated during this time as script styles compatible with these printing presses meant for educational purposes had to be invented. Types which resemble the script of modern Malayalam, at least in remote ways, were designed at this stage. This was the result of a shift in the interest towards promotion of 'native education' and opening of schools in the vernacular by 1820s and 1830s, and later to the printing of the first newspapers and journals in the vernacular. The orthographic practices, including the use of various punctuation marks that prevail at present in the writing of Malayalam, were also introduced through the school text-books printed under Dr. Hermann Gundert's supervision at the B.M.S. presses in Mangalore and Thalassery. The earlier Malayalam printed books in Grantham types were in square letters. It was at the C.M.S. press that the rounded type of letters with reduced size, which continues to be used till this day, were used for the first time.[186]

[183] Pennycook, *English and the Discourse*, 71.
[184] Jeffrey, "Print, Newspapers, and Politics," 470.
[185] Ananda E. Wood, *Knowledge Before Printing and After: The Indian Tradition in Changing Kerala* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985), 176.
[186] Kesavan, *History of Printing*, Vol. II, 623-25.

The earliest book published by Dr. Gundert from the B.M.S. press in 1843 was *Keralolpatti*.[187] Later on, his *Keralappazhama* (1868)[188] also came out of the Thalassery press, thus paving the way to the increased circulation and legitimization of certain versions that emerged out of a mixed bag of myths on the origin of 'Keralam' and related stories. The technology of the litho-press that was brought to the northern parts of Malabar by these missionaries, later on became popular all over the region, which led to the printing of many Islamic religious tracts and *Māppilappattu*[189] works in Arabi-Malayalam.[190] Because of the association of these missionary litho -presses with the propagation of Christianity, the Mappila Muslims of Malabar relied on Bombay Arabic presses for the printing of religious matters initially.[191] By the 1860s, litho-presses established by the Mappila inhabitants of the region began to produce a significant number of works in Arabimalayalam.[192]

One notable feature of the materials that were produced from the B.M.S. litho- presses was the great interest that Gundert and his associates took in collating forms of oral literature and in the compilation of proverbs of Malabar in *Pazhamcholmāla* (1848, Garland of Proverbs*)* and *Oru Āyiram Pazhanoolukal* (1857, One Thousand Proverbs).[193] These works came out of Thalassery and Mangalore print houses. *Malayāla Panjāngam* (The Malayālam Almanac) also happens to be a major publication of the Basel Mission Press which shows the efforts of the press to attract large groups of local readers through printing such materials that were much

[187] Ibid., 640.
[188] Thirty-three years history of Malabar from the time of the arrival of Vasco da Gama in 1498.
[189] Mappila Pattu or Mappila Song is a folk Muslim song genre rendered to lyrics in colloquial Mappila dialect of Malayalam laced with Arabic, by the Mappilas of Malabar.
[190] Govi, *Ādimudranam*, 134.
[191] C. N. Ahmad Moulavi and K. K. M. Abdul Kareem eds. *Mahatthāya Māppila Sāhitya Pāramparyam* (The Great Literary Tradition of the Mappilas). (Calicut: Al Huda Book Stall, 1978), 303.
[192] O. Abu, *Arabi-Malayāla Sāhitya Charitram* (A History of Arabi-Malayalam Literature), (Kottayam: National Book Stall, 1971), 126.
[193] A revised edition of this, with 200 extra proverbs, titled *Āyirattirunooṛu Pazhanchol* (Thousand and Two Hundred Proverbs) came out of the Mangalore press in 1904.

sought-after in an agrarian society. The B.M.S. newspaper *Rājyasamāchāram* (1848, Issue No. 8) brought out the map of 'Madras state,'[194] circulated it for the first time in print among the people of Malabar, in addition to including excerpts from census reports showing the size of the Christian population in India and in the Tamil areas.[195]

The saying that "print did not produce new books, only more old books"[196] became true in the case of missionary publications. B.M.S. and C.M.S. together produced volumes of translations of Bibles, catechisms, tracts and prayer books, either as fresh translations of these or as compilations of the existing translations in print, printed earlier from the Portuguese presses.[197] Though these print houses started with the printing of Bibles, prayer books and similar texts which could be broadly classified under Christian religious literature, they also started printing and publishing text books and study aids needed for the vernacular schools set up by them as well as by the governments of each province, in no time.[198] Rosy Thampi holds that the prose style used in these mission school text books was the one designed by these missionaries for Bible translations.[199] There is a recognizable influence of English on the syntax of this new Malayalam prose.

Such intra-lingual influence at the syntactic level was not an accident since the transfer of new content would have an effect on the form too. According to Pennycook, in fact, a crucial

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[194] Vallikkavu Mohandas, *Rājyasamāchāram: Oru Pathanam* (Rajyasamacharam: A Study), (Trivandrum: Department of Culture (publishing), Government of Kerala, 1998), 93.
[195] Ibid., 240.
[196] Stuart Blackburn, *Print, Folklore and Nationalism in Colonial South India* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2006), 9.
[197] Benjamin Bailey took translation of Bible into Malayalam as his major task, and not being satisfied with Buchanan's translation of gospels already published from Bombay, brought forth a new translation of the whole Bible; and the C.M.S. press was established with Colonel Munro's aid, as he thought that to speed up the project of translation and printing of the Gospels and Bible, a press had to be established at Kottayam.
[198] K. M. Govi, "Olayil Ninnu Kadalāsileykk," (From Palm Leaf to Paper), *Matrubhasha*1, no. 2 (March 1998): 66.
[199] Rosy Thampi, *Baibilum Malayālavum* (Bible and the Malayalam Language), (Thiruvalla: Chraistava Sahitya Samithy, 2009), 132.

aspect of Orientalist language policy was to use vernacular languages in order to promote Western knowledge.[200] Classical learning could only be spread by the intensive personal training of a few privileged pupils under a personal teacher, whereas "the newly printed materials" which were "sold at cheap rates in the schools,"[201] began travelling throughout the Malayalam area, thus transcending regional disparities in terms of linguistic and cultural practices. As noted by G. Aloysius, "printed grammar books, and dictionaries brought the language to the phase of non- contextual anonymity of production and marketing spheres."[202]

Though the Anglicist inclinations in the post-Macaulay age diverted the colonial interest from the question of what is native, the Orientalist preoccupations with the use of the 'vernacular' for 'native education' at the elementary level necessitated an ongoing engagement with the vernaculars and with the discourses on 'enriching' and 'developing' them, though both these positions were equally complicit with the project of domination. The mushrooming of vernacular educational institutions for the masses inevitably became the precursor for Malayalam language entering the phase of 'print capitalism,' as text books and other study aids had to be produced for mass consumption. This slowly led to the standardization of language since language manipulation ceased to be the ascriptive privilege of a few. Maps and censuses which penetrated into the reader's world had immense impact on fixing new conceptions of spatial reality pertaining to that of politically bounded territories.[203] Added to this was the "cultural- symbolic bridging of the erstwhile segmented communities" which paved the way for the intensification of social interactions and communication among groups, later promoted by popular-vernacular journalism.[204]

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[200] Pennycook, *English and the Discourse*, 77.
[201] Koji Kawashima, *Missionaries and a Hindu State: Travancore 1858-1936* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 94.
[202] G. Aloysius, *Interpreting Kerala's Social Development* (New Delhi: Critical Quest, 2005), 14.
[203] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 177.
[204] Aloysius, *Kerala's Social Development*, 12-14.

The advocates of English look upon this tie up between the government and the missionaries after the establishment of British rule as the major reason behind the development of Indian languages as they argue that it was under British rule that these languages greatly flowered and could acquire new and modern forms of expression.[205] Though the socio-political situation in the three regions viz. Travancore, Cochin and Malabar was uneven, the British overlordship did impose its own administrative unity on them.[206] K. N. Panikkar states that the printed book presented to the newly educated readers new genres of prose writing erstwhile unknown to them and an "entirely new way of spending their leisure time."[207] Meanwhile, the use of print by these Protesant missionaries to re-construct the 'real' past of the 'natives' manufactured a 'shared history,' thus foregrounding certain select narratives as constituting the legitimate past for the inhabitants of *Malayālanād*. A variety of activities ranging from the collection of manuscripts, collating versions of mythico-historical narratives, and extending to the editing and publication of local histories were undertaken by the missionaries of Basel Mission in Thalassery and Mangalore. Gundert's effort in collecting and publishing *Keralolpatti: The Origin of Malabar* (1843), which is attributed to the 'father of Malayalam language'- not only became instrumental in giving authority to the story of Brahmin ownership over the land, but it also introduced Thunchath Ezhuthachan in print as the key literary figure in Malayalam and as one who narrated one of the earliest 'histories' of the region. Gundert also took interest in publishing *Kerala Pazhama: Antiquity of Kerala* (1868) which deals with the incidents that followed the landing of Vasco Da Gama and the Portuguese invasions in Calicut from 1498. The devising of *Malayala Bhashavyakaranam* or *A Grammar of the Malayalam*

[205] S. Mohan Kumaramangalam, *India's Language Crisis: An Introductory Study* (Madras: New Century Book House, 1965), 5.
[206] Aloysius, *Kerala's Social Development*, 12.
[207] K. N. Panikkar, *Culture, Ideology, Hegemony: Intellectuals and Social Consciousness in Colonial India* (Delhi: Anthem Press, 2002), 129-30.

Language (1851) by him, with examples cited from selected Sanskrit renderings in the Bhasha like *Mahabharatam*, *Chanakyasootram*, *Ramacharitam* etc. for verse forms as well as examples from *Keralolpatti, Kanakkusaram* (Elements of Mathematics), *Vaidyashastram* (Medicinal Science) etc. for prose forms is also worth mentioning. The publication of above-mentioned works by Gundert had a remarkable role in fixing the contours of a common history for the Malabar coast and in assigning a traceable literary past for its people and their language. This could provide the basis for an emerging sentiment of a common linguistic community, though different sections of people still continued to be fragmented geo-politically till the end of 19th century.

Education and language policy were crucial sites of colonial encounter and aided in the production of a colonial discourse.[208] As the 'Vernacular' schools supervised by the governments of princely states and the Company taught *Malayalam, Arithmetic, Manipravalam, Kilippattu, Amaram, Sidharupam* and *Kavyam*, the eventual victory of the vernacularists over the supporters of classicist lines of education in the 19th century was ensured. It can be understood from the kind of text books that were produced by the B.M.S. press for teaching purposes at their 'Anglo-Vernacular' mission schools. At the same time, the use of vernacular as the medium of instruction does not imply the complete disavowal of the Sanskrit classics since Hindu devotional and mythological texts in Sanskrit also happened to be the sources relied upon for teaching models of versification in the vernacular to the students of B.M.S. schools. A considerable number of people who got educated in Malabar during the mid-19th century can be thought to have gained literacy in the vernacular through the *Pādhārambham* (1843) and *Pādhamāla* (1860), school text books designed by Gundert that were taught in the B.M.S. schools. The sections on poetry in the *Pādhamāla* contained

[208] Pennycook, *English and the Discourse*, 69.

selections from the popular Kavyas of the time like *Jňānanappāna*[209], Valmiki's *Rāmāyanam*, *Nalacharitam*, *Brahmāndapurānam*, *Rāmacharitam*[210] etc. whereas prose sections were composed by Gundert himself.[211] The observation by B.S. Kesavan that "translations of Sanskrit epics and Tamil versions of traditional stories"[212] were the first Tamil works in prose that got into print also shows that early printing efforts were primarily directed at reproducing many of the old indigenous texts of the respective regions. In addition to text books, the first missionary newspapers like *Rajyasamāchāram* (1847) and *Paschimodayam* (1848) which came out of the B.M.S. litho-press at Thalassery reported news items from various parts of the world in a simple Malayalam prose. A well-known fact about the news content in these newspapers is that Gundert who was a polyglot used to translate the content of news items reported in newspapers around the world, since he had subscribed to newspapers in 18 different languages from various countries.[213] Apart from the news on mission work in various countries around the world, testimonial reports of converts and news items about 'native conversions' also presented a sketch of the newly evolving geography of Christian faith in simple Malayalam to the eyes of new converts. Text books for mission schools stressed on moral education in the local form, i.e. in the vernacular, which could attract the locals, though English, Mathematics, Science, Geography and History were also part of the curriculum.[214]

> Dr. Gundert's main concern was to produce suitable text-books in Malayalam at various levels…The East India Company, while re-organizing school education in India, coming to know of Dr. Gundert's scholarship, offered him the position of Inspector of Schools and this obliged him to make Calicut as his headquarters. Dr. Gundert paid special attention to the planning and designing

[209] It is a devotional poem written by the 16th century Malayalam poet Poonthanam. Written as a prayer to god Guruvayoorappan, it is considered an important work in Malayalam literature; written in simple Malayalam, the *Jnanappana* was Poonthanam's magnum opus and is an important work of Bhakti literature.
[210] The earliest extant literary work in Malayalam, an epic poem written in the late 12th or early 13th century.
[211] Thampi, *Baibilum Malayālavum*, 134.
[212] B.S. Kesavan, *History of Printing and Publishing in India: A Story of Cultural Re- Awakening,* Vol. I (New Delhi: NBT, 1985), 74.
[213] Puthuppalli Raghavan, *Kerala Patrapravartana Charitram* (History of Press in Kerala), (Thrissur: Kerala Sahitya Akademi, 2008), 28.
[214] Kesavan, *History of Printing*, Vol II, 638.

> of appropriate textbooks for the various classes. In many cases he himself wrote books in Malayalam. [215]

At the same time, the C.M.S. also adhered to the policy of Pragmatic Orientalism- which means using the vernacular for educating the natives, but not using it to impart knowledge that is already available in that language or in its existing literary works. Instead, the vernacular was used as a medium to promote European knowledge which had to be disseminated through the missionary colleges and print-houses. The newspapers and magazines like *Jñānanikshepam* and *Vidyāsamgraham*, which came out of the C.M.S. college press stand as proofs of their efforts at propagating Western science and Christian ideals through the medium of a newly created 'vernacular.' The use of movable types and rounded letter-script devised by the missionary Rev. Benjamin Bailey made these printed newspapers distinct. Rev. Bailey, the pioneer C.M.S. missionary, also compiled the first dictionary of Malayalam language. One of the major objectives behind the compiling of such a dictionary was stated by him in the opening remarks as: "to give the correct rendering of the words in 'Malayālim' in all their meanings and also to diffuse real and useful knowledge and learning among the subjects of Travancore."[216]

The C.M.S. did shape a strand of the vernacular with a high proportion of Sanskrit terms, which served the purpose of introducing Western concepts and passages from various knowledge-texts in English, Romance languages and languages of the Germanic family as they held the view that vernaculars need to be improved by drawing on older languages. Puthuppalli Raghavan observes that there is a great degree of difference between the language style that is used in the C.M.S. journal *Jñānanikshepam* and the language of the B.M.S. newspapers.

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[215] Ibid., 638-39.
[216] Benjamin Bailey, *A Dictionary: English and Malayalam* (Cottayam: C.M.S. press, 1849), vi.

According to him "though the usages of language in both these journal categories are simple, the occurrence of Sanskrit vocabulary in *Jñānanikshepam* is noticeably high; not only that but also references related to Hindu mythology as well."[217] This did fit well with the colonial language policy of the times; as Orientalists like Captain Candy, who was the superintendent of Poona Sanskrit College in 1880 said thus, "In a word, knowledge must be drawn from…the English language, the vernaculars must be employed as the media of communicating it, and Sanscrit must be largely used to improve the vernaculars and make them suitable for the purpose."[218] All these new translations and compositions in the vernacular which were introduced in print resulted in the gradual evolution and dissemination of a discursive prose apart from the Liturgical Malayalam prose which was already in circulation.

> Having fortified language walls between one group and another, printers homogenized what was within them, breaking down minor differences, standardizing idioms for millions of writers and readers assigning a new peripheral role to provincial dialects…Grammar schools and other institutions of primary instruction became sources for introducing a homogenized print-made language in front of the child's eye at a rather impressionable age or years of childhood. This standardized version for the eye alters the version that is first heard by the ear.[219]

The developing of a strand of less Sanskritized Malayalam prose through school text books elevated the vernacular to the status of a language which can function as the medium of instruction and also as a language which is worth learning as a part of the new schooling curriculum. At the same time, *Manipravalam* with a high mixture of Sanskrit was identified and began to be considered as the language-variety suitable for versification, and the texts in this mixed form were taught as the ideal mode of verse in the language. In the view of the

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[217] Raghavan, *Kerala Patrapravartana Charitram*, 41.
[218] Captain Candy (1840) cited in *Bureau of Education*, 1992, 2, quoted in Pennycook, *English and the Discourse*, 68.
[219] Eisenstein, *Printing Revolution*, 91-94.

missionaries, the pedantic *Manipravala* forms of poetry had 'degraded the moral values of the natives' as these were perceived by them as largely associated with the erotic literature of the times apart from the devotional literary forms available in it. A common feature of 19th century missionary discourse was the labelling of Manipravalam as useless or 'vulgar' followed by categorizing several other existing verse genres identified as erotic in content under the common label of *'Ammayishlokams.'* This went hand in hand with the colonial project of constructing similar images of a 'sexually uncivilized subject' made possible through the ethnographic accounts of missionary- anthropologists like Samuel Mateer.[220] The 'disciplining practices' involved in the constitution of a subject that Foucault talks about in his analysis of the connections between power and knowledge is relevant at this juncture where "the knowing subjects and truths known are the product of relations of power and knowledge."[221] Hence, they took extra care in designing a prose free from *Manipravala* style for educational purposes in their schools as this new prose was supposed to be the kind which could impart the puritan Christian values of that time.

Many scholars are of the opinion that these transformations turned out to be successful in making the tradition of prose more supple and simple, as an increasing avoidance of the convoluted Sanskrit construction and of pedantic Sanskrit vocabulary was the line of growth along which Malayalam prose evolved towards modernity.[222] As P. J. Thomas comments on this remarkable shift:

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[220] His observations about the local customs, property inheritance practices and remarks about the indigenous conjugal relations in Travancore had an important role in labelling marriage practices among certain indigenous communities, especially among the Nayars as licentious. For details, see Samuel Mateer, *The Land of Charity: A Descriptive Account of Travancore and its People* (London: John Snow & Co., 1870).

[221] Joseph Rouse, "Power/ Knowledge," in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, 2nd ed., ed. Gary Gutting (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 107.

[222] See Thampi, *Baibilum Malayālavum*, 130-38; Scaria Zacharia, "Missionary Gadyam" (Missionary Prose), in *Malayāla Bhāshācharitram* (The History of Malayalam Language) ed. S. V. Venugopan Nair (Trivandrum: Maluben Publications, 2010), 126-36; K. Balakrishnan, *Hermann Gundert* (Calicut: Matrubhumi Publications, 2013), 66-77.

> There existed no proper works of prose, written down on those subjects which the laymen wanted to know about, in a form which they could understand. The greatest digression which occurred in the development of Keralabhāsha is that, literature turned out to be of the common man's. That means, various kind of prose works about mundane matters of the world (not about Purāna- Itihāsas), in the language of ordinary people and written by ordinary persons came into being.[223]

Thomas's remarks make it evident that the hegemony attained by the new discourses of colonialism effected through establishing new disciplines of knowledge changed the ways in which we ourselves perceive our society. K. N. Panikkar observes that, "By facilitating access to literary products, print contributed to the making of a new cultural taste and sensibility and thus of a new cultural personality."[224] Thus, not only did the Indian language textbooks produced by government, Christian missionaries etc. aim at incorporating colonial cultural elements, but they also became successful in placing "the cultural ideal in the achievements of western society."[225] Interestingly, literary historians like Krishna Chaitanya hold that though "a Christian evangelical drive initiated by European missionaries…achieved a great success in making the tradition of prose more and more supple and simple, the Hindu litterateur was isolated from it through a double alienation," owing to the "the very obvious instrumental use of the medium and the different creed it was used to popularize."[226] The association of Christianity with the technology of printing and the use of it by missionaries as a tool or weapon to undermine Muslim interests is thought to have made the Mappilas hesitant to adopt printing from the Western Christians.[227] Apart from being suspicious of the early printing efforts beginning with the Portuguese and German missionaries, a considerable section of Mappilas

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[223] P. J. Thomas, *Malayāla Sāhityavum Kṛistyānikalum*, 20.
[224] Panikkar, *Culture, Ideology, Hegemony*, 128.
[225] Ibid., 129.
[226] Chaitanya, *A History of Malayalam*, 166.
[227] J. B. P. More, *Muslim Identity, Print Culture, and the Dravidian Factor in Tamil Nadu* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2004), 95.

maintained their distinct identity in the religious landscape of Malabar by expressing their thoughts through a different medium which they reverently called Quran script.[228] The Mappilas identified passionately with the symbol, the Arabi-Malayalam script, which was a part of their cultural self-defense and a marker of difference.

Colonial Philology and Accounts of the Vernacular

The missionaries as well as the colonial administrators who reached the subcontinent identified the need to have a thorough knowledge of local languages, customs and beliefs as this was inevitable for proselytization and also for the establishment and long-term maintenance of the empire, respectively. Ethnographic and philological work produced by these two groups to document the lives and linguistic practices of the indigenous populations often made long-standing impressions in the minds of the colonized subjects. These documentations include a wide variety of material ranging from District Manuals compiled by government officials, dictionaries and grammar books to collections of folk songs and scholarly articles in literary journals published from mission houses. Many of these efforts in ethnology and anthropological linguistics were inspired by the idealist- romanticist notions about languages that were derived from the views of German philosophers like Johann Gottfried von Herder and Wilhelm von Humboldt which affirmed that language played a prominent role in shaping the thoughts patterns and determining the structures of feeling of each linguistic group. Hence, these ethnolinguistic enterprises which had an obsession about 'origins' continually enquired about the 'essential nature' of regions and peoples in connection with the languages which they spoke, which also were in turn put under scrutiny for the purpose of finding their 'pure original' forms.

[228] This is the alternate popular name for Arabi-Malayalam script.

The final goal of the philological reconstruction of parent languages and texts resulting from the rise of the comparative historical method was to figure out how people made sense of the world they inhabited. At the same time, these ethnolinguistic enterprises also aimed at tracing the connections between the people across the globe, creating a hierarchy of ethnicities where a few turn out to be superior in cultural perfection, while others may fall short of civilizational refinement. As Robert J. C. Young observes, "the insistently genetic emphasis on the metaphor of 'families' of languages, and the oftcharted language 'trees' which were to determine the whole basis of phylogenetic racial theories of conquest, absorption and decline-(were) designed to deny the more obvious possibilities of mixture, fusion and creolization."[229] The discursive peculiarities of these philological accounts include a) the ascription of cultural and linguistic closure to various social groups as well as b) descriptions on the measures of 'progress' and 'modernity' achieved by these groups. It is worthwhile to explore these narrative aspects of these descriptions since they had a significant impact on the later cultural imaginings and socio-political movements taken up by the English educated cultural elites. These studies and descriptions which treated the vernacular as an object of study were not simply exercises in understanding it fully but had instead originated from the motive of language planning. By ascribing a derivative and inferior status to Malayalam which was identified as the language of a particular territory and a people, the British ethnographers and administrators could easily advocate their supremacy over a Malayalee linguistic-cultural group in the making. At the same time, they could also take up the role of the saviours of a native populace who have been enslaved and have been denied justice by the hegemony of the Brahmin populace through the cunning use of Sanskrit, their prime instrument of oppression. On the other hand, to fully develop the capacities of Malayalam, thereby making it capable of

[229] Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 62.

acquiring a distinct identity from Tamil and its people also happened to be the other objective of all these philological exercises. Therefore, the pronounced objective of studying the tongue was to enable the agents of colonialism to effectively work with it to change its overall framework and intentional patterns to suit the colonial and missionary "projects of reform." This task of 'reforming' the people and their tongues that was taken up by colonial linguists was done with an eye to creating an ease in administering them and shaping them as subjects as per the new legal principles of colonial rule.

A) Language and its Connection to Justice:

One of the earliest attempts in devising a grammar for the language of the region is *Grammar of the Malabar Language* (1799) by Robert Drummond which was published soon after the province of Malabar was annexed to the British territory. Drummond was a surgeon in the East India Company's Bombay medical establishment. The purpose of such a publication, as stated in the preface to this work, was to aid the translation of 'proceedings' of "trials of a criminal nature which are conducted by a native judge," since these needed to be scrutinized by British magistrates "as an additional security to the lives of the people."[230] The author's statement in the preface that "a proficiency in the language of Malabar is necessary to give full scope to the judicious and humane regulations framed for the administration of the Province,"[231] is one which establishes an indispensable relation between expertise in the principles of a language and the effective imparting of justice to the people of the land.

Citing the Bishop of Uzula who supported his efforts to make good the "want of any introductory treatise on the structure of the language,"[232] Drummond makes it clear that "the happiness and permanent interests of a numerous race of people who had been hitherto

[230] Drummond, *Grammar of the Malabar Language*, 1-2.
[231] Ibid., 2.
[232] Ibid.

enslaved, would be more effectually secured to them under the mild and equitable institutes of a Christian Government."[233] The underlying assumptions behind these statements can be listed as follows: 1) Deriving the basic structural principles of a language as well as making of grammars and other study aids for the language are 'acts of benevolence,' as these have the long-term impact of uplifting various 'races'/ sections of the 'native society' from slavery. Here, the Company and the missionaries are shown to be claiming the role of protectors, as ones who were striving to ensure the rights of the indigenous people. 2) There is a direct co-relation between the existence/ absence of learning/ teaching aids and materials for a language and the social status of its speakers and 3) The effective diffusion of the knowledge of the tongue is an effort in the direction of ensuring native progress, which consists in nothing less than effectually "securing the mild and equitable institutes of a Christian Government." Similar assumptions figure in many other colonial writings across the subcontinent. Thus, projecting the perceived connections between a complete knowledge of the local tongue among the rulers and the natives under rule, and the act of ensuring justice to the speakers of the tongue, happened to be the justification for teaching a 'standardized tongue' through mission schools and for the dissemination of the same through legal documents issued by the government. The establishment of a moral system in the land coterminous with the colonial legal system in a common standardized tongue could also ensure smoothness in managing the new linguistic-legal subject in the making.

B) Language and Territoriality:

Rama Sundari Mantena in her work on colonial philology states that the idea held by the colonial linguist C. P. Brown was that "the grammarian was the custodian of language. The role of the custodian included monitoring changes in language, providing explanations for the

[233] Ibid., 3.

different uses of the language, and acting as a guide."[234] Many a time, the grammarians' role in demarcating geographical areas on the principle of linguistic unity, by subsuming other features of classification, has in turn made them the real custodians of languages and thus territories. The grammars published by the East India Company's servant, F. Spring (1839) and by the C. M. S missionary, Rev. Joseph Peet (1841) begin with descriptions of well demarcated boundaries of a defined region in which the 'Malayalim' language is spoken. The provinces of Malabar and the kingdoms of Travancore and Cochin are identified as the places where the language is spoken and the term Malayalam country, which has its unity deriving out of the common language, is attributed to the region.

In addition to this, a clear demarcation of the geographical boundaries within which the language is spoken or can be heard are also noted down. F. W. Ellis holds that of the four Khandams or provinces of the west coast, "the one extending from Nileshwaram to Cannetti near Collam lies *Cerala-rājyam* and from there to Canyakumari, *Mushica-rajyam*. The Malayāla or more properly the Malayālma is the language of these provinces[sic.]."[235] Ethno-history, which emerged as a discipline during this time, had erased the boundaries between anthropology and history and this slicing off of a geographical unit which cuts across erstwhile sovereign kingdoms solely on the basis of the attribution of a common spoken tongue was the first occurrence of its kind. Many a time, therefore, "those bounded confines were conceived to be ethnolinguistically homogenous groups that were localized, and naturalized, as 'tribes' or 'ethnicities.'"[236] The movement and settlement of various ethnic groups across territories, language variation and the change in the languages spoken by ethnic groups, including

[234] Mantena, "Vernacular Futures," 526.
[235] F. W. Ellis, *Dissertation the Second on the Malayālma Language* (n. p.: n. p., 1815), 1, https://books.google.co.in/books?id=IIIIAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false (accessed May 30, 2016).
[236] Errington, "Colonial Linguistics", 24.

formation of new mixed languages in territories etc. were dealt with. Commenting on the linguistic images taken up by philology, Errington states thus:

> The linguistic face of human diversity had always figured in debates about questions of human origins, and so knowledge of languages written by linguists abroad could travel back to Europe and into debates which joined questions of human origins and diversity with ideologies of European superiority. The role of linguistics in this intellectual and ideological project is so important that writings in the late 18th century shaped uses of language difference in the 19th century.[237]

C) On the Origins of the Language: Inferiority, Dependence and Derivative Nature:

The absence of a considerable body of noteworthy publications 'in the language' and 'about it' was often cited as one of the important shortcomings of the vernacular by many missionaries and grammarians. In the introductory note to a study aid prepared for civil servants in 1851, then Malayalam Translator to the Government of Madras, A. J. Arbuthnot mentions the inspiration behind the collating of translations and grammatical materials by him as "the absence of any elementary work calculated to afford to English student that assistance in the acquisition of Malayalam, for which in most languages a Delectus or such like manual is available."[238] William Logan who was the district collector of Malabar towards the end of 19th century also wrote in his *Malabar Manual* (1887): "There exists in Malayalam, as far as my information extends, no work or language, no grammar, no dictionary."[239] The slavish nature of the 'vernacular' owing to which the "common tongue was beneath the notice of the

[237] Joseph Errington, *Linguistics in a Colonial World: A Story of Language, Meaning, and Power* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 14.
[238] A. J. Arbuthnot, *Malayalam Selections with Translations, Grammatical Analyses and Vocabulary* (Cottayam: C.M.S. Press, 1851), i.
[239] William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, Vol. I (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1989), 95.

learned"[240] is inferred to be the reason for this and a parallel is drawn between the hierarchy of languages in Europe and the Indian peninsula.

The strong assumption behind these analyses is that there exists a universal principle of hierarchies in any society viz. these will be reflected through the difference in status of various linguistic codes used by different social classes. So also, the presence of the written script was taken to be the marker of superiority of a language variety over the one existing only in oral form. It is concluded that, similar to the way in which "in former days, European Savan(t)s invariably wrote in Latin," the learned among the natives "would not condescend to write in the common language, but always used Sanscrit in the Malayalim character [sic.]."[241] Thus for missionaries like Hermann Gundert as well as for administrators like William Logan, this assumed non-existence of works in and on the vernacular began to be synonymous with the inferiority of the people of the land of Malayalam.

Inferiority is attributed to the language by these grammarians, administrators and lexicographers either on the grounds of the 'derivative nature,' 'dependency' or on the grounds of it's being 'confined to an oral form' prior to the devising of a script by the Brahmin settlers. These can be seen as the result of "a new concept of history (which) entered the discourse on language, imputing a linear directionality to it."[242] Hence Spring observes that "the scanty language…of the aborigines to have been, was written, (when) the rulers wished to commit their thoughts or commands to writing for the information of the common people."[243]

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[240] F. Spring, *Outlines of a Grammar of the Malayalim Language* (Madras: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1839), ii.
[241] Ibid.
[242] Mantena, "Vernacular Futures," 514.
[243] Spring, *Outlines of a Grammar*, iii.

At the same time, in the preface to his grammar, Joseph Peet, a C.M.S. missionary who lived in Mavelikkara reported that "The language of this country is said, by some, to have been derived from Sanscrit; by others, it is supposed to be a mere dialect of the Tamul."[244] Yet, he argued that both these propositions on the origins of the language were wrong, and the abundance of sounds and terms from these language groups should just "show that improvements of a more advanced people have been borrowed, as in many similar cases of other nations."[245] Thus, it is evident from Peet's description that, even though he did not propose a derivative model, his opinion on the inferiority of the vernacular in comparison to those more improved peoples/ nations was maintained in his description.

Jyotsna G. Singh states that "This impulse to catalogue easily enabled the establishment of detailed typologies of geographical, cultural and moral categories, and in turn, became a crucial aspect of the project of colonial meaning-making from the earliest European encounters."[246] Like Peet's *Grammar*, Caldwell's Grammar also came up with a model of dependence: "It is true it would now be difficult for Telugu to dispense with its Sanskrit; more so for Canarese; and most of all for Malayalam-those languages having borrowed from Sanskrit so largely…it would be scarcely possible for them to assert their independence."[247] It is very well known that most of the tropes used by each of these grammarians were often borrowed from earlier travel writings or official documents. The repeated affirmation of the inferiority or dependence of Malayalam in these narratives was also a call for various efforts from the agents of colonialism in the direction of raising its status by striving for its improvement. The report

[244] Joseph Peet, *A Grammar of the Malayalim Language* (Cottayam: Church Mission Press, 1841), v.
[245] Ibid., vi.
[246] Jyotsna G. Singh, *Colonial Narratives/ Cultural Dialogues: "Discoveries" of India in the Language of Colonialism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 28.
[247] Caldwell, *Grammar of the Dravidian,* 1st ed., 47.

of the committee in charge of language teaching in the Fort St. George College also followed the same principles:

> The Committee had heard of works on Malayalam in both Dutch and Portuguese, but the only work any of the Committee members had seen was the grammar of Mr. Drummond, "which might be greatly improved here, for as the dialect is the immediate, though *degenerate offspring* of the Tamil, a knowledge of the parent language would afford great facilities in correcting and extending it" (MPC 10 Dec 1811, para.58).[248]

D) Genealogical Model, Ethnicity and Identity:

The above-mentioned descriptions have immense naturalizing powers, especially because they brought into being various ethno-cultural identities based on language. Since the genealogical model of Darwinian evolutionary theory was adopted by comparative philology of the 19th century,[249] the overarching model of 'parent/ origin – offspring/ derivative' which was applied to languages was also used later to propose ethnic and racial connections and distinctions. The Ellis years in the college of Fort St. George that were synonymous with theories of the connectedness of the four major languages of the southern part of India with one another, their derivation from Tamil, their non-derivation from Sanskrit, and the presence in them of Sanskrit words not as indigenous formations but as loan words put forth the idea of a Dravidian language family.[250] The Dravidian proof also proposed that other than Sanskrit, there exists another classical language in the Indian subcontinent, namely Tamil, which is of foremost antiquity among the languages of the Dravidian family.

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[248] Trautmann, *Languages and Nations*, 129.
[249] Annette Kern-Stähler, "Homer on the Evolutionary Scale: Interrelations between Biology and Literature in the Writings of William Gladstone and Grant Allen," in *Unmapped Countries: Biological Visions in Nineteenth Century Literature and Culture*, ed. Anne-Julia Zwierlein (London: Anthem Press, 2005), 107.
[250] Trautmann, *Languages and Nations*, 130.

The 'Dravidian proof' claimed that though Sanskritic 'tadbhavas'[251] and 'tadsamas'[252] are present in Southern tongues, the vast array of *desya*[253] vocabulary items that remained unexplained etymologically in their relation to Sanskrit were almost similar in all the Southern languages and hence these desya items happen to be the evidence for their origins/ roots derived out of the proto- Dravidian tongue. Thus, further descriptions tended to sketch the influence of Sanskrit and Brahmin invasion to the south as the reasons for the deviations of the tongue from Tamil/ Dravida roots and the reason for the corruptness of the tongue. Hermann Gundert in his *Malayālabhāshā Vyākaranam* (The Grammar of Malayalam Language, 1851) describes the language as a branch of Tamil, termed as *Bhūmilam*, i.e. Malayalam as a subsidiary of Tamil, which later underwent transformation from its original form owing to the entry of Sanskrit words and sounds.[254] This formulation on the one hand invoked the Dravidian connections of the language and its people and at the same time could affirm the separation of the people's language and culture from the 'pure Dravida roots.'

In F. Spring's opinion, in the same vein, any attentive student who tries to compare the words in 'Tamul' and 'Malayalim' "which are not derived in common from Sanscrit" will be able to find that they are separate, but languages of the same kind.[255] Influenced by the idea of Dravidian proof and exposed to the ethno-linguistic findings of Ellis and the Madras Literary Society, the missionary linguist of L. M. S., Bishop Robert Caldwell considered Dravidians as the first inhabitants of India, and stated in *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages* (1856) that they were driven southwards by pre-Aryan Scythian

[251] A "tadbhava" is a word with an Indo-Aryan origin and related to Sanskrit but which had been changed to fit the phonology of the Prakrit or Apabhraṃsha in question.
[252] A term applied to borrowed words which retained their Sanskrit form.
[253] A term applied to words that were not borrowings.
[254] Hermann Gundert, *Malayālabhāshā Vyākaranam* (The Grammar of Malayalam Language), 2nd ed. (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1991), 1.
[255] Spring, *Outlines of a Grammar*, iii.

invaders. He states that, "the Dravidians must have retired before them from the greater part of Northern India, (wh)ere they were in their turn subdued by a new race of invaders"- i.e. the Aryas.[256] Thus, "what set the boundaries of language, style and usage was not the labour of Indian scholars, but that of Europeans."[257] Inferences about the foreignness and intrusion of Aryans/ Brahmins and thus Sanskrit usages into the southern region and Dravida tongues respectively are similar to the findings of another surgeon turned lexicographer of the College of Fort William, Dr. John Gilchrist (1759-1841). Gilchrist considered Sanskrit as "a cunning fabrication…by the insidious Brahmins" and he was convinced about the need to liberate the native speech Hindoostanee and to advance its cause in opposition to the language of priests and aristocrats.[258] This gradual inception of an identity based primarily on language was pushing into background many pre-modern and smaller labels. Kinship, tribe, class etc., as well as other occupational labels which were also markers of identity became less prominent as classificatory loci. The projection of a European model of 'nations' based on the principle of neatly contained linguistic territories was an inevitable referent for carving out easily manageable units of native administrative units with distinct and standardized official language labels.

E) Descriptions of Linguistic Purity and Corruptness:

A common feature of the philological writings which emphasized the derivative or subsidiary nature of the tongues was that 'measure of correctness and corruptness' in relation to the assumed originary form/ language, which was also a salient feature of these descriptions. An ethnic grouping of the people and language of the Western coast under the same label 'Dravidian' gave rise to an unending discussion on 'purity' and 'correctness', beginning with Ellis's work. In 1815, Ellis wrote the *Dissertation the Second on the Malayāzhma Language*

[256] Caldwell, *Grammar of the Dravidian,* 2nd Revised ed., 108.
[257] Sudhir, "Colonialism and the Vocabularies," 338.
[258] David Lelyveld, "Colonial Knowledge and the Fate of Hindustani," in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 35, no. 4 (Oct., 1993): 671.

which depicted the language of Malabar Coast as a deviant or corrupt form of Tamil. Later on, while deciphering many epigraphic works of the south-western coast, like the *Pāliyam* plates, the language was taken as Tamil or at best a variant of Tamil, its 'western dialect.'[259] Typologies marked identity and difference thus "usefully determining what will be perceived as different."[260] Classifying the vast array of spoken tongues gave rise to the positing of gradations among languages of different ethnic groups, based on the levels of corruptness attributed from the proposed standard forms at each level. A speech delivered by Monier Williams in 1861 at the Oxford University shows how ethnology and linguistics come closer in the Western academia. Referring to Dr. Caldwell's classification of tongues, he stated that:

> "… the rude dialects of the more southern hill-tribes are considered…to be connected with the cultivated Dravidian (or South- Indian) tongues, that is, to belong to the same Scythian stock as Telugu, Tamil, Kanarese and Malayalam… The Ramúsies and the majority of the Korawars speak a patois of Telugu. The Male-araśars (hill-kings), inhabiting the southern Ghats, speak corrupt Malayalam in the northern parts of the range, a corrupt Tamil in the southern.[261]

Thus, there were languages like Malayalam or Kanarese which were already considered as corrupt forms of the proposed pure proto-Dravidian and there were still more 'insignificant' languages which were taken to be the corrupt forms of these languages, like the languages of various hill tribes. The identification of 'pure' forms in each stage of linguistic evolution was something which accompanied this typology, since language planning and conducting of daily administrative and legal chores were supposed to be undertaken in these identified 'purer' models to escape contingencies of miscommunication. Hence Spring maintained that the language of Malayalim that was "considered to be spoken in purity (is) in the country, of which

[259] Veluthat, *The Early Medieval,* 152.
[260] Singh, *Colonial Narratives/ Cultural Dialogues*, 29.
[261] Monier- Williams, *The Study of Sanskrit in Relation to Missionary Work in India: An Inaugural Lecture Delivered Before the University of Oxford, on April 19, 1861* (London; Oxford: Williams and Norgate; J.H. & James Parker, 1861), 2-3.

Calicut, is about the centre,"[262] whereas this was denied later by Peet in his grammar. He complained that the earlier linguists had mistaken the language of that region for 'cultivated Malayalim' just because more Sanscrit was spoken there. Peet proposed that "the best Malayalim is spoken in the interior…in many instances Malayalim words appear to have undergone radical alterations by the elision or insertion of letters, caused probably...by incorrect pronunciation."[263] So the indicators and causes of 'purity' varied from one description to another viz. presence of Sanskrit or nearness to Tamil, correctness in pronunciation etc.; whereas the principles of purity and corruptness as categories of evaluation were invariably sustained by all.

F) Reform of Language and Progress of its People:

The ascription of a singular linguistic identity to each colonial subject by denying the existence of multiple verbal repertoires varying with each sphere of social interaction was crucial, since this was inevitable in projecting 'a people' who have affinity to a specific linguistic territory. British administrative and legal documents in circulation as well as policies taken forward during the same time period also projected "reform" as the watchword of colonial rule. Language was perceived as an object 'of' as well as 'for' the reform of the indigenous populace, since planning out measures for the 'new futures' of people and their languages was an inevitable follow up measure for the initial defining of their histories. Tejaswini Niranjana brings our attention to the construction of a 'primitive' colonial subject that underlies such cultural representations like translations, ethnographies or linguistic descriptions. She writes that "The 'primitive' becomes the anthropologist's civilizational other."[264] Criticizing the humanistic underpinnings of anthropology, she states that "The unity

[262] Spring, 1839, *Outlines of a Grammar*, i.
[263] Peet, *A Grammar of the Malayalim*, vii-viii.
[264] Tejaswini Niranjana, *Post-Structuralism and the Colonial Context* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1992), 69.

of human consciousness does not preclude- in fact, it helps construct- an inner hierarchy: primitive thoughts need to be translated into modern, for it is that which is not yet modern. The hierarchy also indicates to us the operation of a teleological model of history."[265] This baggage of a teleological model of history also underlies colonial linguistic enterprises and is visible in the task of describing and hierarchically ordering languages on the basis of degrees of their 'refinement,' obviously based on a scale where the 'cultivated languages of Europe' occupied the prime position. After presenting the reasons for the inferiority of 'Malayalim' language, F. Spring added in his *Grammar* that "if it were cultivated, as it deserves, it would be one of the richest and most copious of the oriental dialects."[266] Singh has also pointed out the tendency of European travellers, administrators and ethnographers to "represent the newly 'discovered' lands as an empty space, a *tabula rasa* on which they could inscribe their linguistic, cultural and later, territorial claims" in order to later extend their claims to "other colonizing enterprises, such as *civilizing*, *rescuing*, and *idealizing* or *demonizing* their Indian subjects as 'others.'"[267] Following Errington, it can be said that colonial linguistics also needs to be viewed as a similar "project of multiple conversions: of pagan to Christian, of speech to writing, and of the alien to the comprehensible."[268]

The perception of a Babel-like situation because of difference in dialects in the northern and southern extremities of Malayalam land was revealed through Peet's observation that this was a hindrance to all intelligible conversation that could happen between inhabitants of one part and the other. He held the opinion that the efforts of European missionaries to improve the language in the previous decades had proven to be fruitful,[269] since systematic stabilization of

[265] Ibid., 70.
[266] Spring, *Outlines of a Grammar*, iii.
[267] Singh, *Colonial Narratives/ Cultural Dialogues*, 1-2.
[268] Errington, "Colonial Linguistics," 21.
[269] Peet, *A Grammar of the Malayalim*, viii.

speeches which were scattered in a state of chaos by grammarians and lexicographers were considered as essential for the progress of the local people. The notion that well-established connections existed between primitiveness or refinement of ethnicities and languages, which was supplied by the propositions of comparative philology, got reflected in the discourses which established the language-modernity relationship.

This discourse of "progress and improvement" depicted the social, political and cultural spheres of the native's life in the present as submerged in an undesirable immobility and barbarism and as one of invincible ignorance. In his *Comparative Grammar*, Caldwell "acknowledged the 'earnestness' and 'assiduity' with which the native grammarians had hitherto studied their languages, but observed with regret that they did not have the 'zeal for historic truth' that is the 'special characteristic of the European mind.'"[270] Caldwell held the opinion that "If the natives of southern India began to take an interest in the comparative study of their own languages…they would begin to…realise the fact that language has a history of its own, throwing light upon all other history."[271] Gyan Prakash's statement that "India was to be ruled according to Indian principles, but the ruler was to be none other than the Company; and it was not Indians themselves, but British officials and scholars, who were to define what constituted Indian principles,"[272] is relevant in this regard. The role of the written and printed word in presenting an ideal Western society with its base in scientific fervor in contrast to the undeveloped Orient which lacks a sense of history, thus slowly unfolding the dichotomies of modernity and tradition, is significant. As observed by Edward Shils, from the 18th century onwards, "Science seemed to be inimical to tradition; tradition was held to be inimical to

[270] Ramaswamy, *Passions of the Tongue,* 13.
[271] Robert Caldwell, *Grammar of the Dravidian,* 2nd Revised ed., x.
[272] Gyan Prakash, "Civil Society, Community and the Nation in Colonial India" in *Ethnographica* 6, no.1(2002): 29.

science."[273] A discourse of improvement and progress was made possible through a modern conception of temporality which relied on imagining the past and future with a linear connectedness. Such a modern conception of temporality and an impetus for improvement was declared as absent in the studies of indigenous grammarians. The evangelical zeal laden with future objectives naturally made European philological endeavours follow this new temporality in addition to the positing of a blood link between the *bhasha* and the people. The overall effect of this discourse was the projecting of the vernacular in print as the medium of passage to modern citizenship, as different from the classical languages which were supposedly oriented towards pre-modern antiquity.

G) Organic Nature of Language vs its Object-ness:

The vocabulary used to describe languages in the 19th century is peculiar since a fair amount of narratives depicted languages as organic entities. Genealogical descriptions replete with ideas of 'parenthood,' 'offspring,' 'sibling' etc. within the idea of language 'families,' as we have seen in the case of Dravidian proof and related illustrations, as well as the attributes of 'growth,' 'inferiority' and 'nourishment' used by missionaries in connection to languages signaled the possibility of imagining them as organisms with a life of their own: "By conceptualizing language as an organism that developed over time and (which) went through historical stages just as human societies did, philologists were able to chart the historical development of Indian languages, specifically as emplotted in their literary production." [274]

The trope of 'organism' used for language by linguists like William Dwight Whitney proposed for it- "a life and growth independent of its speakers, with which men cannot

[273] Edward Shils, *Tradition* (London: Faber& Faber, 1981), 102.
[274] Mantena, "Vernacular Futures," 529-30.

interfere"[275] and this model leaves it to be governed only by natural laws. At the same time, by proposing language as an 'object of study' and by defining it as an 'object worth manipulation,' especially through the discourses of progress and reform which brings the possibility for intervention, an altogether different imagining of the vernacular language is also made possible. Hereafter a shift towards thinking about language as an object of knowledge, by divorcing it from actual usage, was made possible by the end of the 19th century. Language was no more a means to acquire knowledge; instead, it formed the primary object of enquiry. James C Stalker holds the opinion that "for the philologists, the study of language became removed from the social and rhetorical concerns of the 18th century, and thus became an abstract and objective study."[276] As one discourse opens up the possibilities for its personification, the other one proposes a completely depersonalizing approach to it. Yet, both these discourses put forth the possibility of theorizing about language(s) rather than just having the experience of language in use as communicative media.

All the views that have been discussed above are marked by a peculiarity in their approach to language which itself was new to the people of the times. In the discursive structures circulating within the 19th century, "value laden statements about the inhabitants of colonized countries were presented as 'facts,' against which there was little possibility of argument."[277] Many of the cultural constructs produced by colonialism also have long lasting effects, some of which extend to the present times. Thus, the consensus amongst comparative philologists in Europe that linguistic criteria were the most reliable categories in determining the various races of mankind had far reaching effects. The idea of a primordial linguistic

[275] William Dwight Whitney, *Language and the Study of Language: Twelve Lectures on the Principles of Linguistic Science* (London: N. Trübner & Co, 1884), 35.
[276] James C. Stalker, "Attitudes Toward Language in the 18th and 19th Centuries," in *English Language Today: Public Attitudes Toward the English Language*, ed. Sidney Greenbaum (New York: Pergamon Press, 1985), 45.
[277] Mills, *Discourse*, 109.

identity that one inherits through one's birth began to gain prominence from this moment when monolingual identity for the indigenous self was posited as an Indian principle. Language, which was hardly a marker of identity and which was often a tool to maintain socio-political hierarchy, was obtaining the status of an organic entity determining the meanings of the individual's subjectivity.

Consequently, languages, including Malayalam, ceased to be mere media used for the exchange of ideas between its speakers; instead, they began to be recognized as markers of identity and symbols of community cohesion owing to the attribution of a fixed number of speakers and ascription of fixed territorial boundaries for these tongues. The identification and objectification of vernaculars like Malayalam were also done with the objective "to use them as instruments of rule to understand better the 'peculiar' manners, customs and prejudices of Indians, and to gather information necessary to conciliate and control the peoples of India."[278] They also acquired a new status- as the 'objects of colonial reform,' since colonial linguistic discourses had made the judgement that the progress and reform of their speakers were invariably connected to the state of these supposedly 'organic entities' which then made the intervention of colonial agents imperative to meet that goal.

Printing Efforts by Missionaries and the Shaping of Attitudes towards the Vernacular

The latter half of the 19th century was marked by many important events which had a long-standing impact on the politico-socio-cultural scenario that prevailed in South India in the succeeding years, and the major ones among these, like the Dravidian movement turn out to be indirectly the result of the revelations that came out of Fort St. George. Muthiah points out that

[278] Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms*, 46.

"During its brief life of 42 years, the College of Fort St. George's Board did yeomen service in pursuing 'in depth' Dravidian language studies."[279] The College's students, the *munshis*[280] and other scholars, teamed together with the institution's press and publishing house to bring out an imperishable body of work on the Dravidian languages.[281] These materials count very obviously, in Errington's terms, as outcomes of work which made languages objects of knowledge, so that their speakers could be made subjects of power.[282]

Another turning point was Charles Wood's Educational Despatch of 1854, which emphasized the duty of the British to provide education to Indians, viz. useful moral and material knowledge to the natives, which led to the opening of many vernacular schools across the Indian subcontinent. As the most important educational policy that was adopted by the Company's government after Macaulay's Minutes, the 1854 Despatch introduced a bilingual model of imparting education to natives by introducing an "education system centred on the diffusion of arts, science, philosophy and literature through the medium of English at secondary and tertiary levels, and vernacular languages at elementary level."[283] The Utilitarian intent behind these educational endeavours is made clear through the instruction given by the Despatch that "the use of the languages which alone are understood by the great mass of population should be entertained as the medium of instruction."[284] The increased use of the vernacular as the medium of education after the implementation of the Despatch facilitated the spread of the new script through the printed Malayalam textbooks. These were made available

[279] Muthiah, "The College."
[280] Masters of any branch of knowledge
[281] Muthiah, "The College."
[282] Errington, *Linguistics in a Colonial World*, 35.
[283] Naz Rasool, "Language and the Colonial State," in *Global Issues in Language, Education and Development: Perspectives from Postcolonial Countries* (UK: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 2007), 25.
[284] Pennycook, *English and the Discourse*, 87-88.

through government-run schools, in addition to the already existing '*Parochial* schools'[285] run by the missionaries. Through this measure, more standardized versions of the language in vocabulary and structure were made available for the reading public across the British and princely provinces in the Malabar Coast. In addition to the increased availability of printed materials in the language, the circulation of texts about the language which treated it as an object under study was facilitated by the College at Fort St. George and various mission houses. The proliferation of such texts and discourses brought forth a set of new approaches towards the understanding of the vernacular.

Though religious and caste barriers posed hindrance for many sections of the society in attending schools initially, the gradual spreading of literacy through schooling and increased availability of printed journals and popular books resulted in the proliferation of limited versions of the language among the speakers of Malayalam. According to Bhavani Raman, when official and missionary endeavours projected language learning as an educational objective in its own right, the measure of linguistic competence turned out to be gaining enough grammatical knowledge of the language in order to write prose.[286] A major objective behind these efforts in literacy was to enable the dissemination of Christianity, its religious principles and value system through the printed word. Such tasks, which were a part of the colonial 'civilizing mission,' were contradictory enterprises many a time, since they eventually led to domination in the name of liberation. The colonial cultural conquest, achieved through a "re-modeling of beliefs and behavior was facilitated by print."[287] Robin Jeffrey details on the initial steps in the systematization of Indian languages and the role of printing in this process:

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[285] Primary schools affiliated to religious organizations, in this case affiliated to mission churches. Secondary schools were called as Grammar schools.

[286] Bhavani Raman, *Document Raj: Writing and Scribes in Early Colonial South India* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), 87-88.

[287] Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 233.

> For Indian languages, this meant a steady process by which scholar-administrators decided what a language was, who spoke it and where its boundaries began and ended. An artificial clarity was imposed which may well have distorted various local practices, but which no one dealing with government could avoid. Once a font of metal type was created for a written alphabet, other elements of standardization were likely to follow.[288]

The role that the first printed primers, grammars, collections of tales, proverbs and songs which inaugurated the practice of vernacular training played in shaping and determining the local people's attitudes towards the vernacular is remarkable. Pedagogical aids designed to impart language training to school children were primarily lexicons and grammars which laid down the principles of the local tongue. In an expanding print culture, the public had to encounter philology in diverse aspects of their life as "philologists explained the ways in which language indicated ancestry and mental traits."[289] This can be well illustrated by the close examination of some of the teaching materials used in schools like *A Catechism of Malayalam Grammar*[290] prepared by Gundert and revised by L. Garthwaite. The *Catechism* was published on the order of the Director of Public Instruction, Madras and was printed at the Basel Mission Press in Mangalore.

The bilingual grammar, which is designed in the form of a collection of questions and answers provides: a) details on Malayalam orthography by specifically classifying Malayalam letters into pure Dravidian letters and Sanskrit letters, apart from mentioning many indeclinables used in Malayalam as belonging to or derived from Sanskrit. b) Many descriptions of sounds, sound combinations and cases presented in a comparative format, i.e. the rules of the language are always stated in comparison to Tamil or how some forms of the

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[288] Robin Jeffrey, *India's Newspaper Revolution: Capitalism, Politics and the Indian Language Press* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010), 24.
[289] Sean P. Harvey, *Native Tongues: Colonialism and Race from Encounter to the Reservation* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 2015), 3.
[290] Hermann Gundert, *A Catechism of Malayalam Grammar* (Madras: Director of Public Instruction, 1867).

verb and cases are different from the Sanskrit case etc. c) A detailed description of vocabulary items which belong to Malayalam as 'desya' terms and details of *paradeshi* or 'foreign' terms from Sanskrit, Arabic, Hindusthani, Portuguese, and English, mentioning that maximum foreign derivatives come from Sanskrit. d) Certain usages like verb endings explained as found only in *Pattu* (verse or poetry) and certain usages listed out as occurring in 'pure Malayalam' and some as 'good Malayalam.' e) Details of several other forms that are introduced as present usages-as in spoken form-whereas the verse forms are presented as outdated, and the ones in prose form are taken as standard. The popular philological assumptions about the derivative nature of the vernacular, the ideas of purity and corruption of language, strict notions about foreign influences derived from the idea of distinguishable origins and the prescription of superiority to prose and spoken variant, on the grounds of it being a live form etc. are maintained in these classifications and explications. The dissemination of such assumptions about language in general and attitudes to the vernacular in particular among the newly literate cultural elites resulted from the prescribing of Gundert's *Catechism* and similar grammars in vernacular schools.

The assumption that myths, folk literature and oral traditions would provide access to the 'true and uncontaminated essence' of spoken tongues inspired the missionaries to collate and publish them as materials for language training and moral instruction among natives.[291] These repositories of verbal knowledge, putatively effective as media of instruction in comparison to the 'sophisticated' nature of the written forms, resulted in the publication of various collections of folk songs, lullabies etc. from the mission's print-houses. The inclusion of works like *Panchatantram* (which was translated from Sanskrit into the vernacular) in the

[291] Fedrick Sunil Kumar, "The Basel Mission and Social Change-Malabar and South Canara: A Case Study (1830-1956)" (PhD Diss., University of Calicut, 2006), 161-62.

syllabus of Malabar mission schools by Gundert is a result of this understanding that the commoner's tongue is the best medium for moral education.[292] The use of language which is not Sanskritized and which, by virtue of its being of common parlance, could create new tastes in readers was noteworthy. Many of these works were taken up later by educated elites among the colonized, who held similar stances on language and on vernacular traditions. The early decades of the 20th century which witnessed the rise of groups advocating 'Paccha-Malayalam' (pure Malayalam free of Sanskrit pedantry) also saw the emergence of Malayalee folklorists advocating a 'Sanskrit- free original Malayalam' and their initiatives in re-publishing many of these above-mentioned works.[293]

Another prominent belief which influenced the selection and printing of texts for use in schools was the need to impart a historical knowledge of their own language and literary culture to the students. The underlying precept behind this belief was that when a people embrace Christianity, the language of that people also should undergo re-generation and should become the instrument of new thought with a new soul.[294] The inclusion of *Rāmacharitam* and other old works in Malayalam by Gundert, which were later traced as the literary beginning of the newly carved out vernacular was done with this objective of 're-generating the vernacular' through sensitizing the 'natives' about their past. More than the fear of offending the religious beliefs of indigenous people, a fascination with the Orientalist-Classicist tendencies that was compatible with the German idealist principles of the times would have inspired Gundert to make such selections. German idealism which attributed great importance to the language of a people, as the underlying force which structures their thoughts, often led to a search for primitive models of the languages in the early texts in these languages. The influence of these

[292] K. P. Varid, *Doctor Hermann Gundert* (Kottayam: National Book Stall, 1973), 125.
[293] *Pandrandu Tārāttupāttukal* (*Twelve Lullabies*) a selection by Parambil Kunjikkutty Avarkal in the early years of 20th century is an example.
[294] *The Life of Dr. H Gundert* (Mangalore: Basel Mission Book & Tract Depository, 1896), 39.

philosophical principles may have inspired Gundert to teach such originary texts in their own tongues to the natives. The convention of teaching and learning 'one's own literature' which is ascribed a long history and which can be accessed in a printed format opened the possibility of imagining a linguistic identity extendable into the past. Thus, as pointed out by Pennycook, the practices of colonialism produced ways of thinking, saying and doing that permeated back into the cultures and discourses of the colonial nations.[295] P. Sudhir observes that "The idea of the authentic and pure text produced by careful collation of several recensions, was of course already a part of the European literary tradition. Europeans perpetuated the method of producing the authentic and 'pure' text, a notion alien to a society steeped in an oral literary tradition of *smriti* and *sruti*, where differing versions were the norm rather than the exception."[296]

Later on, children's hymns for the Malayalam speaking children of Kerala modeled on popular songs like the ones included in *Pandrandu Tārāttupāttukal* (Twelve Lullabies) and *Kerala Gītamāla* by H. Kuhner were also composed and published by the B.M.S. Thus, oral traditions were cast in new forms which were spread more widely and at a faster pace, as it was thought that folklore is the best means to represent a repository of the vernacular mind, though "living speech on a static page makes the notion of printed folklore an oxymoron."[297] These songs and folk stories printed using Grantha-Malayalam were made accessible to new sets of audience and for the first time the erstwhile non-prestigious varieties of the tongue began to gain prominence and acclaim through the new medium of print. The historical works written by Gundert, composed with an aim to reconstruct the past of the land and the people, initially taught in schools run by the mission and later in those under the aegis of the British government,

[295] Pennycook, *English and the Discourse*, 2.
[296] Sudhir, "Colonialism and the Vocabularies," 338-43.
[297] Blackburn, *Print, Folklore and Nationalism*, 2.

were also crucial in the imagining of an identity bounded to a geo-political unit. The widespread use of print among the local elites and the subsequent socio-political changes that occurred in the latter half of the 19th century gradually shaped a common linguistic platform in print in spite of the continuing differences in the spoken forms.

The impact of Peet's *Grammar* is perceptible in the endeavours of the first 'native missionaries' who came out of C.M.S. seminaries. The *Grammar* was taught in various C.M.S. educational institutions in Kottayam and was meant "chiefly to encourage natives acquainted with English to cultivate the study of their language"[298] The outlook of George Matthan, one among the first batch of 'native converts' ordained in C.M.S., as expressed in the Preface to his grammar can be easily identified as emerging out of the already available approaches to the vernacular. Stating the reasons which made the language to be looked down upon as some form of poor jargon, in the first grammar written by any indigenous speaker on Malayalam, Matthan assures that "its natural capabilities are as good as those of any other language of South India, requiring only cultivation to develop its riches and beauties."[299] The assimilation of attitudes to language set by comparative philology and the effect this had in forming the 'native approach' towards the vernacular can be inferred from this vocabulary used to speak about Malayalam, which is replete with ideas like 'poverty', 'cultivation' and possibility of 'developing its riches.'

Periodicals and journals that were meant for the new literates, containing articles on a variety of subjects including local news, scientific inventions, religious matters, fictional pieces etc. came out of various print houses, thus expanding their horizons of knowledge and

[298] L. J. Frohnmeyer, *A Progressive Grammar of the Malayalam Language* (Mangalore: Basel Mission Book & Tract Depository, 1913), xiv.
[299] George Matthan, *Malayāzhmayude Vyākaranam* (Cottayam: C.M.S. Press, 1868), 1.

imparting new perspectives on native life and practices. *Vidyāsamgraham*, the Kottayam C.M.S. college magazine held criticisms hinting at the inadequacy of useful pedagogical material on the vernacular and drew up similarities between an 'immature language' without a unified script and the 'immaturity of the people' who owned it. Comparisons are made between Occidental tongues and the local tongue reflecting on the superiority of the people 'owning' the former ones and subsequently the superiority of their culture. As pointed out by Niranjana, primitivizing gesture acts as a major vehicle of colonial power since it conforms to the creation of the "distorted images of the eastern Other," waiting to be civilized by Europe. [300] An article in the magazine which is supposedly written by Matthan, reported the contents of the speech made by the Travancore king during the inauguration of a government hospital in 1864. The author added his comments about the speech that draw upon such an Orientalist paradigm: "If Malayalam language had the lucidity and neatly worded sentence constructions as a wealth of its own, as present in the case of English, the speech (of the king) would have been more beautiful."[301]

Passages on 'correctness' and 'appropriateness' in relation to matters of communication as well as on 'corrupt' and 'inadequate' forms of linguistic forms and practices found space in many of the early missionary periodicals. A book review included in an issue of the journal, authored by Father George Matthan, the first native to compile a Malayalam grammar, points at some explicit wrong usages and typographical errors in the work. These errors are described as an offshoot of the disabilities of 'Malayalam' language, referred to as 'Malayāzhma,' and Matthan writes about the attitude to language that existed in Travancore during those times:

> The scholars of the land were mostly Brahmins and they have just boasted about their knowledge in Sanskrit without giving any heed to Malayāzhma which is

[300] Niranjana, *Siting Translation*, 73-76.
[301] *Vidyāsamgraham: The Cottayam College Quarterly Magazine* 1, no. 2 (October 1864): 60.

> an essential part of their day to day livelihood. In the same matter, the government has also been indifferent all the time…Even though the Maharaja of this land has Malayāzhma as his own language (*Swabhāsha*), he has not brought forth any rules or regulations for the goodwill of the language…From the royal gates to the *Hajūr*, from the Munsiff court to the *Ĉatur* courts, all practices of writing have been carried out in Tamil alphabet, till date.[302]

This seemingly 'modern' sensibility about the vernacular which comprises the need to acknowledge the importance of the *vyavahārabhasha*, viz. the language of everyday activities, and the need to pass legislations for its goodwill is derived from Matthen's new approach to language. The newly chalked out connections between language and justice were also invoked as he complained about the impracticability of native people writing petitions in Tamil and added that this plight of the natives was a result of the unwillingness of Tamil Brahmins to use Grantham. This criticism of Matthan is in line with an earlier remark by Caldwell that "a considerable portion of the commerce and public business of the Malabar states has been monopolized, especially in Travancore, by the less scrupulous and more adroit Tamilians."[303] Talal Asad's and Niranjana's works on the social authority of the anthropologist examines the role of ethnographer in the translation of a culture, where the ethnographer's translation of a culture is shown to be occupying the privileged position of a 'scientific text;' their formulations are applicable to these cultural representations as well.[304] The accounts of many of these grammarians and lexicographers later began to occupy the privileged position of 'scientific texts' on the history of the language as they are more powerful than folk memory and could also construct a folk memory for the coming generations.

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[302] Ibid., 32.

[303] Caldwell, *Grammar of the Dravidian*, 1st ed., 16.

[304] Talal Asad, "The Concept of Cultural Translation in British Social Anthropology," in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, eds. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkley: University of California Press, 1986), 141-64. See also Niranjana, *Siting Translation*, 83.

This also points at the availability of a variety of written forms co-existing with more unified printed forms that range across the Western coast with variations in sound patterns and characters even in the 19th century. Kathleen Gough maintains that Ezhavas and other low caste Hindus used the vattezhuthu script until the end of 18th century.[305] This leads us to the inference that George Matthan considered Grantham script or a script based on Grantham to be the apt form of writing for the Sanskritized repertoire. Matthan regarded a script based on Grantham as the only perfect written form for documenting official petitions and for other legal matters addressed to the state, since the form of documentary prose that was being shaped through missionary efforts in Southern Kerala under the C.M.S. was making itself distinct from legal and liturgical Tamil. By that time, this newly formed prose was gaining popularity among the new literate elites of the land, since that form was popularized through missionary educational texts and literary materials in print. Interestingly, the missionary efforts to spread this new linguistic repertoire which was designed to be distinct from the earlier *Jāti-Āchārabhāshas* or caste-lects among the non- literate slave castes happened to be through the newly composed Christian devotional songs. Sanal Mohan's study on 19th century Dalit Christian religiosity shows that missionary interventions in manufacturing a new linguistic repertoire also involved the reshaping of the oral and folk traditions in addition to the script and vocabulary reforms in print that were meant for the new literates. Sanal Mohan writes:

> Emblematic of their group life, singing remained a major feature of the Dalit social world. Conversions brought about a new signification for singing in a different soundscape, since the singing of hymns, as against the singing of work songs in the day, offered an interesting contrast. The hymns offered a different linguistic experience by introducing new words and phrases alongside new stories from the Bible, since these songs were often in modern Malayalam, as against the caste-specific language that dominated in the composition of the work songs.[306]

[305] Gough, "Literacy in Kerala," 135.
[306] P. Sanal Mohan, "Women and Religiosity: Dalit Christianity in Kerala," *EPW* 52, nos. 42-43 (October 28, 2017): 53.

The images of a tongue possessing a fixed script, structure and almost unified vocabulary which cannot be violated- was presented to the mind of the newly educated Malayalee, whereas a new vocabulary of orature which replaced the categories of slave caste-existence was getting shaped through singing and prayers among the non-literate slave castes who were also later brought in to their "fledgling schools, which became the nucleus of an emerging social space."[307] The visual impressions of the vernacular, which had been registered as authentic through the technology of print, and the script to which s/he was habituated, pushed the new literate to accept the idea of the uniqueness of the characters in which a language could be written or printed. Hence, the need to use Grantham script was stressed by the missionary philologist George Matthan owing to its familiarity to the literate people, and its putative suitability to denote all the sounds of the language. At the same time, as per Matthan's understanding, the existing official script was prevalent because of the increased presence of *Pāndikkār* (people from Pandya region or present day Southern Tamil Nadu) in government service and the script could only be used to write down '*Shuddhadrāvida'* (pure Dravidian) words. The outlines of 'modern Malayalam' as denoted by Sanal Mohan were getting shaped in print and in orature through mission houses and this variant was thus essentially defined as distinct from the *'Shuddhadrāvida*' forms by Matthan. This newly standardizing tongue was to be more inclined towards the Aryan Sanskritic roots and Grantha writing in terms of sounds, script and vocabulary, since Sanskrit occupied the status of the prestigious variety among the Syrians who were also the targets of conversion for C.M. S., and at the same time had to be simple in syntax fitting to go along with the form of folk oratures in use among the downtrodden.

[307] Ibid.

The notions of the desi- the insider and the 'foreign Other' that were etched out along with the boundaries of the tongue also resulted in such observations by Matthan. He added that, "just because these 'foreign' officials were ignorant in Grantham, avoidance of the script from official uses had created an impression in the people's minds that 'the *Koyma* (royalty) has some enmity towards Grantham."[308] These deliberate attempts to popularize Grantham and the language variants which could be accommodated by the script laid the foundations of the new standard prose for the official and formal realms. Scripts and linguistic repertoires ranging from Vattezhutthu to Arabi Malayalam entered the list of aberrations as an after effect of these deliberate choices. Susan Lewandowski's observation in her work on the migrations to the city of Madras during the colonial period that "ethnic groups were not always a given but may have emerged under the impetus of colonialism which helped define the names and boundaries of groups"[309] is relevant here.

Through these colonial ethnographic transactions, and the vernacular auto-ethnographies, language and literature began to be projected as the means to define and communicate the agenda of progress, and at times these were highlighted as metaphors for the *jati* or the newly imagined 'nation'/ region. These discourses can be identified as sites of transculturation since they turn out to be locales where "subordinated or marginal groups select and invent materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture."[310] Thus the notion that 'common language entailed common mentality, which is something which could be traced back in time through means of language' gained currency. Printed matter which penetrated into the reader's private world was not only crucial in mobilizing their sentiments

[308] "Nanartham", *Vidyāsamgraham: The Cottayam College Quarterly Magazine* 1, no.2 (October, 1864): 32-33.
[309] Susan. J. Lewandowski, *Migration and Ethnicity in Urban India: Kerala Migrants in the City of Madras 1870-1970* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1980), 6.
[310] Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 6.

but had a vital role in fixing their memories and guiding their future habits. Along with the novel idea that "societies could be altered, shaped, planned and steered in particular directions" another idea, viz. "individuals could to some extent direct their own destinies" also came into prevalence.[311]

New solidarities were manufactured through print whereas affiliations of the 'older' world ceased to be natural with the ideological constructions of a colonial subject, whose perception of his/ her own past was altered. It was conceived that the strength of the literature showed the strength of the 'nation' and the life of the language was the life of the 'nation.'[312] Conceptualizing a 'lack' thus was followed by efforts to compensate for it by struggling for progress which is a prerequisite for the rise of nationalism fulfilled through these new exchanges. A proliferation of discourses grounded on the postulates of modern (19th century) philology which is ultimately linked to "a recurring quest for origins and the construction of the community-group as threatened by the other"[313] was the result. It is evident from the various stages in the evolution of the new Malayalee subject (interpellated by the discourse of reform) that the designing of the 'modern Malayalee self' also involves these mechanisms leading to the standardization of/ creation of a homogenous identity based on language.

[311] Akhil Gupta, "Imagining Nations," in *A Companion to the Anthropology of Politics*, eds. David Nugent and Joan Vincent (USA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 270.
[312] Francesca Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere 1920-1940: Language and Literature in the Age of Nationalism* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002), 5.
[313] Annie Montaut, "Colonial Language Classification, Post-colonial Language Movements and the Grassroot Multilingualism Ethos in India," in *Living Together Separately: Cultural India in History and Politics,* eds. Mushirul Hasan and Asim Roy (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005), 84.

Chapter 3

Language as a Site of Self- Fashioning: Publishing Ventures by Malayalees and a Growing Sentiment of Nationalism around 'Swabhāsha'

The introduction of printing presses was accompanied by new literacy practices and the emergence of new literary forms in the subcontinent was aided by an increased circulation of printed matter in the 19th century, though the diffusion of this technology among the local residents remained meagre till the middle of the century. The technology of print which was accessible only to British bureaucrats, Protestant missionaries and foreign capitalists till the middle of the 19th century soon passed hands to reach native mission houses. This was followed by the owning of print houses and publishing enterprises by former aristocratic families, newly educated middleclass businessmen and caste/community groups in no time. Most texts which were popular among large sections of vernacular speakers prior to the advent of print and literary forms which were circulated in the oral and scribal cultures never got into print until the setting up of native print houses. Beginning with lithographic presses and then extending to movable types, the technology was often used by many natives for the promotion of community interests and at times as a weapon in the defense of one's faith. However, the commercial uses of the technology as well as the impetus for retrieving a long lost 'golden past' also attracted the local populace to undertake efforts to establish new presses and publishing firms in the coming decades.

In the erstwhile Kerala society, apart from the members of royal families who could extend literary patronage and could send out 'public' royal proclamations through messengers, it was only the affluent and elite literate classes and castes who could store or circulate literary or knowledge texts in palm leaves or could afford to appoint personal messengers. All other classes and caste groups had to rely on oral and personal mode of communication for the

transmission of knowledge across generations and for the passing of information to distant places. As Ananda E. Wood has pointed out, the distinction between the systematized classical forms and more localized folk cultural forms themselves is to a large extent derived from these differing modes of storage and transmission of information.[314] With the popularization of the medium of print, ancient literary wealth and knowledge texts of earlier times stored in written palm leaves, which were confined to private houses or transmitted orally reached the larger public through certain native endeavours in publishing.[315] The new medium was also a device in the native hands to respond to and raise their opinions against the tendentious attitudes of European Orientalist discourses about the customs and socio-religious organization of the life world of the colonized; and at times, it was used to urge fellow-inhabitants to strive for self-reform and embrace 'modernity' by endorsing the precepts of the "civilizing mission." A quick survey of the early printing and publishing efforts undertaken by the native cultural elites would point to the fact that print did not have a unifying role among the diverse sections of the local populace in the initial years of its inception; instead it reflected the prevailing situation of multilingualism in the early 19th century Kerala society.

Language, specifically the vernacular which was projected as an identity marker by the colonial and missionary philologists was later identified as a crucial site central to the self-fashioning of the new Indian middle class across various regions. In K. K. Gangadharan's opinion, this middle class cannot be called so in the strict sense of the term, since they did not rise as a class which broke away from the strongholds of feudalism unlike their corresponding group in Europe that emerged with the growth of industrial civilization.[316] This emerging Malayalee class which was the product of colonial and missionary education was inspired by

[314] Wood, *Knowledge Before Printing*, 2-6.
[315] Govi, "Olayil Ninnu Kadalasilekk," 66.
[316] K. K. Gangadharan, ed., *Indian National Consciousness: Growth and Development* (New Delhi: Kalamkar Prakashan, 1972), 198.

the newly acquired idea that the power to impose a shape upon one's language, by tracing its origins, fixing its contours and planning for its future was an inevitable aspect of the more general power to control one's self-hood and could in turn be beneficial for the wellbeing of the respective communities to which they belonged.[317] The medium of print could be effectively employed to further the interests of this new class "who discovered that despite their qualifications, they would always remain marginalized in the administrative structure of the colonial state."[318] The missionary interventions in bringing new legislations into force with the support of the colonial government, starting with the abolition of slavery in Travancore and establishment of educational institutions accessible to the erstwhile lower castes etc. were altering the existing socio-economic relations among various castes and communities in the princely states. The diminishing of privileges and the eroding of the ritual status of Brahmins and members of other land-owning feudal classes were the results of these transformations. Though affected on a minimal scale, the above changes made these castes of the upper strata of the social ladder insecure. The efforts of this class in creating a 'cultural idiom' which they could call their own were also directed towards language which in turn resulted in the infusion of a sense of regional belonging woven around the concept of Swabhasha, i.e. 'one's own tongue.'

A tendency to view one's language 'as a thing to be measured, used and known' cropped up after the encounter with the Europeans. Robert Darnton states that of all the different categories of printed materials in the century, "language was a large category, but it included almost nothing but dictionaries, grammars, and school textbooks."[319] Similar to the

[317] See Michele Cohen, *Fashioning Masculinity: National Identity and Language in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1996) shows a similar scenario. It describes the 18th century British preoccupation with the relation between the 'tongue' and the genius of the people as well as the 'rise of politeness'.
[318] Utsa Ray, *Culinary Culture in Colonial India: A Cosmopolitan Platter and the Middle-Class* (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 4.
[319] Robert Darnton, "Book Production in British India, 1850-1900," *Book History* 5 (2002): 252-53.

observations made by Blackburn in the case of Tamil, though such a perspective or understanding about language first emerged among a tiny group of local elites in Kerala who worked with the Europeans, later it became widespread it was implicit in the newly established methods of public instruction and language teaching practices.[320] Thus, a variety of cross-linguistic activities ranging from efforts in lexicography and compiling of grammars to promoting translations which resulted from these colonial and missionary transactions enabled the inhabitants of the region to view their language from the vantage point of an outsider. Hence, the major grammars of the vernacular prepared by the cultural elites of Kerala and which appeared before the publication of A.R. Rajaraja Varma's 'scientific' and descriptive grammar- *Keralapanineeyam* (1896) are taken into consideration. An attempt to delineate the narrative peculiarities of the first literary history of 'Malayalabhasha' which also throws light on the native socio-political imaginings of the region in the 19th century follows. The above-mentioned works characterized by a discourse of 'reform,' also had an important role in bringing the 'vernacular' into being, as the major, singular object of these discourses.

In Partha Chatterjee's opinion, the idea that loomed large in the native mind is that "modern European culture possessed certain attributes which made the European culturally equipped for power and progress, while the Indian, lacking these attributes, was doomed to poverty and subjection."[321] The very same idea turned out to be the prime determinant of many translation projects undertaken by the newly educated class. The establishment of school textbook committees by the 1860s which took initiative in the selection and rendering of English and other European texts into the vernacular, primarily with a pedagogical intent was followed by more translations of literary and scientific texts from English, Sanskrit and other

[320] Blackburn, *Print, Folklore and Nationalism*, 27.
[321] Partha Chatterjee, "The Constitution of Indian Nationalist Discourse" in *Empire and Nation: Essential Writings 1985-2005* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2014), 44.

Indian languages in the coming decades. The new yardsticks of 'prosperity' (abhivruddhi) and 'decadence' (adhapathanam) applied to compare vernaculars and the corresponding measures of advancement attributed to its speakers also called for increased number of translations into the tongue. Translation activities accompanied by corresponding efforts to print the very same texts became instrumental in expanding the linguistic and epistemic repertoires of the vernacular along divergent discursive patterns which encouraged the promotion of conflicting views on the past, present and future of the tongue to flourish in the coming decades. The use of the tongue for multiple purposes and in a variety of discursive realms viz. in journalism, in textbooks and in translations of religious as well as literary texts by missionaries was followed by its use for similar purposes by the native translators and prose writers who first came out of mission schools and seminaries. A pedagogical canon of Malayalam which was initially developed through these missionary efforts in language teaching and through the spread of public literacy was developed and re-designed further through the efforts of the vernacular elites and their School Book Societies, Text Book Committees etc.

All these developments beginning from the latter half of the 19th century, that pointed to the question of the "modernity of the vernacular language and its speakers" and the diversity of native approaches to this issue established the unquestionable existence of a vernacular identity attributable to a large section of indigenous population erstwhile divided on many grounds. The upholding of a homogenized identity for the first time, with the concept called 'swabhasha' (one's own tongue) as the focal point, became a vital component of the self-fashioning of the new middle class. The active interventions of this class, which flourished under the continuing patronage of the feudal monarchs and their associates, in this direction resulted in defining the attributes of the modern region in the making, especially its domains of culture, language, literature etc. By the turn of the century, these germinating seeds of

bourgeois nationalist thought were "shaped, indeed contained, by the same dominating framework-the framework of Orientalism."[322] Adopting the same representational framework used by the alien rulers in their task of self-representation, these acts of self-affirmation by the native cultural elites through their class consolidation grew into vernacular national identities which were held together by the very same concept of 'mother- tongue'.

Early Printing and Publishing Endeavours by the People of Malayāḷanād (the land of Malayalam) 1838-1870.

The first among all local undertakings in the field of printing and publishing is the Government press which was established in Trivandrum (1838) during the reign of Swathi Thirunal and the first publications from this press include the Travancore Almanac and some books necessary to meet the needs of English schools in Travancore. Later on, Government Gazettes containing important government orders like appointment and change of officers, rules passed by the government and the proceedings of the Legislative Council etc. were also printed from this press.[323] Another Government Press was established in Ernakulam in 1847 and both these presses were used for printing of private publications after a short period of time. This was followed by the opening of many private presses all over the region.

Another peculiarity of that century is that when the technology of print along with many other new scientific developments was shifting hands, the medium of print was used by majority of the community groups in the region to further their interests. The effective use of the medium especially by those who could later affirm their distinctness as communities competing for hegemony is notable. The popularly held assumption supported by Benedict

[322] Ibid., 42.
[323] "Related institutions/Events: The Printing Press," Swathi Thirunal (1813-1846), Dept. of Culture, Govt. of Kerala: C-DIT&VSB., accessed December 16, 2016. http://www.swathithirunal.in/rlinsti/press.htm.

Anderson's thesis of the nation as a print induced-"imagined community" is that the use of print by the capitalist entrepreneurs would have caused the proliferation of materials in the vernacular language and the perpetuation of stereotypes where the vernacular type-script is the prominent one.[324] In contrast with this often-cited chain of events leading to the precipitation of a national consciousness centred on a singular linguistic identity, cues from the mid- 19th century printed materials lead to a different conclusion in the context of Kerala. The Gramscian notion of the civil society "as a site of permanent contestation wracked by conflicts among diverse opposing social forces within it and struggles over competing hegemonies"[325] is worth mentioning here. The model is appropriate for defining the 19th century scenario in Kerala, as print media, which is an institution located within civil society, as per this model, happens to be the site that reflects the competing and contesting interests of collectives with diverse interests. This situation accounts for the multiplicity of languages, the diversity of the goals behind the publication of journals, newspapers and the huge variety of literary works which got into print in the native presses from the middle of the century.

Print technology promoted the publication of books and magazines in multiple languages in the region, at least in the initial decades. The Protestant missionaries popularised printing in a newly revised Malayalam script devised along the lines of Grantham script (which was earlier used primarily to write Sanskrit) by translating and publishing the Bible, Catechisms and liturgical materials in that script. This soon became the identifying feature of Malayalam as distinct from Vattezhutthu, Kolezhuthu or the script of Tamil, to gain a distinct identity as a printed language in later times. They even published an adaptation of the birth story of Jesus Christ *Kristhu Avatharam Pattu Ottanthullal* in the popular folk form of a

[324] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 39-48.
[325] William I. Robinson, *Transnational Conflicts: Central America, Social Change and Globalization* (London: Verso, 2003), 222.

'Thullal' performance in Grantham.[326] The efforts of B.M.S missionaries like Gundert to produce Arabimalayam gospels along with Bibles in the newly devised Grantha-Malayalam Bibles from his Thalassery litho-press is worth mentioning. This was done as a part of the proselytizing efforts of the mission among Muslims in Malabar since the literary language popular among them was Arabi Malayalam. At the same time, the Syrian Christian church-fathers who had to defend their religious faith and customs were using the technology to spread the learning of the Syriac language. The book, *Grammati* (1862) and a Syriac- Malayalam dictionary (1848),[327] which would have been meant for sustaining and reviving the learning of their sacred language came out of the press owned by the Malankara Syrian Metropolitan at Kottayam, as keeping the sacred repertoire alive in another tongue was seen as an essential factor for the survival of these congregations. Like Arabi Malayalam script, *Garshuni-Malyalam* transcription also is a composite writing system-but one that has a mixed script, with additional notations to write Malayalam sounds along with Syriac. This was already in use as a writing system among these Christian sects at least from the second half of 17th century.[328] The need felt to preserve the difference in script through the medium of the new technology was strong since script began to be understood as the symbol of difference and of the distinct cultural heritage of each community.

The Muslims in Malabar who could not rely upon the missionaries there to get their religious works printed used to depend on the Arabic litho-presses in Bombay initially, but later on started an Arabi Malayalam litho-press in Thalassery (1867) followed by more presses in Ponnani and Thirurangadi.[329] Beginning with the large scale publishing of popular works

[326] This was printed at the Thalassery Press and the author's name is given as Klappana S. J.
[327] The author of this work is Palayil Abraham Kathanar.
[328] Françoise Briquel Chatonnet, "Syriac as the Language of Eastern Christianity," in *The Semitic Language: An International Handbook*, ed. Stefan Weninger (Berlin: De Gruytor Mouton, 2011), 657.
[329] Abu, *Arabi-Malayāḷa Sāhitya Charitram*, 126.

like *Malappattus* and *Madhuppattus* (both eulogies), endeavours in printing extended to commentaries on *Hadiths* and a large variety of works that were accessible only to a few sections of the Mappilas prior to print. The knowledge of Arabi Malayalam manuscripts preserved in written form as well as other works including translations from original Arabic works were made available to a larger audience within a short period. Works like *Failul Fayyal* (1887) by Shujai Moidu Musaliyar which narrated the history of the religion from its genesis as well as a few other historical works dealing with the history of Malabar composed in Arabi Malayalam were soon made available in printed form.[330]

The names of a Guajarati merchant and a Tamil Mudaliyar also figure in the list of early entrepreneurs in the field of native printing. More than anything, the commercial prospects offered by the new technology would have attracted them to release books in the vernacular language of the region. The Keralamithram press at Cochin which was established by Devji Bhimji in 1863 was the first publishing centre of many old Hindu religious books and the well acclaimed *Keralamithram* weekly, and a considerable number of these were printed in the Grantham script. Along with this press, Bhimji also ran a subsidiary press where printing of many Marathi works including the *Amarakosam* in Nagari script is reported to have been conducted simultaneously.[331] His biography also mentions that a Marathi monthly titled as *Kerala-kokil* which had a subscription of over thousand readers also came out of his press for a while.[332] Another press which was a joint enterprise of Bhimji and some respectable local Syrian Christians of Cochin like Kurian writer, Ittyara writer and Ittoopp writer[333] was the Western Star. The eponymous English newspaper *Western Star*, the first of its kind in

[330] Moulavi and Abdul Kareem, eds., *Mahathaya Maappila Saahitya Paaramparyam*, 401.
[331] M.T. Kunjunni, *Shree Devji Bhimji Avarkalude Jeevacharithrasamgraham* (A Brief Life- History of Sri Devji Bhimji) (Cochin: Shree Natavar Krishnaswami Devaswam, 1894), 26.
[332] Ibid.
[333] Writer refers to the post of accountant in trading companies in those times.

Travancore under the editorship of H.M. Walker was the first and major publication from this press that was in print from 1865 onwards. The paper is said to have possessed a wide readership of English educated Syrian Christians.[334]

Thus, a recognizable feature of native printing in the region in the beginning decades, starting from the 1850s was the multiplicity of languages in which books and magazines were produced. Moreover, instead of promoting a more popular spoken code through increased production of works in the newly evolving vernacular, the strengthening of scholasticism in the classical languages including Sanskrit and Syriac was the immediate effect visible after the spread of print technology among the native groups. Also, a continued publication of works in liturgical and erstwhile linguistic forms like Manipravalam, Arabi Malayalam etc. was the initial consequence of the introduction of this medium. Thus, like many other bilingual elites across the subcontinent in the pre-print era, whose discourse, according to Sheldon Pollock, happened largely in the "more cosmopolitan Sanskrit,"[335] the culturally elite groups of Kerala could also keep their conservatism intact to a great extent even after the introduction of print. Meanwhile, the communication networks of the subordinate groups continued to remain in the vernacular, thereby confining them to the local boundaries. The illiterate commoners and the middle and subordinate class groups who did not have access to the technology continued to be confined to the realm of the oral or the scribal for a few more decades. This situation is in many ways similar to what Lucien Febvre and Henry- Jean Martin refer to as the continuing prominence enjoyed by classical languages like Latin through print in the initial decades of its inception in Europe that continued till the 17th century.[336] Another peculiarity is that a

[334] Joseph Cheeran and C. Cherian, *Nazrani Kesari Akkara Kurian Writer* (Akkara Kurian Writer, the Lion among Nazranis) (Kottayam: Paschimatharaka Publications, 2010), 21-22.
[335] Sheldon Pollock, "The Cosmopolitan Vernacular," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 57, no. 1 (Feb., 1998): 11-13.
[336] Lucien Febvre and Henry- Jean Martin, "The Book as a Source of Change," in *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing, 1450-1800* (London: Verso, 1997), 330-32.

considerable number of these works were bilingual or even multilingual in a few cases, since many of these were meant for instruction of one kind or the other, for the readers and users of majority of these publications in the early decades remained to be the neo-literates in schools and other educational institutions. This shows that the spread of the technology among the local elites did not immediately lead to the rise of any national consciousness based on a single linguistic code which could act as a common medium of communication or as a symbol of unity across the region. Instead it reproduced the multilingualism existing in the actual life-world of the local populace of the region during that time and reflected the multiple repertoires of prevailing communication networks.

The texts which mostly got into print and which could attract a large readership of elites were mainly the classical performance texts of the pre-print era like Attakkathas.[337] Keralavilasam which is one of the earliest vernacular presses opened by Eswarapilla Vicharippukar in 1852 on the orders of the then raja of Travancore, Uttram Thirunal produced printed copies of *Manipravalakeerthanangal* (1854) or Maniparavalam compositions in the mixed idiom. Following these compositions of Irayimman Thampi who was the Carnatic classical vocalist and composer in the court of Swati Thirunal, more performance texts of the classical tradition like *Ambatthinalu Divasatthe Aattakkatha* (54 Days Long Attakkatha, 1858), which is a collection of songs for Kathakali performance and *Sreekrishna Charitam Manipravalam* (1858), the story of Sree Krishna in Manipravalam style got into print from this press.[338] After the publishing of these texts which suited the tastes of a culturally elite audience, a series of popular performance texts mostly belonging to the *Pattu*[339] tradition, in a less

[337] The text that is used for the performance of classical art form Kathakali.
[338] P. K. Rajasekharan, "Eswarappillaye Arorkkunnu?," (Who Remembers Eswarapilla) in *Bookstalgia*, (Calicut: Mathrubhumi Books, 2016), 48-49.
[339] Pattu refers to song in general and in the context of Malayalam literature, it is used to specifically denote the oral literatures of commoners extending to what is traced as the beginnings stages of Malayalam literary

Sanskritized idiom came out from this press. Popular works of *Pattu* like *Devimahathmyam Kilippattu* [340](1858) by Ezhuthachan and performance texts like Kunchan Nambiar's *Nalacharitham Kilippattu*[341] (1885) also figure in the list.[342]

Grantha-Malayalam script and the idiom corresponding to it was already gaining currency through the lexicographical and philological writings, beginning with Arnos Padiri and later extending to Benjamin Bailey and George Matthan through their favouring of the Uccabhasha. Printing in the same script began under Bailey's initiative and was later taken over by many other private presses owned by upper caste Hindus including Bhimji and Vicharippukar. This continued activity gave further authenticity to the script for the claim of the right visual representation of the language. Thus, texts composed in the Grantha-Malayalam script beginning from Ezhuthachan,[343] including more texts of the popular *Kilippattu*[344] tradition like the *Mahabharatham Kilippattu*[345] (1862) and other *Pattu* texts began to circulate in print in a short while. In Ulloor S. Parameshwara Iyer's opinion, Kunchan Nambiar's works and Ezhuthachan's *Ramayanam* (1863) which came out of the Calicut-Vidyavilasam press, owned by the then Munsiff of Calicut, Kalahasthiyappa Mudaliyar were the products of native Hindu discontent about the lack of printing presses for printing religious and literary works of their community.[346] Similar explanations are given by his biographer for the starting of the press by

tradition as distinct from the Sanskrit- mixed Manipravalam poetry of elites. Pattu included songs praising gods and goddesses, work songs, ballads about local warriors etc.

[340] Eulogies of the Goddess in Kilippattu style of poetry.

[341] Story of Nala in Kilippattu style of poetry.

[342] Rajasekharan, "Eswarappillaye Arorkkunnu?," 49.

[343] Thunchath Ramanujan Ezhuthachan, also referred to as Thunchath Ezhuthachan or simply as Ezhuthachan, Thunchan etc. by later writers is considered to be the father of modern Malayalam. He is a Bhakti poet whose rendering of *Bharatam* and *Ramayanam* for the first time in the vernacular tongue, in the Kilippattu form is considered as the event which earned a distinct identity for Malayalam language and literature.

[344] A popular genre of medieval and early modern Malayalam poetry which falls in the Pattu tradition in which the narrator is usually a parrot, a swan, a bee etc. In literal terms, Kili means parrot and pattu means song; so Kilipattu is literally the parrot-song. This form of poetry was popularized by Ezhuthachan.

[345] Story of the epic Mahabharata in Kilippattu style of poetry.

[346] P. K. Rajasekharan, "Kalahasthiyappante Vazhikal, Ezhuthachanteyum," (Tracks of Kalahasthiyappan, of Ezhuthachan too) in *Bookstalgia* (Calicut: Mathrubhumi Books, 2016), 42.

Devji Bhimji which produced Hindu religious works like *Venkatakalyanam* and *Ramakarnamritham* for the first time in the history of printing in Kerala; yet, commercial possibilities opened up by the new medium can equally be considered as a valid reason.

Although no conclusive statement can be made about the motives of these native entrepreneurs which led to the publishing of Hindu popular religious works for the first time, it can be indisputably stated that those performance texts which were of visual and auditory familiarity and popularity among the vernacular speakers got re-introduced in the new medium by these presses. The observation made by Blackburn that "when viewed as a means of communication, it is clear that print does not exist in isolation, but interacts with other media, including oral traditions and writing,"[347] proves to be apt here. The oral *Pattu* or Attakatha texts which were reduced to the visual attributes of the printed word in Grantham meant for private readership established a new relationship between the audience who are now readers, the newly devised script, and these texts in the new format. This is true for the Malappattus like *Muhiyuddinmala*[348] (printed in 1870 and composed in 1607) and other popular songs printed in Arabi Malayalam which came out of the Mappila presses in Malabar from 1860s and also for *Ummade Dukham*[349] (1862) which was printed for the first time from Inas Press, Cochin, though it was composed a long time ago by Arnos Padiri.[350] Thus a quick survey of the first documents selected for printing and publishing by the locals reveals that "modern technology (used) in the service of pre-modern traditions"[351] was the greatest paradox involved in these novel

[347] Blackburn, *Print, Folklore and Nationalism*, 7.
[348] An ode to Muhyadheen Abdul Khadir Al Gilani composed by the eminent poet, Khazi Muhammad of Calicut.
[349] "The Lament of Mother Mary" which forms part of the 12th canto of describes the emotions and feeling that Mother Mary had when the dead body of Jesus was laid on her lap.
[350] Paul Manalil, "Arnos Padiriyude *Ummade Dukham*- Adyathe Vilapakavyam," (*Ummade Dukham* by Arnos Padiri- The First Elegy) in *Malayala Sahithya Charithram: Ezhuthappedatha Edukal* (Malayalam Literary History: Unwritten Pages) (Kottayam: SPCS, 2013), 262.
[351] Blackburn, *Print, Folklore and Nationalism*, 1.

endeavours. Thus, the re-definition undergone by many pre-modern communities in their effort to find a place in the newly modernizing print-capitalist social order occurred through the means of a distinct body of printed matter that could etch a literary past for each of them. Such efforts made by the members of prominent communities to build a specific tradition and community-history of their own were acts through which their 'modern' identities were also being invented. Therefore, they quite often involved not only a re-writing of literary pasts and community histories, but a simultaneous re-birth of unknown and less important texts and textual histories, as well as a translation of the 'pre-modern' to the time/space of the 'modern.'

Native Publication of Dictionaries, Grammars and Histories: Beginnings of Linguistic Nationalism and the Discourses on Tradition and Reform of the Vernacular

Historical discourses play a pivotal role in the formation of collective identities, and the antiquarian objectives in their production can regulate cultural memory by means of deliberate exclusions, erasures and generalizations. When historical, or any other knowledge for that matter, began to be identified with the presence of written/ printed sources after the introduction of print/ book, claims to historicity or authenticity for a knowledge claim of any kind had to be accompanied by a printed resource which clearly stated the case. So also, the role of print and colonialism in spreading a modern "sense of history" is so immense that it had a significant impact on native minds. A series of colonial narratives on the native people marked them as a populace devoid of any recorded history. This perceived lack acted as the stimulus for the production of numerous philological works by educated elites in the coming decades, mostly as a response to the criticisms posed by European philologists. The first geographical text in Malayalam, *Malayalarajyam* (The Malayalam Country, 1869) by Hermann Gundert acted as an ethnological model which deals with the history of local territories, towns, markets, fairs, resources, flora and fauna. Apart from this, other already available philological documents by

colonial officials and ethnographic works by Europeans became models for new ways of documenting one's own life practices, language, customs and beliefs. This new sense of history, i.e. the idea that "each generation builds upon the knowledge and achievements of the past,"[352] motivated the cultural elites to document things as 'insiders' adding to the larger discursive assemblage which became crucial in the constitution of community memory in the following decades. The seeds of linguistic consciousness are traceable to several native publications which began to appear in the second half of the 19th century, either with the objective of denying the European claims about the cultural backwardness of the people or aiming at modernizing the indigenous cultural realm. Similar to Partha Chatterjee's observations on the nature of nationalist discourse, both these responses accepted "the very intellectual premises of 'modernity' on which colonial domination was based."[353]

As stated earlier, European philological accounts projected language as a crucial feature of a community's identity and the progress and modernity achieved by a people was shown to be inextricably linked to the state in which their languages were. The new bourgeois class of the region, like others of the kind that gave impetus to nativist movements across the globe, was influenced by the tenets of Humboldtian model of philology which was envisioned as "a science of the nation."[354] Hence they got involved in the rigorous practice of searching for previously unknown texts in the language and coming up with etymologies and grammars of the language, the origins of which are traced to a distant past. "Language," included as "an important category in all the Indian statistics" consisted of "mainly dictionaries and school books along with an admixture of philological works" classified under it.[355] Anderson explains

[352] Alexander Stille, *The Future of the Past* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002), 319.
[353] Chatterjee, "Indian Nationalist Discourse," 39.
[354] Susan L. Burns, "The Politics of Philology in Japan: Ancient Texts, Language, and Japanese Identity," in *World Philology*, eds. Sheldon Pollock, Benjamin A. Elman and Ku-ming Kevin Chang (London: Harvard University Press, 2015), 261.
[355] Darnton, "Book Production in British India," 255.

the effect of these exercises and elaborates on a developing philological notion of identity that "monolingual dictionaries were vast compendia of each language's print treasury, portable (if sometimes barely so) from shop to school and from office to residence. Bilingual dictionaries made visible an approaching egalitarianism among languages."[356] The preparations for compiling the hefty *Sabdatharavali* (The Galaxy of Words), a lexicon compiled by Shreekantheshwaram G. Padmanabhapillai, which started in the 1890s required almost twenty years of hard work on the part of this government servant in Travancore before its publication.[357]

As pointed out by Anthony Smith, in the ethnic model of nationalism, vernacular culture or 'languages and customs' occupy the central place, whereas 'law' holds this position in the Western civic model and "that is why lexicographers, philologists and folklorists have played a central role in the early nationalism of Eastern Europe and Asia."[358] The grammar of the Sanskritic idiom, *Amarakosam*, which was used in traditional village schools for language teaching continued to be published by native presses in the 1860s.[359] Yet, the native efforts in composing grammars for the vernacular which followed the publication of George Matthan's *Malayāzhmayude Vyākaranam* (A Grammar of Malayalam in the Language Itself, 1863) are notable for their intent to delineate a distinct identity for the language, even if its affiliations to other languages were stated alongside. Apart from this, a growing sense of dissatisfaction with the old tools available for the structural delineation of the language turned out to be an impetus for the creation of new grammars and dictionaries. The statement of purpose by P.O. Pothan,

[356]Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 73.
[357] P.K. Rajasekharan, "Shreekantheshwarathinu Naam Koduttha Vaakku," (The Word That We Gave to Shreekantheshwaram) in *Bookstalgia* (Calicut: Mathrubhumi Books, 2016), 21-25.
[358] Anthony Smith, "Civic and Ethnic Nationalism," in *Nations and Nationalism: A Reader*, eds. Philip Spencer and Howard Wollman (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 180.
[359] A publication of the text with a Preface by V. N. Sankunni Nair came out in 1860 from ARP Press, Kunnamkulam and another compiled by Samushastrikal was printed at Manomohanam Press, Kollam in the same year.

the author of a poetical anthology meant for schools, carries criticisms directed at the established pedagogical methods in use for language teaching. It states that "the parroting of *Siddharoopam, Amarakosam* etc. without knowing their meanings have proved to be without any benefit; instead, the author's selection of apt and simple verse in the language is claimed to be of better benefit for this purpose."[360]

The observation of John Plamenatz that Eastern nationalism involves two rejections, viz. "the rejection of the alien intruder… and rejection of ancestral ways which are seen as obstacles to progress and yet also cherished as marks of identity"[361] is relevant in this context. Matthan's remark in the Preface to his work evidently expresses the anxieties of the first Malayalee philologist and similar anxieties were shared by some of his fellow-natives who had ventured into similar projects to compensate for the lack. He who considered grammar writing as a scientific activity wrote thus:

> The ancient literati of the country, being chiefly Brahmins, were only anxious to acquire a knowledge of the Sanscrit and regarded the vernacular as unworthy of their attention; which fully accounts for the want of any grammatical works by the natives themselves. It was this circumstance, which made the Language to be commonly looked upon by foreigners as a poor and ungrammatical jargon; whereas its natural capabilities are as good as those of any other language of South India requiring only cultivation to develop its riches and beauties.[362]

A notable feature of this description by George Matthan is that he reproduced the same line of argument and held the very same opinions as held by the C.M.S missionaries and colonial philologists who preceded him in his enterprise. While citing reasons for the absence of any native Grammars, the neglect of Malayalam by the Brahmin literati of olden times which eventually led to its 'inferior status' was foregrounded by him as an unfortunate state of affairs

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[360] P.O. Pothan, *A Malayalam Poetical Anthology* (Mangalore: B. M. S. Press, 1879), 1.
[361] John Plamenatz, "Two Types of Nationalism" in *Nationalism: The Nature of Evolution of an Idea*, ed. Eugene Kamenka (London: Edward Arnold, 1976), 34.
[362] Matthan, *Malayāzhmayude Vyākaranam*, 3.

as far as the vernacular was concerned because as per his opinion, Malayalam has certain 'natural' capabilities, those when developed can make the language flourish like any other South Indian tongue. Categories like 'inferiority' (*pathithvam*) and 'cultivation' (*poshanam, abhivruddhi*) as well as concepts like 'developing the riches' (*swattu vardhippikkuka*) which began to be attributed to the language, as such are derived from the colonial philological terminology which had been used to talk about Indian vernaculars including Malayalam. Native philologists beginning with Matthan, both missionary educated and otherwise, started using this style of description and categorization in their works while trying to defend the status and relevance of their vernacular tongues.

Elaborating on the uses of a grammar, Pacchu Moothatu, a scholar in Ayurveda and Astrology, tries to defend a possible question that might be raised about the relevance of such a work, in the preface of his *Kerala Bhasha Vyakaranam* (A Grammar of Kerala's Language, 1876). He stated it as a well-known truth that "all these years, people have been speaking the language of the Malayalam land without the availability of any grammar of this kind;" yet, "like the making of some inner roads into and placing some pointers" in a forest area which brings ease for a foreign traveller, "this grammar can act as a 'law book' even for foreigners to start speaking in the language."[363] The analogy of improvement that was used by him is the typical trope of progress; that is the "making of roads and placing of signboards" in the hilly forest areas of the region like Aryankavu or Nilambur which were compared to the fixing of rules for the improvement of the language. The author of *Thiruvitamkoor Charithram* (History of Travancore, 1868) and *Keralavisesha Mahathmyam* (The Legendary Story of Kerala, 1877), he also complained that "in the present situation, people have been speaking the language with

[363]Pacchu Moothatu, *Keralabhashavyakaranam* ed. K. M. Prabhakara Variar (Madras: University of Madras, 1981), v.

lots of errors and in diverse ways without any particular system in place which has become the cause of ridicule and distress."[364]

Moothatu, who was described by Ulloor as the "first among the pioneer reformers of modern prose" has not explicitly mentioned who happened to be the agents of as well as victims of ridicule. Since his work *Keralabhashavyakaranam* (A Grammar of the Language of Kerala, 1877) was originally published serially in the four issues of the journal *Annals of Oriental Research* published by the Madras University which was meant to include philological works of that time, it is clear that the mysterious quarters from which ridicule originated are those discourses induced by colonial philological standpoints on the vernaculars. It can be baffling that a native scholar like him who possessed a traditional education in Ayurveda, astrology and Sanskrit also turned out to be the harbinger of linguistic reform on the lines of his English educated fellow natives. The observations by Udaya Kumar that Moothatu as a writing subject states events of his life from a "supervening angle of vision" and "provides a gateway to the truth about himself… in terms of an external, absolute, suprahuman vision" in his autobiography shows the influence of modernity and its categorizations imposed on the authorial subject.[365] Moothathu would have felt pressured to adopt an 'objective' approach to the 'language in use,' since the modern vocabulary of reform which he had embraced later, might have demanded it; and this internalized pressure accounts for his urge to classify, label and categorize Malayalam. On the one hand, Moothatu stressed the very 'modern' idea that for those who learn *Vyakaranam* (grammar), "refinement of intellect will be the benefit; at the same time, he preferred to propose a Sanskritic structure for the vernacular language and emphasised that "the structural pattern of *Malayalabhasha* follows the Sanskrit form."[366] This

[364] Ibid.
[365] Udaya Kumar, "Subjects of New Lives: Reform, Self-making and the Discourse of Autobiography in Kerala" in *Different Types of History*, ed. Bharati Ray (New Delhi: Pearson Longman, 2008), 300.
[366] Moothatu, *Keralabhashavyakaranam*, 3.

is a view upheld by many traditionalists who wanted to project an Aryan- Hindu cultural origins for the vernacular language and its people, stretching to antiquity. The ambiguity inherent in the "simultaneous articulation of what appears to be contradictory positions on political, social and cultural issues" is the result of a "fractured modernity."[367] This makes it evident that apart from the English educated middle class, scholars like Moothatu who had received a traditional education, distressed by the colonial criticisms on native ways, could also act as upholders of reform which marked an evolving strand of regional modernity.

Kovunni Nedungadi's Malayalam grammar *Keralakoumudi* (The Moonlight of Kerala, 1878) carries the author's remarks in the Foreword- "Avatārikāpanchakam" that offers a prose and verse combination of descriptions on the territorial geography of the *Malayala-vani* (the Malayalam word). The political unity of the region from the past is invoked through the Parasuraman myth along with the statement that '*Shuddha* Keralam' (pure Kerala) of the present times extends only to the south of Mangalapuram whereas it extended till Gokarnam in the Puranic past.[368] The reference made to the term '*Karmabhoomi*'(place of action) which is shown as a synonym for this distinct geographical unit is striking as it implies the distinct geographical space "where each act, each sacrifice performed has its due retribution, and where even gods desire to attain birth, once they have exhausted their spell in *svarga*."[369] Through these descriptions, the author proposes a direct linkage between the imaginings of the region made available through the Hindu Puranic versions of its past to that of the new experiential category of the region increasingly defined as a politico-linguistic unit through the recent colonial-missionary philological descriptions of its boundaries. This is in many ways similar

[367] Sreejith K., "Negotiating Tradition and Modernity: Middle-Class Dilemmas in Colonial Malabar," *Social Scientist* 41, no. 3/ 4 (March- April 2013): 43.
[368] Kovunni T. M. Nedungadi, *Keralakoumudi* (Varappuzha: Varappuzha Mission, 1878), 2.
[369] Vasudha Dalmia, *The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions: Bhāratendu Harischandra and Nineteenth-century Banaras* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 37-38.

to how a Hindu nation was made cognizable through the defining of the *Bhāratvarṣh* as a territorial and cultural unit by his contemporary Bhāratendu Hariśchandra through making allusions to the Hindu Puranic coherence of the nation which is imagined from the present to a sacred time in the past.[370]

The age old distinctions between the Aryas and the Mlecchas which were legitimized through the earlier European accounts and Dravidian Proof is recalled here as Nedungadi traces the moment of origin of "our Manipravalam"[371] to the inter-mixing of the Arya- Brahmins who accompanied Parasuraman to 'Keralam' with the Sudras who are spotted as the Tamilians of the neighbouring land.[372] It is clear from Nedungadi's statement of his objectives that he values the posited Aryan/Sanskritic influence on the language and literature, where he acknowledges this as the cause for the spread of Aryan script in use during his times. The gratitude which he openly expresses to Ezhuthachan on behalf of the 'offsprings of Keralam' for the bringing of *parishkaram*- 'modernity' to their language through his renderings from Sanskrit, is also extended to many earlier Manipravalam writers who diminished the influence of Tamil, in the rest of his account. According to Nedungadi, who spent the majority of his life-years as a college teacher and lawyer, "the rules of this literary Manipravalam followed in the compositions of the traditional great poets are not followed correctly by certain nitwits who copied the works of these geniuses" and he states that he is compiling the grammar "to prevent more of such atrocities."[373] The roots of 'modernity' and progress of the region, its language, and of the people rest on the establishment of connections with the sacred language of Aryan-Hindu antiquity, i.e. Sanskrit, as far as he was concerned. He can be called as a typical

[370] Ibid, 32-42.
[371] Kovunni Nedungadi uses the term Manipravalam to refer to the language of the land and his objective is to make a grammar of the written language or for the literary usages of the language than the spoken language which is stated by him in the preface.
[372] Nedungadi, *Keralakoumudi*, 2.
[373] Ibid., 3.

representative of the national intelligentsia referred to by Chatterjee, as the upcoming educated elites who wanted to "think of its own language as belonging to that inner domain of cultural identity" which was to be kept sacred without colonial intervention, yet that at the same time identified the importance of reform in that domain "to make it adequate for the modern world."[374] His comparison of Malayalam to the sacred river Ganga which has originated from the impressive Himalaya mountain of Sanskrit and which conjoins the other Dravida river of Kalindi is just another example that shows his leniency to the sacred tongue and is part of his efforts to project the superiority of the Aryan cultural roots over other non-Aryan/ Mleccha strains of succession.

The contrast between a quickly transforming modern world and these local attempts to "structure at least some parts of social life within it as unchanging and invariant" under the project of "inventing or safeguarding tradition" is a feature of a majority of efforts that aim at symbolizing social cohesion or group membership.[375] A new notion about language, that it is primarily one which is embodied through a shared literature than through a common speech, emerged as a result of this evolving strand of regional modernity. P. Govindapillai, a Travancorean, through his *Malayala Bhasha Charitram* (History of the Malayalam Language, 1881) which happens to be the first literary history of the language composed by a Malayalee, undertakes the task of language reform and aims to "correct multiplicity in terms of sentence structures followed by natives owing to their foolishness and ignorance about the real form of Malayalabhasha."[376] Though he affirms that Dravidian is a separate kind of its own and Malayalam is a Dravida tongue which has lately attained the status of sisterhood in relation to

[374] Chatterjee, "Whose Imagined Community?,"28.
[375] Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 2-9.
[376] P. Govindapillai, *Malayala Bhasha Charitram* (The History of Malayalam Language), (Trivandrum: Vidyavilasam Press, 1881), 1.

Tamil, Govindapillai, like his predecessors, has full conviction in the distinctive capacity of the *Shreshthabhasha* (perfect and foremost speech)-Sanskrit in bringing 'progress' to a populace, including the people of the region. The romantic-nationalist theory of literature which holds sway on the school teacher turned lawyer makes him inclined towards viewing literature as "a select body of aesthetically produced verbal compositions, which constitutes the most valuable expression of the spirit of a race, people, society, or nation or of a national character."[377] Hence he also adds that he has composed the work since "it is necessary to recognize all the honoured poets who have resisted these adversities...to restore those poets who were lost in the ocean of forgetfulness, to prevent the present ones from plunging into that ocean and to engender enthusiasm in producing new poetry, and thus to reform our language."[378] Since the richness of literature was increasingly equated with the prominence of a language, the author had to opt for some selective restorations which would provide models for the future composers.

The *Bhasha Charitram* in effect is not restricted to a mere history or description of the language but turns out to be nothing less than a compendium of the socio-cultural history of the region and its literature. A declaration made in the Preface states that "owing to the ignorance about the obstacles which turned out to be the reason for the limited progress attained by the language and because of the lack of complete knowledge of the works in it, some people have counted the language as insignificant."[379] The major obstacles stated by him are those posed by a) the ban imposed by the Brahmins against the gaining of literacy by *Shudras* and b) the reluctance on the part of ancient Rajas in patronizing local scholarly efforts at devising

[377] Vinay Dharwadker, "Orientalism and the Study of Indian Literatures," in *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia New Cultural Studies*, eds. Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 178.
[378] Govindapillai, *Malayala Bhasha Charitram*, 1.
[379] Ibid.

granthams (books) in Swabhasha.[380] c) The attack by Tippu Sultan in 1788 A. D. which is discussed in detail as the major cause for the misery that has befallen on Malayalabhasha.

> Tippu destroyed ancient temples which were storehouses of the hard–earned wealth of generations, *Padhasalas* which were repositories of Malayala-granthams in palm leaves composed with great efforts over many years, and many traditional *Illams* of *Gruhastha* Namboothiris and forcefully converted these Brahmins into the religion which can be more dreaded than death itself.[381]

This invasion of Tippu which nullified the long term hard work of scholars is cited as the major cause of misfortune met by Malayalabhasha which is claimed to have been soaring high till then. A gradual improvement for the language after this period of decline is shown to be the result of Malayalam country coming under the British rule, through the mission houses in the land which established printing presses and schools and effected the circulation of religious and scientific books translated from English.[382] The pan- Indian model of colonial historiography which aims to highlight Islamic invasions as bringing an end to the golden ages of 'Indian civilization' and cultural splendour followed by the British restoration of the lost grandeur and bringing of civilizational progress gets reproduced here. This scheme mapped on a timeline of decline and progress clearly marks out the presence of Syrian Christians and Mohemmadans in the region and tries to chalk out their relations with Malayalam, the language. The author disregards the role of the former community by reporting that after some initial attempts to learn the local language, Syrian was used by these early Christian settlers and he adds that their arrival needs to be mentioned because they happened to be the cause for the arrival of later European Padres who brought printing and publishing to the land.[383] The arrival of Muslims and the mixing of Arabic, Persian and Hindusthani words is explained with the comment that "not only has Malayalabhasha gained nothing from this *jati*, this interaction

[380] Ibid., 12-20.
[381] Ibid., 119.
[382] Ibid.
[383] Ibid., 18.

has been proved to be harmful."[384] The casteism of the native Brahmins which formed a major obstacle for the spreading of literacy among the *Shudra*[385] and other *Avarna*[386] castes and the reluctance of Rajas in aiding the flourishing of local literature are not showcased as major impediments to the growth of the language whereas the harm caused by the arrival of Muslims, resulting in the 'adulteration' of language, is projected as the major setback.

The accounts have the typical quality of a liberal nationalist narrative "dividing up historical time into past and future, tradition and modernity, stagnation and development- and inescapably, into bad and good" with the addition of the watershed event in history being the "advent of British rule which terminated centuries of despotism, superstition and vegetative life" ushering in a new era of change.[387] As Naregal observes, "one of the main problems was what official reports routinely described- as late as at the end of the 19th century-as 'the lack of original compositions."[388] This criticism about the 'lack of originality' is taken up by the historian and to counter this, a literary canon for the Swabhasha comprising works written in a less Sanskritized idiom written by people having a substantial grasp of English is shaped through his narrative. At the same time, he criticizes that the Manipravalam texts of many Sanskrit scholars educated in traditional ways are inconsistent with the idea of what constitutes a Malayalam work. The Namboothiris as a jati/ caste figure as the group who were the possessors of special knowledge before Islamic invasions, and as the class which denied progress to the lower castes which could have reached them otherwise through the *Devabhasha* (language of gods). The influence of Muslims, them being followers of "a religion more dreaded than death," is seen as posing a threat to *unnati*- 'progress' of the language and hence

[384] Ibid.
[385] Lowest of the four Varnas of touchable castes.
[386] Lower castes/ untouchables.
[387] Chatterjee, "Nationalism as a Problem," 22-23.
[388] Veena Naregal, *Language Politics, Elites and the Public Sphere: Western India Under Colonialism* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001), 166.

this *jati* occupies the margins of the nation/region imagined through such liberal narratives whereas the names of local rulers and upper castes whose Manipravalam works are listed in detail appear as contributions to the Bhasha. The new bourgeois elite castes who take up the British and the Protestant Christian missionary initiatives of 'modernizing' the language by compiling and publishing grammars, text books and other literary tracts become the legitimate members of the newly imagined linguistic collective.

It can be observed from all these early native philological efforts that most of them came out as a response to the already available works of the same kind composed by Europeans which were in circulation during that time. Most of these native authors acknowledge the existing grammar by Gundert, and occasionally the ones by Robert Drummond or Joseph Peet and assert the significance of their own ventures in comparison to those by stating that the particular work serves the purpose of 'correcting' or invalidating many of the claims tabled by these 'outsiders' accounts'. A general discontent with the European representations of the Keralites' past resulted in the production of alternative discourses about the 'past,' while a readiness to admit the pointed 'shortcomings' on the part of some native elites is also notable. A new native approach towards the vernacular is evident in a few of their works about language, since there was a fundamental element of self-criticism which marked this glance towards the past. Yet, a notable feature of these varied narratives is that none of them except George Matthan's account proposes that the superiority and the unusual emphasis on Sanskrit is the perceivable threat to Malayalam. The sacred language of the Hindus, viz. Sanskrit is seen as an enriching and enabling presence in its relationship to the vernacular by these upper-caste Hindu scholars while the native missionary George Matthan sees it as a purely restricting presence stunting the capacities of the vernacular which was taking full life under missionary efforts. Yet, irrespective of this difference, all these works tinged with elements capable of

envisaging a nation bound by a single language were proclaiming that their efforts were aimed at 'reforming' the vernacular. At times, some of them also advocated certain measures which were to be followed by the speakers of the vernacular language for the 'progress' and modernization of the language.

Early Prose Translations and Beginning of Text Book Societies: Making of Literary Canons for Teaching the Vernacular

Efforts to trace the beginning of translations into the bhasha can take us to the early decades of the second millennium, whereas the concept of 'translating into the bhasha' with reference to this time period itself can be questioned. Since the early compositions that constituted the body of literature of those times like the Manipravala poetry or Champu kavyas[389] themselves were mixed forms, a strict boundary between original compositions/ translated texts cannot be drawn. A few texts composed in such an amorphous form of the language, like *Bhashakautiliyam*,[390] *Brahmanda Puranam*[391] etc. which are either based on puranas, or form commentaries on Sanskrit religious texts were supposed to possess elements of early prose in the language.[392] Apart from some adaptations in the form of bhakti kavyas and Hindu mythological renderings in the bhasha making use of the Grantham script, the commentaries of *Hadiths*[393] and *Mawlid*[394] texts in Arabi Malayalam constituted the body of translations in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The texts in these mixed forms that were popular in the oral and scribal modes were mostly commentaries, renderings and adaptations of religious and literary texts belonging to the larger Hindu and Islamic pantheon spread across

[389] A genre of Indian literature originating from Sanskrit, which is a mixture of prose and poetry passages.
[390] A commentary of Kautiliya's *Arthashastra*.
[391] One of the eighteen major puranas or eulogies of important deities in Hindu religion.
[392] K. Ayyappa Paniker, *A Short History of Malayalam Literature Nationalism*, Revised ed. (Trivandrum: Information and Public Relations Department, Kerala State, 1977; Trivandrum: Information and Public Relations Department, Kerala State, 2006), 30. Citation refer to the 2006 edition.
[393] Record of the Prophet's sayings.
[394] A text composed for and sung during the celebrations of Prophet Muhammad's nativity day.

various regions in Asia. This can lead us to the inference that until the advent of print, a large proportion of that which constituted the 'literary' or 'artistic' in the region(s) which later on became Kerala was, to a great extent, a product of constant cultural interactions and social movements that took place beyond the restricted limits of the vernacular. The larger world which is kept open for traders, scholars and the elites through trade relations and scholastic exchanges while facilitating transactions of goods and ideas in the South-western coast made it possible for them to compose and adapt texts in mixed forms as they were always part of a larger cosmos where multilingualism was the norm.

On the one hand, the democratizing capacity of these medieval adaptations and interpretations can't be ignored in the context of the power difference that was existing between the audiences of classical and vernacular texts of those times. Yet, an unforeseen possibility of having diverse discursive patterns available in the language of everyday transactions got realized only after a couple of centuries, through a variety of translations into the bhasha in the 19th century. The purpose with which translation activities were carried out in the 19th century happened to be inherently different from the earlier ages since the activity of rendering texts into the local language was determined by the objective of reforming the language through providing it with a new literary canon which will define its boundaries. The prolific activity of translation had supposedly expanded the boundaries of the bhasha in such a way that a new prose-style that was different from the earlier existing styles which were mostly used for documentation purposes was the result. With this, the bhasha is thought to have become capable of conveying a whole lot of varied subjects within its boundaries, including those of literary and political criticism by the turn of the century, after shedding the baggage of a medieval prose which was limited in diction and in its varieties of use. These new efforts in prose translations need to be examined closely, since translation as an activity is used as a tool

for creating a pedagogical 'literary canon' during this time period. On the one hand, when pedagogical concerns governed by an evangelical spirit of 'reform' determine the selection of texts and exercising of specific discursive strategies in most missionary translation efforts, the creation of "a *de facto* canon" [395] for the language is the concomitant effect of these attempts. The setting up of text book committees which later converted the status of these *de facto* canons to official canons and the subsequent translation efforts by the Malayalam literati in response to these are worth paying attention to. Colonial philology, which projected the notion that *a body of literature is emblematic of a nation and a culture,* consequently led to the delineation of connections between a canon and national culture. These ideological imperatives put forth by philology eventually led to active intervention from sections of cultural elites in fashioning 'a literary canon' for the language through the promotion of certain kind of translations for textbook content and subsequent shaping of specific literary pasts through the writing of literary histories. Hence, it becomes imperative to examine the trajectory of 19th century efforts in translation and its relation to developing the sentiments of a language-based nationality and a national literary canon.

Translating Religious Works:

Prose translations into Malayalam started with various missionary Bible translations from Syriac, Latin and English and were followed by translations of prayer books, liturgical material for the use of seminaries and various other religious tracts. According to Rosy Thampi, though there were a few efforts to create vernacular renderings of the Bible after the arrival of Portuguese Jesuit missionaries, a group of native priests, viz. Pulikkottil Joseph Malppan,

[395] Mike Fleming uses the term to denote something which 'happens in practice through tacit consensus rather than prescription'. See Mike Fleming, "The Literary Canon: Implications for the Teaching of Language as Subject," in *Text, literature and 'Bildung'*, ed. Irene Pieper (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2007), 31-38.

Ittoop Katthanar and Kayamkulam Philipose Ramban with the aid of a Tamil pundit Thimmappillai were the first ones who attempted to translate portions of the Bible from Syriac to Malayalam.[396] This was under the persuasion of Claudius Bucchanan, a C. M. S. missionary who served as the Vice Principal of the Calcutta College, during his visit to Malabar in the early years of 19th century.[397] Other significant translations which followed this were those of Benjamin Bailey who completed his Bible translation with the aid of local scholars like Chathu Menon and a Tamil Brahmin named Vaidyanatha Iyer by 1821,[398] followed by Gundert's translation of the *New Testament* which came out by 1852. Bailey's translation is noted for an excessive presence of Sanskrit vocabulary items whereas Gundert's Bible is carefully crafted with a language which falls in line with the language of ancient Malayalam works.[399]

Venuti's statement that "translation is fundamentally a localizing practice"[400] is proven to be true here, since it is evident that these missionaries intended to introduce the principles of Christianity in what was perceived by them as the already established and acceptable discursive language and literary patterns of their audience in corresponding regions. The intended audience for Bailey's Bible at the time of his translation work were the Syrian Christians of Central Travancore, who were the initial targets of C.M.S conversion efforts and this accounts for the presence of the Sanskritized idiom in Bailey's work since such an idiom was palatable for any upper caste community in erstwhile Kerala. This once again proves that the observations of Venuti viz., "Every step in the translation process…including the development of a discursive strategy to translate it (text)…is mediated by values, beliefs and

[396] Thampi, *Baibiḷum Malayāḷavum*, 67-69.
[397] Ibid, 69-70.
[398] Babu Cherian, "Benjamin Bailey's Contribution Towards Malayalam Language and Literature" (PhD Diss., Mahatma Gandhi University, 2013), 245.
[399] Zacharia, "Missionary Gadyam," 128.
[400] Lawrence Venuti, "World Literature and Translation Studies," in *The Routledge Companion to World Literature*, eds. Theo D'haen, David Damrosch and Djelal Kadir (Oxon: Routledge, 2012), 180.

representations in the receiving situation"[401] are applicable to these Bible translations as well. The fact that Gundert took the aid of Nayars, Thiyyas and many downtrodden castes and shaped his manuscript after listening to all the criticisms that are posed by these non- Christians against Christianity,[402] explains the reason behind his composition of the work in the more popular folk idiom of commoners and thus proves that it too was a domesticating translation. The Malayalam Bibles of various congregations were always projected as a notable addition to the literary canon at a time when the absence of basic prose works essential for the language was pointed out as a major shortcoming.

Journalism, Language Teaching and Literary Translations from B. M. S:

The search for a vernacular form of prose which would be helpful for 'practical purposes,' viz. for the spread of Christian ideals of reform and moral principles of self-transformation as well as for the dissemination of European systems of knowledge, is a feature of Hermann Gundert's philological efforts at Thalassery.[403] This led to the selective publication of native didactic literature like *Panchatantram* stories from Sanskrit as translations in the Grantham script, compilations of local orature like *Pazhamcholmāla* (1848, Garland of Proverbs) *Oru Āyiram Paḻaṉoolukal* (1857, One Thousand Proverbs) etc. and re-publication of *Keralapazhama, Keralolpathi* etc. by Gundert. Didactic content and texts on the mythological and historical accounts of the region along with other foreign prose translations like that of *Aesop's Fables* stand proof of the fact that he acted as a promoter of the European 'civilizing mission,' which accounts for the inclusion of his name in the list of authors for the Madras Textbook Committee also. The majority of items included in the first missionary newspapers like *Rajyasamāchāram* and *Paschimodayam* (both started in 1847) published by Basel Mission

[401] Ibid.
[402] Thampi, *Baibiḷum Malayāḷavum*, 76.
[403] C. I. Issac, "The Press as a Site of Colonial Discourse-A Case Study of the Experience of Keralam," *Journal of South Indian History* 1, no. 1 (September, 2003), 32.

were also prose adaptations of parables, translated articles on news items from various parts of the world, etymologies of Malayalam vocabulary items etc. Information about geographical peculiarities of countries across the world, new scientific discoveries and inventions across the globe, fictive conversations revealing the contrast between English and Hindu (Indian) knowledge forms etc. were presented through these new prose items. A notable feature of these newspaper entries as noted by many critics of modern times was the simplicity of the language of this Sanskrit-free prose which made them intelligible to laymen.[404]

As argued by Kennedy, "canon formation is a natural human instinct, an attempt 'to impose order on multiplicity"[405] and hence the slow evolution of "a *de facto* canon" for the vernacular/ bhasha through various stages of instruction at these missionary schools is worth discussing. The fact that the nature and contents of pedagogical materials, including that of the Malayalam prose-anthology *Padhamala* used in Basel Mission schools for language teaching, largely overlap with the above-mentioned newspaper entries prove that "a *de facto* canon" i.e. "a canon that emerges from actual practice and may not have any official status"[406] was gradually reinstated. In a textbook prepared by him in Malayalam titled *Prakrutishastram* (Natural Science), the missionary- teacher L.J. Frohnmeyer expressed the need to teach various disciplines of knowledge in the vernacular. He stated in the "Preface" that there existed no work of that kind in Malayalam, and that he is undertaking the publication of such a work since it is absolutely necessary for everyone to understand the basics of modern science.[407] He added, "Educated natives, if asked, why they do not use their Vernacular in public, would tell us, that

[404] See Balakrishnan, *Hermann Gundert*, 32-38 and Mohandas, *Rajya Samacharam*, 43.
[405] George A. Kennedy, "The Origin of the Concept of a Canon and Its Application to the Greek and Latin Classics," in *Canon vs Culture: Reflections on the Current Debate: Reflections on the Current Debate*, ed. Jan Gorak (New York: Garland Publishing, 2001), 105.
[406] Fleming, "The Literary Canon," 31.
[407] L.J. Frohnmeyer, *Prakrutishastram: A Malayalam Catechism of Physics* (Mangalore: B. M. S. Press, 1883), V-VI.

things cannot be expressed properly in Malayalam…Let science be taught for some years in the Vernacular and let us ask again, whether there be anything too sublime to be expressed in Malayalam."[408]

The publication of the bilingual work *Malayala-Inglish Bhashantarapustakam* (A Translation Guide: Malayalam-English, 1870)[409] supports the notion that instilling the very habit of translation among students as a part of language acquisition training is a characteristic feature of the training at mission schools. The interesting fact about the language teaching materials prepared by the mission is that not only prose, but even verse anthologies such as *A Malayalam Poetical Anthology* (1879)[410] prepared by their native missionary indicates their keenness in composing, translating and presenting lessons in basic science, importance of education and other moral instruction through simple verses. This text includes mostly prosaic poems like "Vellam" (Water); "Dhanavyayam" (On Spending Money), "Nandikedu Dushtante Lakshanam" (Ingratitude- The Sign of Evil) etc. which are selections from *Panchatantram*; "Moodhaswabhavam" (Idiotic Personality), "Vidwante Lakshanam" (Signs of a Brilliant Personality) etc. selected from *Bharatam*,[411] "Pakshabhedam Eswaranilla" (God is Unbiased) taken from *Ajnanakuthaaram*[412] etc. If the term 'canon' can be conceptualized as a set of texts that are recommended or simply suggested in the educational context, these B.M.S missionaries

[408] Ibid., VII.

[409] Most of the books used as teaching aids including this *First Malayalam- English Translation* were printed and published from the mission press at Mangalore.

[410] The full English title of the work is *A Malayalam Poetical Anthology or A Collection of Easy Poems and Moral Aphorisms: Compiled and Annotated by P. O Pothan* whereas its Malayalam title is *Pathamaala Allenkil Cheriya Kuttikal Manappaathamaakki Pathikkendiya Sanmargopadeshangal* (Padhamala or Moral Lessons to be Learnt by Heart by Little Kids)

[411] It can be inferred that this refers to Ezhuthachan's version of the epic which was very popular among the locals of the region during those times.

[412] It is the most important work of Joseph Fenn (Cherusseri Chathu Nair), a native convert who was influenced by the teachings of C.M.S. He wrote this verse in the bhasha, in a style similar to the poetry of Ezhuthachan with a goal to popularize Christianity among the locals. Written in a simple language which can be understood even by children, it contains sharp criticisms about many outdated rituals and superstitious practices in Hinduism.

prescribed what can be termed as a 'mixed literary canon' for the vernacular which was shaped through their language teaching efforts in Malabar. This consisted of older works already available in the language, i.e., primarily some works of old poetry and a few selected works of prose along with a considerable amount of recent prose translations from European languages all of which fall under the colonial category of 'useful knowledges.'

Journalism, Language Teaching and Literary Translations from C. M. S:

Apart from translating the Bible, a few religious tracts, catechisms etc. and composing two dictionaries, Bailey has pioneered prose translations of children's stories like *Bharateeya Teerthatakan* (The Indian Pilgrim),[413] *Randu Aattinkuttikal* (*A Tale of Two Lambs*) and language teaching aids like *Vyakaranasamgraham* (Murray's *Abridged Grammar*) etc. into the vernacular.[414] The contents of the first C. M. S. journal *Jnananikshepam* (Treasury of Knowledge, started in 1848) and College magazine *Vidyasamgraham* (A Summary of True Knowledge) printed and published from Kottayam from 1864 also comprises a fair amount of translated literature; but unlike Gundert and his fellow missionaries, the Kottayam mission concentrates on the creation of a new Malayalam prose entirely through new compositions or through translations from modern knowledge texts available in European languages and from Protestant religious literature. Unlike in the case of the "newly established vernaculars of Europe, which had literary writings of low-brow kind in prose into which the Protestant ideas were translated, the inability to find anything of a similar kind,"[415] led to the complete disavowal of the already available literary models in the bhasha by these missionaries. This perceived lack may be the result of a Macaulayan attitude, a tendency to view the bhasha as an insignificant jargon of an inferior people, limited to the spoken form as held by the mission's

[413] It is a translation of Mrs. Sherwood's *Indian Pilgrim* (1818) which was an attempt on her part to re-write *Pilgrim's Progress* as a story for children in the Indian context.
[414] Cherian, "Benjamin Bailey's Contribution," 393-402.
[415] Babu Cherian and Jacob Issac Kalimatham, *Jnananikshepam: Pathanavum Pathavum* (The Text of Jnananikshepam and a Study of It), (Trivandrum: Prabhat Book House, 2002), 53.

linguists like Peet,[416] since verse was seen as devoid of any informative quality and as the marker of crudeness. Hence, the inauguration of a new prose form in the vernacular replete with Christian theological vocabulary was effected through translations of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* as *Paradeshimokshayathra* (1845) by Joseph Peet's assistant, Archdeacon K. Koshy[417] and subsequently by Rev. C. Muller and Rev. P. Chandran as *Sanchariyute Prayanam* (1846).

Apart from catechisms and moral stories like *Cherupaithangalkk Upakarartham Enkleeshil Ninnu Paribhashappeduthiya Kadhakal* (Stories Translated from English for the Use of Children, 1824) meant for imparting religious instruction to children, many of these translated texts printed and published by the C.M.S were also used in their Preparatory schools, Grammar schools and later in their college for instruction.[418] These missionaries relied on translations not only as sources which can provide moral inspiration, but also as newer literary models which can be introduced to the target audience. Articles which appeared in the form of question- answers- *Vidwanmarkkayittula Chodyangal* (Questions for the Sharp-Witted)[419] or as conversations- *Jatakam- Oru Vedakkaranum Sastrakkaranum Thammil Oru Sambhashanam* (Horoscope: A Conversation between a Christian and a Hindu)[420] etc. and fables like *Aanayum Thunnanum* (The Elephant and the Tailor)[421] filled the pages of the first C.M.S journal/ newspaper *Jnananikshepam*, in a newly shaping prose literature in the bhasha. The language used in translation and prose compositions by European missionaries like John Haxworth was

[416] Peet's grammar explains the reason for the presence of large amount of borrowings in the Malayalam language from Tamil and Sanskrit as owing to the inferiority of the former people/ nation to that of the latter.
[417] K. M. George, *Western Influence on Malayalam Language and Literature* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1972), 69.
[418] Babu Cheriyan, ed., *Cherupaithangalkk Upakarartham Enkleeshil Ninnu Paribhashappeduthiya Kadhakal: Benjamin Bailey* (Trivandrum: Prabhath Book House, 2014), 23-24.
[419] *Jnananikshepam* 48, Thulam issue (October, 1852).
[420] *Jnananikshepam* 18, Medam issue (April, 1850).
[421] *Jnananikshepam* 9, Karkkadakam issue (July, 1849).

simple and closer to the spoken dialect of the locals in Kottayam whereas the native missionaries of the C.M.S used a more Sanskritized variety for writing.

Native Translators and Pioneers in Prose Writing Trained at Mission Schools:

This activity was taken forward by other Malayalee Katthanars (local priests) and members of laity trained at C.M.S, like George Matthan and Kalloor Ummen Philippose, being not only the first native translators, but the first natives who acted as torchbearers of the "colonial civilizing mission." K. Koshy's translation of Bunyan's work, *The Holy War* as *Thirupporattam* (1865), Ummen Philippose's adaptation of Shakespeare's *A Comedy of Errors* as *Ālmārāttam* (1866) published serially in the newspaper *Paschimataraka* etc. were the most notable ones. These followed a bunch of knowledge text translations in the middle of the century like *Onnamatthe Bhoomishastram* (*Clift's First Geography or Guide to the Map of the World*) and *India Charitram* (*The History of India* by Henry Morris)[422] etc. Translation began to be seen as a patriotic activity and translation manuals and guides began to be published since it had already become an integral part of language teaching. Ummen Philippose writes thus in his preface to the first edition of *Ālmārāttam*, "Since works which can adorn our own language, in prose, is a rarity for us- the inhabitants of Kerala, everyone will agree to the fact that it is our duty to focus on all efforts which can compensate that lack, through our own work or even by borrowing from other languages."[423] The fact that the translator has rendered the whole of the play in prose while the original play itself has a large proportion of verse in it testifies to the fact that the author was fully truthful to his words in the preface. These prose works which introduced a new word-order and syntax, emerging from their allegiance to English structures

[422] This book was the first of its kind in the vernacular and was translated by a Malayalee, Mr. Aymanem P John, an alumni of Kottayam college who initially worked as a language teacher and later worked as a Sheristadar at the Tellicherry court.

[423] Paul Manalil, *Malayalasahitya Charitram: Ezhuthappetattha Etukal* (History of Malayalam Literature: The Unwritten Pages) (Kottayam: SPCS, 2013), 58.

erstwhile unfamiliar to the language, were a novel experience for the up-coming reading public created through the new literacy practices. George Matthan who took charge of the editorship of *Vidyasamgraham* was the first native to introduce reports and translations of speeches by important administrative officers in the government and was the one who introduced the genre of criticism written by any native in vernacular prose form. Apart from the newness in form, the contents of these journal articles by George Matthan were also unique since they upheld the greatness of a rational European civilization and its modern scientific advancements in contrast to the limitations of Indian knowledge systems.[424]

The promotion of prose in the vernacular language which suited the project of a colonial Utilitarian modernity in general is a characteristic feature of the publishing efforts undertaken by B.M.S. and C.M.S. The Utilitarian philosophy of the times judged everything by the principle of the greatest good of the greatest numbers and its champions like J. S. Mill despised poetry whereas Jeremy Bentham held that "poetry is a mere amusement" and that "there is a natural opposition between poetry and truth."[425] While Bentham classified poetry under the category "arts and sciences of amusement" and considered it as a substitute for drunkenness, in the same vein, the Protestant utilitarian fervour in many of these C.M.S missionaries also caused them to evaluate the language and literary genres in the Malayalanad, primarily dominated by Manipravalam poetry of the times as- unproductive and pre-modern according to their standards of industriousness and temperance. The taste for the dominant form of poetry of the times, labelled for its eroticism, lack of capability to 'morally uplift its readers' and above all identified as something which has no other cause than amusing its readers, was to be immediately replaced by cultivating a taste for useful knowledges in prose and a new canon

[424] Stella Joseph, "Print and Public Sphere in Malabar: A Study of Early Newspapers (1847-1930)" (Ph D Diss., University of Calicut, 2013), 140-142.
[425] See D. L. Richardson, "Poetry and Utilitarianism" in *Literary Leaves or Prose and Verse* (Calcutta: Samuel Smith & Co., 1836), 331-336.

which can fulfil this goal. Besides this, the rising evangelist fervour in Britain contributed to the blurring of the distinctions between moral improvement, civilization and Christianity. T. V. Venkateswaran points out that, "Thus, for the missionaries of that period 'mental and moral improvement of natives' was a rhetoric for proselytizing. Hence it was posited that by providing modern education in western (English) literature and science, gullible natives can be made to see the light and turned towards 'true religion.'"[426] Graded textbooks for all classes in various subjects were prepared and published through School Book Societies established by these missionaries and the Travancore government used to purchase these books for its newly established vernacular schools until the middle of 1860s.[427] The numerous Shakespeare translations starting with *Ālmārāttam* and followed by texts like *Shareerashāstram* (Science of the Body), a translation of Calvin Cutler's *First Book on Anatomy, Physiology and Hygiene for Grammar Schools and Families* etc., which were meant for schools and published from the Kottayam press were endeavours in this direction of reforming the 'native tastes' and updating their 'scientific temper' according to the standards of that time.

School Book Society, Travancore Text Book Committee and the Native Efforts in Designing of the Canon:

The selective publications and translations which take place through more organized systems like School Book Societies could strengthen the sense among the new cultural elites of Kerala that a prescribed canon was getting shaped through the new educational system. Thus, the overall impression that was created towards the second half of the century was that missionary translations were aiming to create 'a proper canon of prose literature in/ for the bhasha' consisting of didactic materials and knowledge texts of the 'useful' kind which can

[426] T. V. Venkateswaran, "Negotiating Secular School Textbooks in Colonial Madras Presidency," *Journal of Scientific* Temper 1, no. 3&4 (July, 2013): 162.
[427] E. K. Zachariah, "Contribution of the Christian Church to the Progress of Education in Kerala" (M.Ed. Thesis, University of Kerala, 1960), 66.

bring home scientific and technological advancements from Europe along with promoting a Christian value system. The missionaries, native elites and the colonial state constructed their discourses as to what it means to be 'modern,' and what needs to be done for the 'mental and moral improvement' of the native society in the field of vernacular education. Hence, in 1867, during the reign of Ayilyam Thirunal, it was decided that a separate committee would be set up for designing teaching materials for government vernacular schools and the Travancore Text Book Committee, the first of its kind in any of the princely states in the subcontinent was formed with Kerala Varma Valiyakoyi Thampuran as an honorary member initially, and later as its President.[428] The Text Book Committee at Travancore was preceded by the Madras School Book Society which was started in 1820 under the directions of Colonel Munro to cater to the needs of students at missionary schools in the Madras Presidency.[429]

Kerala Varma who is widely acclaimed for his erudition as the father of modern Malayalam prose was a scholar in Sanskrit, English, Vedanta and medicine. He has composed many slokas in Sanskrit and the mixed form of language, Manipravalam, and is also the author of considerable number of Attakkathas used in Kathakali performances. He is more renowned for his prose compositions where many of the first prose text books used in government vernacular schools in the 19th century are compilations by him. The contents of these texts were mostly his own pieces of translation or fresh compositions in Malayalam prose. P. Govinda Pillai, the first historian of the language, reports it thus in the *Malayala Bhasha Charitram*: "Since the prose texts which are of need for these (vernacular) schools were not available in Malayalam, a (text) book committee was instituted, and numerous books viz. *Vijnanamanjari* (Repository of Knowledge), *Dhanatatwaniroopanam* (Economic Analysis), Books of

[428] George Irumbayam, "Keralavarmayum Malayalasahityavum," (Kerala Varma and Malayalam Literature) in *Kaattalaril Kappiri* (Kottayam: Self-pub., 2009), 71.
[429] Kesavan, *History of Printing* Vol. I, 64.

Mathematics and Algebra, *Thiruvitamkoor Charitram* (History of Travancore), *India Charitram* (History of India), *Inglandu Charitram* (History of England), *Bhoomishastram* (Geography), *Indiavivaranam* (Description of India) etc. were printed and made use of."[430] Kerala Varma's efforts in bringing out the above-mentioned prose-texts through the Text Book Committee was perceived as an act of cleansing Malayalabhasha by many of his contemporaries like the then Dewan of Travancore, T. Madhavarao and, Govinda Pillai himself. The list of texts mentioned by Pillai are the works of Kerala Varma published by the Committee, done until 1870s, after which there was a break in the functioning of the Committee when Kerala Varma was in house arrest until 1880, i.e. the beginning of Vishakham Thirunal's reign. Pillai adds more about Kerala Varma's contributions: "Though some prose works for the use of schools were composed by European Padres, there was a shortcoming that they were not so useful in the subject of modernization of the 'Swabhasha' (one's own tongue) for the children of Kerala. It was this His Highness who freed Malayalabhasha of this shortcoming."[431]

These observations by Govinda Pillai can be read in the light of the fact that though missionary translations and publications established prose as an important form of literature and shaped the idea that prose is the ideal form for communicating and spreading modern knowledges, this missionary prose referred to as 'Padiri Malayalam' was considered as non-standard according to the aesthetic norms of those times by certain sections of the literate. The major objective of the Textbook Committee set up in 1867 according to the Travancore Dewan Madhava Rao's memorandum was "to establish a textbook committee to facilitate the translation and fresh composition of all kinds of books. The proposed curriculum in the making should also include enough Sanskritic elements which can aid the dissemination of knowledge

[430] Govindapillai, *Malayala Bhasha Charitram*, 142.
[431] Ibid., 148.

in subjects like Mathematics, Geography, History, Moral Instruction, Health Science, Political Economy etc. in the vernacular."[432] Except Kerala Varma, most of the members of the first committee constituted in 1867, like Annajirayar, Subba Deekshitar, Munshi Raman Thampi etc. had no knowledge or even acquaintance with Malayalam language and its literary models. The interesting fact that George Matthan, the native *Katthanar*[433] was also a member of the Text Book Committee for a while points to the fact that his Sanskrit scholarship and usage and promotion of a more Sanskritized idiom[434] in his speeches and through his writings supposedly earned him a position in the Committee. So, on the one hand there is a readiness on the part of these educated elite natives to acknowledge the labour of missionaries in improving the bhasha which made it gain the status of a tongue worthy of literary production. On the other hand, relative inferiority is attributed to these prose works on account of poverty of style as is implicit in Pillai's comment about Kerala Varma that "he is not only the person who cleansed the language of Malayalam- land, but also is the one who first created useful Malayalam text books."[435] Since Kerala Varma gave priority to the aesthetic aspects of the works than to the utilitarian aspects of texts, he was considered by Pillai as the person who cleansed the existing style of missionary prose. At the same time, the new standards of morality and the claims about the epistemic superiority of 'English knowledge' had attained hegemonic status by the 1860s through the missionary education of over three decades.

All the native authors who lived in the century and who are hailed for the efforts done by them for the 'progress' of the language, including Vishakham Thirunal, who rubbed

[432] Memorandum by Madhava Rao TGER Cover No. 15982.1866 quoted in Sreekumar A.G., *Acchukoodatthile Keralam* (Kerala in the Printing Press) (Kannur: Kairali Books, 2014), 37.
[433] A native priest or missionary was referred to as Katthanar as different from Padiri which was used to refer to a European priest or missionary.
[434] He was an ardent critic of the use of Vattezhuthu and other writing systems for writing Malayalam and advocated the use of Grantham script by affirming the allegiance of language to Sanskrit than to Tamil.
[435] Govindapillai, *Malayala Bhasha Charitram*, 149.

shoulders with Kerala Varma in his efforts to 'reform' education in Travancore have penned or patronized the translation of many treatises in the vernacular. *Keralamitropapatram*, the Malayalam monthly reports in 1881 that Vishakham Thirunal Thampuran who passed away had given some money to the Madras government and had given directions to undertake one or two translations into Malayalam language every year and the Madras School Book Society was kept in charge of this.[436] Govinda Pillai also mentioned that, "morals, righteousness and importance of hard work etc. are the subjects of majority of the *prakaranams* (essays)"[437]penned by Vishakaham Thirunal. The list of important prose essays translated by Vishakham Thirunal titled as "Sareerarakshayekkurich" (On Taking Care of Physical Health), "Satyathekkurich" (On Truth), "Paropakarathekkurich" (On Benevolence), "Deenasamrakshanam" (On Taking Care of the Downtrodden) etc. also proves this. This is also evident from the content of the textbooks prepared and prescribed by the Travancore Text Book Committee.

George Irumbayam observes that a major portion of the stories included by Kerala Varma in the text books prepared till 1870 are translations of Aesop's fables and another major chunk of his prose translations for text books are translations or adaptations.[438] In some cases, re-tellings of stories already published by C. M. S. in its textbooks and journals like *Jnananikshepam* in a more Sanskritized idiom can be found in the textbooks compiled by him; as in the case of stories like "Aanayum Thunnalkkaranum" (The Elephant and the Tailor), "Aneppiyassum Amphinomussum" (Anaphius & Amphi-nomus) "Matiyanaya Balante Katha" (The Story of a Lazy Boy) etc.[439] Works of Pacchu Moothatu, who happens to be Kerala

[436] Speech delivered by the then Madras University Chancellor, Grand Duffond quoted in *Keralamitropapatram*, 1888.
[437] Govindapillai, *Malayala Bhasha Charitram*, 144. Prakaranam can be a treatise or an essay.
[438] Irumbayam, "Keralavarmayum Malayalasahityavum," 73.
[439] Cherian and Kalimatham, *Jnananikshepam*, 112-118.

Varma's teacher of traditional medicine, were also included as texts by the Committee. His *Balabhooshanam* (Ornament for Children, 1866) which also figured in the Malayalam syllabus of Madras University, containing chapters titled "Eswaravicharam" (Godly Thoughts), "Satyam" (Truth), "Daya" (Kindness), "Daanam" (Gifting), "Streedharmam" (Women's Duty) etc. is designed in the format of conversation between two women: Sumati who is the embodiment of right knowledge and Kumati who is a novice who gets enlightened by Sumati's teachings. These moral instructions follow the logic of missionary Catechisms in structure and selection of subjects but reveal themselves to be typical examples of the first native experiments in formulating a 'modern Malayalee identity'. As a hybrid of modern Malayalam prose and Manipravala slokas which are renderings from Bhagavatam, Manusmriti etc., the text points to the early native attempts in accommodating locally established epistemic practices thriving largely in oral form into the new textual format in print. Another text by Moothatu, viz. *Tiruvitamkoor Charitram* (History of Travancore, 1868) prescribed by the Committee is written in a prose form which is more or less poetic in quality, having a "meta-narrational code which is an amalgam of four different strands of Indian thought: the *ithihasa-purana* conventions of quasi historical literature, *katha* style of narratology, rasa-dvani modes of kavyasastra and finally, the kali conception of time."[440]

Thus, the new canon put forth through translations and fresh compositions by natives from erstwhile aristocratic families like Kerala Varma, Visakham Thirunal etc. was one which adhered to the models of modern, useful 'disciplines of knowledge' like history, mathematics, moral essays etc. in content. At the same time, it was carefully designed to stay distinct in diction from the missionary text-books by bringing it closer to a more Sanskritized idiom on

[440] Sheeju N. V., "The Difference of Modernity and the Repetition of Tradition in Nineteenth Century Kerala: A Critical Study of Missionary Narratives and Colonial Administrative Writings" (PhD Diss., University of Kerala, 2012), 102-103.

the lines of the already established notions about an acceptable narrative style and dignified 'literary' style available in the oral and scribal practices prior to the spread of print. The fact is that most of the translation efforts undertaken by the natives which followed these till the end of the century were from Sanskrit,[441] leading to the development of a prose style with a leaning towards the Sanskritic idiom, yet one that was simpler in comparison to the highly inflected poetic language used in erstwhile Manipravalam poetry. The active involvement of educated youngsters from Travancore in the functioning of the Textbook Committee followed by the decision to remove Bible from the curriculum and from the list of books that are published by the book committee shows that there is a growing Hindu nativist sentiment in Travancore. It can be seen that portions from the works of ancient poets like Kannassappanikker, Cherusseri, Ezhuthachan, Mazhamangalam, Unnayi Varrier, Ramapurat Varrier, Kunjan Nambiar, Ittirarissha Menon, Irayimman Thambi and Swati Thirunal were also included in the Travancore text book series in the final decade of the 19th century.

It is evident that the European missionaries tried to introduce a canon of Malayalam prose which is closer to the *vyavaharabhasha* or the language of day to day speech, with a considerable proportion of Davidian vocabulary, as the instrument of 'modernity' to impart useful European knowledge. A few translators like Ummen Philippose, K. Koshy, Aymanenem John etc. who were trained in mission houses were the only natives who took up texts in European languages and English. They chose the works of Shakespeare or some texts on Christianity for translation so that new concepts and syntactic models enter the target language as it is getting re-defined. Meanwhile, the cultural elites of royal families and the Sanskrit pundits who associated with these old-time patrons of literature actively designed a prose style

[441] Kodungallur Kunjikkuttan Thampuran mentions this in the Preface to his translation of *Hamlet* into Malayalam. He also defines his translation effort from English to Malayalam as a distinct attempt in that context.

replete with elements of the Sanskritised idiom and the narratological conventions followed by classical Sanskrit literature that used to be considered as dignified by these groups. The growing nativist sentiment towards the end of the century is evident through such actions to bring back models of ancient Hindu devotional poems and Manipravalam verse models into the school textbook curriculum. The publication of *Tiruvitamkoor Charitram*, a translation of Dewan Madhava Rao's work in English titled *Travancore History* (1876), another text which discussed the geography of Travancore State titled *Tiruvitamkoor Samsthanathe Bhoovivaranam* (Geographical Description of Travancore State, 1890) and one on the description of India named as *Indiavivaranam* (Description of India) etc. by the Text Book Committee and similar other activities in the same direction were channels for shaping their own canon of Malayalam prose in which a Travancorean identity is imagined. Thus, models of Malayalam verse and new models of vernacular prose capable of projecting a nation in the making started circulating through the school curriculum in Travancore. These acted as the first symbols of a linguistic nation that was imagined on behalf of all speakers of Malayalam language later.

Swabhasha and its Others

The term 'Swabhasha' began to be widely projected through newspapers and literary journals as a central marker of identity of the people by the 1880s. This is the time period by when questions of socio-cultural reform and discussions around traditional forms of family structure and caste relations and the relevance of modern European science were gaining prominence in the emerging Malayalee literary sphere. The Sanskrit root 'Swa' has meanings like self/ of one's self/ of one's own etc. The recurrent appearance of the term 'Swa-bhasha' as a major topic of concern is an upshot of various reflections on the reform of the native 'self', in its multiple dimensions, and the outlining of a new collective-self which is 'modern'. This phenomenon, in a nutshell is the result of an altered function, scope and status ascribed to

various linguistic codes already in use which is aided by the shift to new modes and channels of communication, the nature of which in turn were defined by the newly acquired functions of these linguistic codes. This dialectic relationship between media and its messages finally resulted in the evolution of a linguistic identity around the newly devised language of Malayalam.

As already seen in the earlier chapter, the 19th C missionary interventions brought an end to a hierarchical model of caste-based education in caste/community-specific languages bringing all the people of the land under a common system of schooling in English and the newly devised Malayalam language which was even raised by them to the status of a liturgical tongue in the coming years. This initial step in the direction of language planning basically springs up from the new approaches to language that were central to the European philological enterprises of that century since they attributed qualities of organicity, inferiority etc. to languages and thought of these attributes as crucial for defining the status of various peoples. They also considered the relation between a language and its speakers as crucial since the use of a particular language or the other was essentially defined by questions of ensuring justice and bringing reform to the people. These principles of philology including that of a monolingual territorial identity later seeped into native thought through the new educational system and also through the texts made available in the new medium of print. The changed modes of communication in the new world of common schooling and common printed textbooks creates the demand for a single uniform linguistic code unlike in the age of the performative and personal communication, since print calls for a structurally fixed language with a fixed vocabulary and script as the time-space axes that needs to be traversed by this static and impersonal medium is vast and hence cannot afford any kind of equivocality. As seen in an earlier section of this chapter, there were native publication trends beginning from

the 1860s which tried to uphold the unique existence of various communities by projecting separate ‘traditions’ for each one of them through the printing of their respective sacred texts in specific scripts that marked their distinct identities. At the same time, a unified modern administrative, legal and educational machinery under the aegis of colonial powers demanded the knowledge of and acknowledged the presence of the newly devised and preferred language, viz. Malayalam in the Grantham based script. Hence, as different from the earlier scenario of multiple print languages, the dictionaries, grammars and other philological works by the local scholars that followed soon mentioned only about the reform of a ‘single language- Malayalam or Malayanma’ which marks the identities of the people who inhabit the stretch of land in the South-western coast. This shift calls for a new relationship between all the inhabitants of the region and the newly defined region called Kerala, a relationship which is mediated and defined through this single language in Grantham-based script which has already acquired a degree of standardization as a visual form in script by the middle of the century.

The inauguration of a missionary discourse in the newly devised language which focusses on the ‘moral-reform of the self’ was followed by the reform of its habits. This reform of habits includes refining literary practices and the introduction of prose as the ‘progressive form’ as well as the revision of literary narrative practices as a corollary to it which completed the process of narrowing down of the major object of reform to a single bhasha. This ‘modern’ nature of the language is something which specifically arises out of its quality as a linguistic code equipped to meet the needs of the new popular medium of print. It is distinct from the former mixed codes of versification and erudition and is replete with fused morphemes and idiomatic expressions meant to be decoded mostly in the space of personal performance spaces. This distinction is derived from the fact that this new code is designed with smaller distinct morphological and syntactic units that equip it to function as the carrier of print messages to a

strange audience. The 'modernity' of Malayanma as proudly expressed through George Matthan's words in his speech later published as *Balabhyasanam* (Kids' Training) is as follows: "While thinking about the *jatyam* (nature) of Malayanma, it has become capable of competing with any other language in beauty and power. The words in the language have become easily distinguishable from one another, sentences in it can be merged together without getting all fused together and above all these have become capable of expressing different emotions through change in tone."[442]

By then, this chosen singular code in print was acquiring the attribute of the prime identity marker of the modern individual self in the making, which in definition was divorced from the traditional identity of caste/ religious community. The inclusion of Malayalam as a subject in the syllabus of Madras University and the setting up of a separate exam for Malayalam by 1860 also accelerated the process which culminated in the official separation of the tongue and its people from other Dravidian groups, especially that of Tamil and Tamilians. George Matthan, the C.M.S. Katthanar who is also a linguist endorsed the need to use the Swabhasha-Malayalam as the medium of instruction in a speech delivered by him at Kollam in 1867.[443] He had already stressed the need to use Grantham script as against the more Tamil-oriented Vattezhuthu script that was used for documentation purposes in the Travancore Kutcherry courts through his article in *Vidyasamgraham* in 1864.[444] The prominence of Tamil script in the local court is pointed out by him as a consequence of the dominance of the Tamil clerks in the court.[445] Matthan puts forth a sketch of the modern Malayalee individual-self defined through post-print literacy practices as the unit of a single nation/region with a well-

[442] George Matthan, *Balabhyasanam* quoted in Manalil, *Malayalasahitya Charitram*, 58.
[443] P. Pavithran, "Maktithangal: Mathrubhashayute Porali," (Maktithangal: A Fighter for the Mother Tongue) *Mathrubhumi,* January 05 2013, accessed January 25, 2016. http://archive.is/91YD8
[444] "Nanartham," *Vidyasamgraham: The Cottayam College Quarterly* 1, no.1 (July, 1864), 32-33.
[445] Ibid.

documented cultural history of its own and pictures the Tamilian 'other' as an outsider posing a threat to the autonomy of this subject.

When the majority of the new literates coming out of missionary and government vernacular schools in Cochin and Travancore were inculcated with this spirit of the 'Swabhasha,' centred around Malayalam, the scene in Malabar, especially with the continuing presence of literacy and publishing practices in Arabi-Malayalam was different. The report on education submitted to the government by L. Garthwaite, who also happened to be the Inspector of Schools in Malabar and Canara in 1871-72 mentioned the presence of separate 'Mappila schools' in Malabar. He mentioned them as schools 'scarcely worthy of the name…imparting the rudiments of a real education'[446] and complained that

> There are peculiar difficulties in spreading education amongst the Mappilas of North Malabar. Possessing a rude alphabet of their own, and also using freely the Arabic character for Malayalam- in spite of its utter want of adaptation- they are satisfied with thus the means of writing however imperfect these means may be. Hence, while the Mappilas of South Malabar, who use the ordinary Malayalam character, welcome Malayalam instruction, those of the North despise it.[447]

Thus, Mappilas in Malabar continued to stay outside the purview of the unified 'Malayalee self' for a longer period as the script, literacy and literary practices which defined their existence was not distinct from the one which marked their 'traditional religious self' and hence Mappila identity in the second half of the century continued to be non-concomitant with the 'modern secular Malayalee' identity that began to be projected as primary through the carving out of the concept of Swabhasha.

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[446] S. Satthianadhan, *History of Education in the Madras Presidency* (Madras: Srinivasa, Varadachari & Co, 1894), 119.
[447] Ibid., 121.

The publication of a literary history by Govinda Pillai in 1881 turned out to be a significant episode in endowing the new literate Malayalee with the design of a collective-identity extending to a time long back in history, with the 'Swabhasha' as the common strand connecting the 'present and past of his/ her to that of his/her fellow speakers'. The drawing up of the literary canon and subsequently a national literature which legitimizes the historicity of the linguistic nation, a modern category, completed the blueprinting of the structural boundaries of the language by defining the literary and the extra-literary in the tongue. While the classical performative texts like Attakkathas and Manipravalam poetry and the classical idiom with a high degree of Sanskrit vocabulary find a place on the list of the 'literary', the vast sea of oratures which were designed for subaltern performances and the local idiomatic usages remained as extra-literary and at times, obscene. Thus, the widespread use of the term Swabhasha began to coincide with junctures which defined the 'bhasha of/for the modern self' which was still in the making simultaneously with the 'inception of a selfhood for the well-defined bhahsa' which too was in the making. The evolution of Malayalee as a political identity based on language resulted in questioning the expertise and fluency of Europeans and Tamilians in the Swabhasha. The formation of the 'Malayalee Social Union' which later became the 'Travancore Malayalee Sabha' in 1884 and the beginning of the newspaper titled *Malayalee* edited by Pettayil Raman Pillai Asan in 1886 as its mouth piece were steps in the direction of encouraging western education to bring its benefits to the members of Malayalee community, especially for the Nayars and Vellalars in Travancore.[448] Members of the Sabha as well as its well-wishers wrote articles in many newspapers including the *Madras Standard* showcasing the claims of Malayalees to occupy Travancore government jobs on grounds of the real ownership of Swabhasha and criticising the dominance of Non-Malayalee Brahmins in

[448] C. J. Fuller, *The Nairs Today* (New York: CUP, 1976), 128.

various government offices.[449] This shows how the idea of 'swabhasha' attains political meanings within a short span of less than two decades.

For the first time in the history of the region, a slogan in the form of "Travancore for Travancoreans" was raised against the 'Paradesi-Brahmins,' 'Paradeshi-Sudras' and 'Paradesi-Christians'[450] in some leaflets which were published by G. Parameswaran Pillai in 1890 where the term 'paradesi' which originally meant a foreigner, took the meaning of non- Malayalee in this context. Brahmins, Vellalars and other "Tamil speaking" groups who had an upper hand in the administrative matters of Travancore government and who occupied significant bureaucratic positions till the 1880s began to be seen as competitors who were snatching away government jobs and other similar opportunities of Malayalam speaking Travancoreans by this time. The official status given to Tamil as the language of administrative and revenue records till the middle of the 19th century was seen as resulting from the supremacy of 'foreigners' in the government services. This view was held by the Malayala Brahmins, Sudras, Syrian Christians and by the educated sections from other lower castes. Hence, annoyed Swabhasha speakers raised their voices for an increased claim over the administrative and other legal positions in Travancore. Following the rise of such nativist sentiments, the foregrounding of the linguistic identity as a means for securing jobs in Travancore happened for the first time when petitioning by aspirants in the name of Malayalee Memorial took place in 1891.

The Malayalee Memorial was a memorandum signed and submitted by educated Travancoreans to Maharaja Sree Moolam Thirunal on 1st January, 1891 requesting him to end the supremacy of Tamil Brahmins in Travancore Civil Services. It was a demand for secured

[449] G. Priyadarshanan, "Anandapuriyile Adyapatrangal," (The first newspapers of Anandapuri) in *Kerala Patrapravartanam: Suvarnadhyayangal* (Journalism in Kerala: Golden Episodes) (Trivandrum: Self-pub., 1999), 46.
[450] Raghavan, *Kerala Patrapravartana Charitram*, 118.

government jobs raised by the educated citizens of Travancore and the petition was signed by over 10,000 people. In addition to members of the Nayar community, the petition was signed by a few members of other communities too, like members of the Ezhava community, Syrian Christians etc. At the same time the inner contradictions inherent within the idea of 'Malayalee' represented through the so called 'swabhasha' identity which was raised in opposition to Tamil Brahmin supremacy in the jobs was exposed soon after this, since the Nayar caste identity was the one that got foregrounded to a major extent through this movement. A series of other memorials that followed this, including the much significant Ezhava Memorial of 1896 that was submitted to secure the employment rights of Ezhavas proves this. Though such inner contradictions on the basis of differing community interests were visible till the end of 19th century, the foregrounding of a distinct linguistic identity by the educated cultural elites of Travancore to protect their politico-economic interests culminated in the amalgamation of a nascent Malayalee nationalism at the turn of the 20th century.

Chapter 4

The Vernacular Public Sphere and the Discourse of Linguistic Reform

The last two decades of the 19th century and the early years of the 20th century is a period characterised by an unprecedented upsurge of vernacular publishing activities and journalism in the context of Kerala. According to Robin Jeffrey's three-period classification of information transmission in India, what is termed as a "peasant-mode," which is primarily a face to face mode of information transmission prevailed in the pre-industrial era. He has termed the mode of information transmission that prevails after the 1980s as the "mass media mode" when print, television and other mass media exist together to transmit information instantly. According to him, a "print- elite mode" which extended up to the 1980 took shape from the 1870s, once cheap printing presses and Indian language fonts became available side by side with an expanding railway and telegraph network in the country.[451] The rise of a bourgeois capitalist class who owned vernacular print houses and the establishment of a public postal service which was made available for the first time for the circulation of non-governmental materials in 1861 are some important factors which led to the inauguration of print-elite mode in Kerala by late 1870s. Noted historian Rajan Gurukkal identifies the establishment of postal service for the public as a "significant force behind the rapid growth of publications in Keralam" in the second half of the 19th century.[452] The presence of a native elite class which can afford the economic means as well as intellectual resources sufficient enough to own print houses and to run newspapers and other publications also happened to be the other necessary condition for such a shift. This condition was fulfilled by this time and it led to the proliferation

[451] Robin Jeffrey, "Communications and Capitalism in India, 1750-2010," in *Media and Modernity: Communications, Women, and the State in India* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2010), 215-16.
[452] Rajan Gurukkal, *The Making of Modern Keralam: Report of the UGC Major Research Project (1993-96)* (Kottayam: School of Social Sciences, M.G University, 1996), 68.

of journals, literary magazines and newspapers in the vernacular gradually leading to the formation of a literary public sphere in Malayalam. As different from popular belief, it was in fact the widely circulated folk songs and stories, mythology and legends that created a large community of readers in Malayalam and not our novelists or 'high literature' that made it possible.[453] To a large extent, passing of information or communication by word of mouth which is termed as the 'peasant mode' still continued to co-exist as a strong mode with this print-elite mode in the initial years.

These last few decades of the 19th century was a time when printing technology and publishing enterprises actively shifted hands from missionaries and Europeans to the native hands. Hence, the proliferation of presses and publication of reading materials facilitated various kinds of novel discussions and deliberations among the newly educated elites through the medium of print. The public discussions that happened henceforth in print were mainly about language, literature, family, religious beliefs, food habits, education, medicine, caste relations etc. which were considered as matters which constituted the realm of the 'private' or of the 'inner domain'. These new possibilities of communication opened up by such printing and publishing ventures have a great significance since it was these discussions and deliberations which took place in this newly formed common literary sphere that became crucial in the evolution of certain norms about the constitution of a Malayalee national culture. Hence, it is interesting to trace the change in the nature of journalism in Malayalam after it shifts hands and also to look at the later times of active 'native journalism' till the end of the 19th century.

[453] P. Ranjith, *Malayaliyude Bhoothakalangal: Onavum Samoohyabhavanalokavum*, (Malayalee Pasts: Onam and the Social Imaginaries) (Thrissur: Current Books, 2011), 77.

Rajan Gurukkal states that, of the 28 printing presses which were operational in Travancore during 1905, "except a few missionary presses, all were owned and operated by 'natives.'"[454] Keeping Robin Jeffrey's periodization in mind, the print-elite mode which started from the 1870s would have been the marker of transformation to an increased native ownership of printing and publishing enterprises. Jeffrey's periodization fits well with the historical scenario of the region, though the fact remains that a few four-page weeklies in English or Malayalam which had a considerably small readership could be the ones which can be traced as newspapers 'thriving' in the 1870s. The list includes *The Western Star* and its Malayalam version *Paschima Tharaka*, both run by H. M. Walker- a European; *Sathyanadakahalam*, owned by Italian Carmelite missionaries and edited by Father Candidus; *Keralopakari*, the Basel Mission publication in Malayalam from Mangalore, *Keraladeepakam*, the only periodical owned or edited by any Mappila during the times and so on. A notable feature of these publications in the 1870s is that though a few individuals of the new elite class like Oommen Philippose, T. J. Paily, Khader Sahaji Bappu etc. played the role of columnists or editors in these new endeavours, none of them can be considered as purely commercial enterprises owned by local individuals. Most of these newspapers gave primacy to discussions on matters of religion and faith, though local news items and government proceedings could find a space in a few of them. An earlier exception to this was a Malayalam newspaper *Sandishtavadi* which was published from the Kottayam C.M.S Press from 1867 onwards. It was published as the annex of the English newspaper *Travancore Herald* by a European named W.H. Moore and used to include columns on politics in it. But, it was soon proscribed by the Travancore government on grounds of criticizing the government.[455] A bilingual publication named as *Tiruvitamkoor Abhimani* began to be published from 1876, from Nagercoil, situated

[454]Gurukkal, *Modern Keralam*, 68.
[455] Raghavan, *Kerala Patrapravartana* Charitram, 52.

in the present-day state of Tamil Nadu. G. Priyadarshanan has described this publication as a Tamil-Malayalam magazine.[456] Thus, hardly did any of these surviving publications in the 1870s have all and only the Malayalam literates as their intended audience. Moreover, the commercial possibilities opened by the print-market in an evolving standardizing tongue seldom mattered for them. But, a change in the state of affairs marked by the identification of the commercial uses of print by the local populace occurs by the end of 1870s and towards the turn of 1880s.

The invention of these new commercial possibilities of the medium by the cultural elites of the land, which resulted in the gradual development of a public platform of interaction in the newly devised and popularised common language of Malayalam by the 1880s, deserves attention. As mentioned earlier, this literary public sphere in Malayalam which set the normative boundaries of a Malayalee national culture also decided the nature of what the 'language' - Malayalam itself should be. These public sphere discussions also had a crucial role in setting the norms for literary production in the language which proved to be the important constituent of the new Malayalee linguistic identity that was being invoked. The specific role of newspapers like *Malayala Manorama* and literary magazines like *Bhashaposhini* and *Vidyavinodini* in defining the nature of the literary public sphere, forming the very foundation for a Malayalee literary publicness needs to be examined. The ways and means through which Malayalam language acquires the status of an emblem of a secular Malayalee selfhood also needs to be looked into.

[456] Priyadarshanan, "Anandapuriyile Adyapatrangal," 37-38.

Rise of Print Capitalism and the Beginnings of a Middle-Class Vernacular Journalism

The advent of print as a strong medium in various societies across the globe was through replacing the role of pre-existing oral and scribal cultures and was often marked by a shift to a capitalist mode of production. This applies to the case of Kerala too, where the introduction and promotion of this medium was not accidental. It can be observed that this was part of a conscious process of colonization and proselytization. The caste-ridden society of Kerala with its feudal hierarchies thrived in the oral and scribal modes of communication with palm leaf manuscripts functioning as the traditional store houses of knowledge and as the transmitter of information which was largely restricted to various forms of verse.[457] This proved to be a hindrance for the capitalist interests of the British as well as for the proselytizing interests of missionaries which needed an alternative mode of communication that was faster and at the same time cheap. A gradual shift to the capitalist mode of production after the establishment of the British Empire necessitated the quick circulation of information about raw materials, a faster movement of the manufactured products as well as a quick transmission of information about all these. Fitting to Habermas's observations about a change in existing modes of production, "With the expansion of trade, merchants' market-oriented calculations required more frequent and more exact information about distant events."[458] So, in addition to faster modes of transportation, they needed some improved channels of communication, because in the changed scenario, information about the latest politico-economic changes and ideas which were meant to be disseminated among a wide variety of population should travel back and forth within no time. This was also crucial in shaping the obedient colonial subject whose subjectivity and world view was to be moulded by the new forms of knowledge established

[457] Wood, *Knowledge Before Printing*, 2-5.
[458] Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1993), 16.

through colonialism. Shibu Muhammed observes thus, "the contents of missionary newspapers reveal that they were strong instruments of colonial systems of knowledge production and subjectivity formation. Their objective was to criticise local feudal over-lordship and its belief systems on the one hand and at the same time to provide justification and to rationalize colonial domination on the other hand."[459] While the missionaries used it as a tool for spreading ideas of western Protestant Christianity and European scientific knowledge, projected as the universally accepted principles of the new world, British capitalists and bureaucrats saw it as an investment which can bring them profit. The English newspapers from erstwhile Madras, and the ones like *Western Star* published from Cochin by the European H. M. Walker were the early capitalist enterprises in print, where the indigenous elites also slowly joined hands. Thus, as pointed out by Habermas "the traffic in news developed not only in connection with the needs of commerce; the news itself became a commodity."[460] Hence, it can be stated that print in Kerala was not only an instrument of capitalism but also grew into a capitalist enterprise in itself by the end of 19th century.

Later, by the end of 1870s, a handful of native printing and publishing enterprises with the intent of profit-making also came into being. "Reform" and "progress" were the watchwords of these publications which were owned and run by an upcoming section of educated middle class in the region. These sections of 'natives' were representatives of the class mobility gained by the erstwhile middle and inferior castes under a new colonial rule. K.N. Panikkar holds that, "The cultural impact of the new literacy was not confined to English-literates alone. It had a spill-over effect on vernacular readers as well, for its cultural essence

[459] Shibu Muhammed, *Charithrathinte Mudranangal: Malayala Pathrapravarthanathinte Vikasavum Parinamavum*, (Impressions of History: Growth and Evolution of Malayalam Journalism) (Trivandrum: State Institute of Languages, 2007), 25.
[460] Habermas, *The Structural Transformation*, 21.

invariably found its way into Indian languages and through them to a larger audience."[461] This new audience of the English and vernacular literacy practices were the owners, readers and editors of most of these newly published periodicals and newspapers. During the turn of the decade, there emerged *Keralachandrika* in 1879, as a monthly magazine published and edited by P. Govinda Pillai, the first historian of Malayalam language[462] and *Keralamithram* a weekly started by the Gujarati merchant Devji Bhimji in 1881, with Kandathil Varughese Mappila as its editor. These are the first publications run by the vernacular elites through which some of the stalwarts of Malayalam journalism like Vengayil Kunjiraman Nayanar and literary figures like Kerala Varma started writing, and the first of their kind to have private individuals as their owners. These can be identified as typical instances which marked Kerala society's shift to print-capitalism per se, though both these journals were short-lived. It should also be noted that "the beginning of sustained Malayalam journalism" [463] can be traced only to late 1880s with newspapers like *Nazrani Deepika* (1887-) which was intended to convey the principles of Catholicism to its readers and *Malayala Manorama* (1890-) started by Kandathil Varughese Mappila which was more of a commercial enterprise.

Many magazines were also categorically launched as 'literary and/ or educational magazines' during the final decades of the century and they were published as bulletins of various literary associations as in the case of *Vidyavilasini* from1881, *Vijnanachinthamani* from 1886 as a bilingual in Grantham and Malayalam script, *Bhashaposhini* (1896-) etc. *Vidyavilasini* which was launched as per the directions given by the minister of Travancore, V. Rama Iyengar to the Inspector of Malayam schools, Ramarao specifically declares its official nature by notifying that the magazine will not state anything on matters related to royal justice

[461] Panikkar, *Culture, Ideology, Hegemony,* 128.
[462] Priyadarshanan, "Anandapuriyile Adyapatrangal," 36.
[463] Robin Jeffrey uses the phrase to point out the long-lasting nature of these newspapers which have been surviving till date. Jeffrey, "Testing Concepts," 473-74.

or about government officials.[464] K. N. Panikkar's observation on the role played by print "in disseminating the cultural content of the new literacy…by setting up new networks of communication, facilitating new options for the people, and also providing new means of controlling the people,"[465] is relevant at this juncture. Whether they were literary journals or political publications, their connection with the new practices of print-literacy as a prerequisite point to their dependence "on the existence of a particular state and its bureaucratic routines"[466]. The popularity enjoyed by periodicals like *Keralapatrika* (est.1884), *Keralasanchari* (est.1888) *Vidyavinodini* (1889-1902), *Keraladarpanam* (est.1899), *Janaranjini* (est.1890) and many more literary and political journals in the last two decades of the 19th century as well as the increased publication of new literary forms like novels, short stories and plays in the vernacular points towards the gradual transition of print from a "rare medium" into a "scarce medium" as per Jeffrey's classification.[467]

All the journals named here from *Vidyavilasini* to *Janaranjini* were run by private individuals who were members of the emerging new middle class. Various socio-political and economic policies of the colonial government had already led to the decline of Brahminical dominance in the field of education, in local means of production like agriculture and even in religious institutions like temples to an extent. The setting up of a new legal system, a network of more egalitarian educational institutions and the establishment of a new economy based on trade and commerce led to the gradual breakdown of old time hierarchies based on ancient

[464] G. Priyadarshanan, *Malayalapatrapravartanam Prarambhaswaroopam*, (Malayalam Journalism: Beginning Stages) (Thrissur: Kerala Sahitya Akademi, 2010), 34-39.
[465] Panikkar, *Culture, Ideology, Hegemony,* 128.
[466] James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (London: Yale University Press, 2009), 226.
[467] According to Jeffrey's classification, print can be identified as a 'rare' medium at a time when printing presses exist, but when newspapers are usually unknown or exclusive with a circulation less than 1 copy for 1000 people. It can be considered as a 'scarce' medium when there is an expanding press, but with a circulation of roughly around 30 copies for 1000 people. This stage at which it still is not a mass medium, is the one at which print can influence people the most, in turn to alert and trouble political authorities.

caste relations.[468] As Sanjay Joshi observes, the colonial system of education brought forth a new middle class in various regions which used "colonial modernity for constructing their identity, superior social status, intellectual and moral hegemony."[469] In this changed state of affairs, it was mostly the members of Nayar, Christian and Ezhava communities in Travancore and Cochin who could secure a prominent social status. They constituted the new bourgeois class of those times by procuring prestigious government jobs, by starting new business ventures and through cultivating cash crops The English educated elite Thiyyas from Malabar who became lawyers and teachers by profession also began to oppose the feudal attitudes existing in the society at a time when the Nayar militia in Malabar had lost prominence under the British rule.[470] Majority of the owners of the newly published newspapers and magazines across all three regions belonged to this new class of literates including that of the *Keralasanchari* which was owned by Poovadan Raman, an English educated influential lawyer from Malabar belonging to the Thiyya caste.

Partha Chatterjee's argument about the construction of an "inner domain- bearing the essential marks of cultural identity," by middle-class intelligentsia of the late 19th century is relevant at this juncture. According to him, this is the domain where the 'national' in contestation with the colonial was getting imagined, while the domain of the "outside" was one which was constituted by economy and statecraft.[471] Hence, the issues related to family, language, literature, art, gender relations etc. constitute the categories that fall under this 'inner domain of national culture' which was to be kept free of any colonial intervention.[472]

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[468] K. N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Innalekal*, (The Yesteryears of Kerala) (Thiruvananthapuram: Department of Cultural Relations, Government of Kerala; 1990), 198-207.
[469] Sanjay Joshi, *Fractured Modernity: Making of a Middle Class in Colonial North India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), 7.
[470] Muhammed, *Charithrathinte Mudranangal,* 34.
[471] Chatterjee, "Whose Imagined Community?," 26-27.
[472] Ibid., 27-31.

A series of discussions ranging from re-organizing the matrilineal joint family system which was found to be 'incompatible' with the new economic order, deliberations about imparting English or Sanskrit education to girls, critiques on the temple rituals of Travancore to discussions about the benefits of Ayurveda over European medicine and so on were the ones which constituted the domain of 'national culture' in the context of Kerala. The major literary magazines of the late 19th century had discussions about the meter and rhyme scheme that is to be employed for poetry, about the ways to 'enrich' the vernacular through new compositions etc. *Vidyavinodini* which included elaborate discussions about language-reform, *Keralapatrika* which dealt with the caste- question apart from political matters of the times and *Keraladarpanam* which attacked the temple rituals of Travancore which sexualized the bare-breasted bodies of Nayar women were the mouthpieces of the new intelligentsia. *Vidyavinodini* owned by C. P. Achyuta Menon from Thrissur, who worked as the Secretary of Cochin Dewaswom[473] (the governing body of temples); *Keralapatrika* by Chengulatthu Valiya Kunjirama Menon, a school teacher from Calicut and *Keraladarpanam* launched by K. Ramakrishnapillai, an English educated university graduate who belonged to an influential Nayar family from Trivandrum etc. were all dealing primarily with issues of 'national culture' in that sense. Being middle class in that time of active journalism and an emerging public sphere "meant, apart from other things, taking responsibility for one's self, one's family and community."[474] Thus, they can be looked upon as native endeavours in the direction of ensuring native sovereignty in the 'inner' domains of national culture. Efforts by a few members of erstwhile aristocratic families who continued to be the patrons of literature for a while, even in the age of changing social class relations were also in the same direction. This proves to be

[473] Ganga Ram Garg, *Encyclopaedia of the Hindu World,* Vol. I (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1992), 140.
[474] Sreejith, "Negotiating Tradition and Modernity," 39.

fitting in the case of *Janaranjini* and *Kavanodayam* (est.1896) owned by Kadatthanatt Udayavarma Raja, a local ruler from Nadapuram. The special care that he took in translating Sanskrit plays like *Ratnavali, Priyadarsika* etc. and in publishing a short biography of many Sanskrit poets titled as *Kavikalapam* in his periodicals besides compiling and publishing manuscripts of various old classics in Manipravalam form the Janaranjini Press which was under his ownership makes this evident.[475]

K. M. Govi observes that most of the print houses that were opened during this time across the land of Kerala were predominantly local centres that carried out printing and publishing activities as well as the selling of books under the same roof. These centres would have played a crucial role in the publication of works by litterateurs of respective localities.[476] Publishing and journalism activities in the final decades of the century was not completely free of caste/ community affiliations. In fact, various aristocratic families, community and religious groups also entered into the field of publishing and journalism during this time to voice their collective concerns and to selectively protect their community/ caste interests in a changing socio-economic environment. This include publications like *Malayali* (est.1885, Nayar), *Nazrani Deepika* (est.1887, Catholic), *Atmopakari* (est.1889, Protestant), *Mahammadeeyaparopakari* (est.1891, Muslim), *Sujananandini* (est.1892, Ezhava) etc. Thus, as noted by Shibu Muhammed, it is evident that 19th century journalism in Malayalam was the outcome of a perfect consolidation of community/ caste interests with the economic interests of local capitalist forces, as it is revealed by the contents of most of these periodicals.[477] The interesting feature of such publications is that it is the world view and social aspirations of the

[475] "Jeevacharitram," Udayavarma Raja Kadatthanatt, Kerala Sahitya Akademi: C-DIT, accessed July 1, 2018. http://www.keralasahityaakademi.org/sp/Writers/Profiles/UdayavarmarajaKadathanat/Html/Udayavarmapage.htm.
[476] Govi and Panikkar, eds., *Malayāḷagranthasoochi*, xxi.
[477] Muhammed, *Charithrathinte Mudranangal*, 35.

newly educated middle class members from these communities which were raised and propagated through these newspapers and journals as the demands of the whole community or religious group in most cases. It is true in the case of *Malayali* (est. 1886) published from Trivandrum which functioned as the mouthpiece of the Malayali Sabha which stood primarily for the interests of Travancore Nayars or in the case of *Sujana Nandini* (est. 1891) published from Kollam which focused in furthering the interests of the Ezhava community. At the same time, there is substantial change in the nature of publishing ventures in Malayalam and in the native attitudes towards making use of the medium of print towards the turn of the century.

Robin Jeffrey's mention that "by the beginning of the 20th century, a host of Indian writers were using print to earn a living and promote ideas, while print helped to create a nationwide nationalist movement that touched most of the elite and beyond"[478] also needs to be taken into consideration at this point. Though the press in Kerala did not take interest in national level politics in the 19th century, political issues at the provincial level and criticisms on the government at the princely states constituted active issues for discussion from the 1860s onwards. The fact that a newspaper like *Sandishtavadi,* founded under the editorship of an Englishman W. H. Moore was proscribed in 1867 by the Travancore government for including political criticism aimed at the then Dewan Madhavarayar and his educational policies[479] itself shows that print was slowly becoming a strong medium for political action in Travancore by the second half of 19th century. There were also a few journalists like C.V. Kunjirama Menon, the editor of *Keralapatrika* who decided to launch a newspaper in Calicut after participating in the Calcutta meetings of the newly formed pan-Indian associations like the Indian National

[478] Jeffrey, "Communications and Capitalism," 217.

[479] There was an actual debate between Kerala Varma Valiyakoyi Thampuran who wrote columns criticizing the Dewan's rule and Pattathu Raghavan Nambiar who praised the Dewan's policies. See Z.M. Moozhoor, *Nassranideepikayum Malayalasahithyavum*, (*Nazranideepika* and Malayalam Literature) (Kottayam: Self-pub., 2008), 26-27.

Association in 1884.[480] So, the fact that many of these newspapers later on became the voice of national associations like Congress in Kerala, as in the case of *Keralapatrika*,[481] shows that the convergence of journalism in the vernacular with political activism goes back well into the 19th century. In spite of this, it can be stated without doubt that most of what could be termed as political journalism till the end of the century was largely intertwined with the task of representing and furthering caste/ community interests and hence was incapable of manufacturing a regional linguistic identity that could supersede caste and community differences. Another striking feature of the newspapers and magazines that came out from Kerala is that press with an anti-colonial character supporting the cause of Indian nationalist movement did not emerge till the early decades of the 20th century.

Malayalam was the common language in which most of political journalism was performed from the 1870s to a large extend; yet this could not ensure that a collective of political subjects represented and addressed in front of authorities or governments through these writings as the 'public' was a community of private individuals forming a collective on linguistic lines. Thus, at least till the 1880s, Malayalam as a language remained to be just a medium used to communicate the political interests of certain communities and religious groups and did not function as a common marker of identity for political alignment among the speakers or the literates in that linguistic code. The evolution of a single print language by the 1880s, as the prominent medium of journalism and literary compositions, in turn prepared grounds for a common platform for transactions which can be termed as 'public'. Thus, the next stage in the evolution of vernacular middle-class journalism was the setting up of new literary magazines and associations, which inaugurated discussions on a common shared

[480] G. Priyadarshanan, "Pathradhiparammavan," (The Editor Uncle) in *Kerala Pathrapravarthanam: Suvarnadhyayangal*, (Journalism in Kerala: Golden Episodes) (Self-pub., 1999), 1.
[481] Ibid., 1-4.

language, its literature as well as steps for reforming it. This shift in the scope of middle-class journalism effecting a new level of community and identity formation accompanied by the rise of literary associations, formed on the basis of a common language and flourishing under aristocratic patronage needs to be discussed here in detail.

Print and the Growth of a Modern Literary Publicness in Malayalam

As different from the situation in 1850s and '60s, the variety of languages in which printing and publishing happened within the geographical territory of Kerala by the 1870s was four or five in number. Other than English in Roman script, Sanskrit in Nagari and Grantham scripts or the Arabi Malayalam material in print, the newly evolved and standardized language of Malayalam in a Grantham-based script remained to be the major language of journalism in the last couple of decades of the 19th century. As already mentioned in the earlier chapters, the dictionaries, primers and grammars of the language prepared by the colonizers and the natives had already drawn the boundaries of the language. As Homi Bhabha observes, "An important feature of colonial discourse is its dependence on the concept of 'fixity' in the ideological construction of otherness. Fixity, as the sign of cultural/historical/racial difference in the discourse of colonialism, is a paradoxical mode of representation: it connotes rigidity and an unchanging order as well as disorder, degeneracy and daemonic repetition."[482] In addition to creating such images of a culturally and historically fixed notion of the 'other,' these tools played an important role in making the natives 'aware' of the structurality and rule-boundedness of the language which they used in their day to day conversation. As James C. Scott observes, this new rule- bound language used in the "practice of literacy was directly

[482] Homi K. Bhabha, "The Other Question: The Stereotype and Colonial Discourse," in *Twentieth Century Literary Theory: A Reader*, ed. K.M. Newton (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 293.

dependent on the existence of a particular state and its bureaucratic routines: knowledge of state documents, law codes, chronicles, record keeping in general, taxes and economic transactions" and also survived through means by which "the structure of officeholding and hierarchy linked to the state" were reproduced.[483] The increased presence of a single language in print, in the place of multiple languages and scripts made it possible for a fairly good number of people to come in touch with a larger population through a single print-language. The medium of print also aided the native intellectual in re-discovering the cultural repository of a linguistic community as constituting a national tradition which has evolved continuously in time.[484]

An upsurge in the variety and number of native publications in Malayalam in the last decades of the century led to the growth and establishment of new networks of communication between the new literate classes, whether it be in the role of writers, editors or as readers. The owners, target audience and the list of contributors of 19th century periodicals were initially limited since it was usually the rich or the middle class who consisted mostly of the educated groups who could afford to own or subscribe printed materials during the times. The establishment of a common language for transaction with the inauguration of a printed prose and the publicity gained by the vernacular through print led to the linking up of erstwhile strangers uniting them under a single identity. Print also opened up the new possibilities of forming collectives which are 'public' in character by building an awareness about or by invoking the presence of commonalities in an otherwise stranger. The Habermasian public sphere which is "a model of norms and modes of behaviour by means of which the very

[483] Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 226.
[484] E. V. Ramakrishnan, *Deshiyatakalum Sahityavum*, (Nationalisms and Literature) (Kottayam: D.C. Books, 2001), 23-24.

functioning of public opinion can be guaranteed for the first time"[485] in the modern world needs to be mentioned here. It is defined as the "sphere of private people" who "come together as a public; to engage" the public authorities "in a debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labour."[486] As different from the Habermasian notion of the 'public sphere', Michael Warner who problematizes the idea of the 'public' further, opens up the possibility of talking about a 'public' which shouldn't necessarily be a 'social totality' that exists in relation to or as one engaging in debate with the 'public authorities.' The 'public' as the audience/spectators of a performance, play or art work or "the kind of publics that comes into being in relation to texts and their circulation"[487] like the private readers who form the reading public of a book etc. also find a place in Warner's theorization of the 'public'.

According to Warner, the idea of 'the public' becomes also central to modernity where "an environment of strangerhood is the necessary premise"[488] for it. He also adds that "in modernity this understanding of the public is best illustrated by uses of print or electronic media" where an orientation "to indefinite strangers" becomes "the crucial background horizon of 'public opinion' and its social imaginary" which itself is made available through these media.[489] This latter conceptualization of the 'public' happens to be apt for defining the evolving 'literary publicness' which was a new socio-literary phenomenon in the context of late 19th century Kerala. A. R. Venkatachalapathy's description of the pre-print literary practices in Tamil Nadu, which is also applicable to Kerala shows that palm leaf manuscripts

[485] Jurgen Habermas, Sara Lennox and Frank Lennox, "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article," *New German Critique*, no.3 (Autumn,1974): 50.
[486] Habermas, *The Structural Transformation*, 27.
[487] Michael Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics," (abbreviated version), *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88, no.4 (November 2002): 413.
[488] Ibid., 417.
[489] Ibid.

had a prominent role in those traditions. These manuscripts were largely composed under the patronage of kings, landlords, caste leaders etc. and underwent the practice of patronage-publishing. The *arangettram* or the premiere of a literary text corresponding to the debut performance of a dancer or a musician was a ritualistic performance in that era of patronage where the newly composed texts were either performed in courts or local temples which meant that these texts were available for public consumption and scrutiny from that time onwards.[490] The people who participated in these discussions, the audience for these deliberation sessions as well as the extent to which questions can be posed to the author were always regulated according to the patron's wish.[491] From this, it can be assumed that the kind of public that existed for palm leaf manuscripts was limited in variety in comparison to the public that was created by printed texts, journals and periodicals.

The native confrontation with colonial modernity through values of Western education and through the new instruments and principles of administrative and legal mechanisms established by the government prepared the middle class to imagine a shared ground of existence with strangers, which led to the evolution of a 'public'. From the 1880s, magazines like *Vidyavilasini* to *Bhashaposhini* which advertently discussed matters of language and literature were discharging the function of making their readers avidly aware of the presence of their "fellow- readers, to whom they were connected through print."[492] The opening section titled "Prasthavana" in the first issue of the *Vidyavinodini* published in 1889 declared the primary intention behind the launching of the magazine. It declared its aim as "to make good of the lack of such books in Malayalam language that can aid humans in attaining worldly and

[490] A. R. Venkatachalapathy, *The Province of the Book: Scholars, Scribes and Scribblers in Colonial Tamil Nadu* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2012), 34-36.
[491] Ibid., 37.
[492] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 44.

metaphysical knowledges."[493] The introductory remarks also mentioned about the "hard fate of those Malayalees who have a 'taste for Vidya (knowledge)'" since they were forced to learn other languages like Sanskrit or English. It also made a call to the "educated natives for 'devising' simple, intelligible books in prose and poetry for the advancement of knowledge and modernity/progress among the common people."[494] In modernity, "strangerhood is the necessary medium of commonality."[495] This truly defines these declarations and interactions in print. By mentioning about the existence of common knowledge texts which can be of equal use to every one of the 'humankind' and by tabling the idea that the same needs to be made available to all 'Malayalees,' a new text-based identity was brought into being. The category or community of a 'reading public in Malayalam' who can share the same kinds of knowledge texts with the larger 'humanity', but in 'their own specific language' was altogether a new conception in those times. It not only addressed the unknown collective of 'Malayalees' as a category but thereby and also imagined and brought forth that new category which was non-existent in the pre-print imagination. This marked the transformation to a modern way of existence as different from an ancient/ traditional sense of being, where strangers can be placed on a less stranger ground of commonality only on the basis of religious beliefs or on the basis of belongingness to a guild, caste, on the basis of common army affiliations, racial identities etc. The possibility of having knowledge forms which are 'universally useful' and of having texts about such 'universal' knowledges was opening the possibility of invoking a text based collective of strangers beyond the scope of existing community boundaries. The preface-remarks in *Vidyavinodini* engendered and interpellated a new community of strangers defined as the 'literates' in Malayalam who could qualify to modern 'publicness' as per the way the notion of modern publicity is put forth by Michael Warner. At the same time, the declaration

[493] *Vidyavinodini* 1, no. 1 (Tulam, 1065 M.E- 1889): 1.
[494] Ibid., 1-2.
[495] Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics," (abbreviated version) 417.

modelled as an editorial preface unequivocally addressed an 'educated Malayalee public' (*Malayalathilulla vidyasampannaraya janasamanyam*) who was the assumed audience who in turn could act as mediators of progress and promoters of knowledge dissemination in the language. Thus, the public that was addressed and imagined by the early literary magazine was clearly constituted of the 'educated Malayalees' of the times and correlates with the idea of a 'literary public' of the Habermasian model.

Habermas refers to a "literary precursor of the public sphere operative in the political domain" which provides the "training ground for a critical public reflection… - a process of self-clarification of private people focusing on the genuine experiences of their novel privateness."[496] This concept as used by Habermas, forms "a background to the deliberative view of democracy where literature and culture hold a prominent position."[497] In the case of Europe, this early public sphere in the "world of letters whose institutions were the coffee houses, the *salons*, and the table societies" were arenas where "the heirs of the humanistic aristocratic society, in their encounter with the bourgeois intellectuals" built a bridge between the earlier form of 'courtly publicity' and thus the new bourgeois public sphere.[498] The evolution of the literary public sphere is also based on the notion that one can share ideas and interests with a larger 'public' of strangers who were "preoccupied with the native tongue, now interpreted as the medium of communication,"[499] which turns out to be their common shared character. This is seen by Habermas as an important contribution of the medium of print in the case of seventeenth and eighteenth-century European society. The norms and modes of behaviour stated by Habermas which can guarantee public opinion include a) the principles of

[496] Habermas, *The Structural Transformation*, 29.
[497] Torbjön Forslid and Anders Ohlsson, "Introduction: Literary Public Spheres," *Culture Unbound*. *Journal of Current Cultural Research* 2, no.4 (2010), 432.
[498] Habermas, *The Structural Transformation*, 30.
[499] Ibid., 34.

general inclusiveness and accessibility b) the elimination and disregard of all privileges and status c) the discovery of a domain of common concern and d) rational legitimations.[500] These ideal conditions for securing public opinion proposed by Habermas have been put under question by various criticisms from the subaltern and feminist points of view. Nancy Fracer's feminist critique[501] and Michael Warner's critique on the principle of a "utopian universality"[502] that overrides the Habermasian notion of the 'public sphere,' brings our attention to the "exclusionary" nature of this 'ideal' public sphere. These ideal conditions for securing a public opinion put forth by the Habermasian model were never met in the context of 19th century Kerala where traditional caste and gender hierarchies kept a lot of people outside the purview of the 'public' sphere.

In the case of eighteenth century England, the beginnings of civil society deliberations are traced back to the publishing of magazines like *Tatler* and salon or coffee house discussions on literature and art. Similarly, it was the 19th century literary societies and poets' associations of Kerala which served as centres for promoting literary production and acted as catalysts for the re-printing of older works in Malayalam. Thus, they served as platforms for discussions about the shaping of a new Malayalee literary and cultural milieu. Habermas cites the example of seventeenth century Germany, where existed table societies and literary societies which acted as precursors to a more democratic literary public sphere, but were "still convened by the princes but avoided social exclusiveness"[503] to an extent. These table societies convened by the German royalty functioned as the preliminary arenas for staging 'public *opinion'* owing to the

[500] Ibid.,35-38.
[501] Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," *Social Text*, no. 25/26 (1990): 56-80.
[502] Michael Warner, "The Mass Public and the Mass Subject," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere,* ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 377-401.
[503] Habermas, *The Structural Transformation*, 34.

absence of any "town" which could operate as the "life centre of civil society"[504] as it was in the case of many other scenarios/contexts. This happens to be similar in the case of the 19th century Kerala where initially, many sections of the society remained to be illiterate to read, poor to meet the subscription costs of magazines and newspapers and hence were not part of most of the early literary associations. The early literary societies like Vidyavilasini Sabha, Bhashaposhini Sabha or Bharatavilasam Sabha and the later literary conferences like Sanmargaposhini Sabha and Cochin Sahitya Samajam were headed or convened by the members of erstwhile aristocratic families of Travancore, Cochin and Malabar and by the old time Sanskrit scholars from various affluent Brahmin families. The prominent members of the Kavi Samajam, a literary collective convened through *Malayala Manorama* newspaper in 1891 and of the Bhashaposhini Sabha of 1892, which is formed at its later stage were scholars who were members of erstwhile royal and priestly families. Mariyappalli Valyathampuran, Kottayathu Thampuran, Kodungalloor Kunjikkuttan Thampuran, A.R. Rajaraja Varma, Appan Thampuran, Punnasseri Neelakantha Sharma,Vayakkara Moossath, Kopprathu Narayanan Nampoothiri, Mar Geevarghese Dionysius, the Metropolitan of Malankara Orthodox church etc. were among them.[505] The presence of the new bourgeois from Syrian Christian families, Ambalavasi upper caste households allied to temple rituals and Nayar families could be seen from the time of first Kavi Samajam at Kottayam onwards. Members like Kandathil Varughese Mappila, the owner of *Malayala Manorama* newspaper and *Bhashaposhini* magazine, C. Anthappai, who was a clerk in various government offices, C. Krishna Pillai, Head Inspector of vernacular schools and K. Narayanan Thampi, Kottayam Munsiff are a few examples. But, in the course of time, the readership of magazines and membership of associations expanded

[504] Ibid., 29-30.
[505] Amaresh Datta, ed., *Encyclopaedia of Indian Literature*, Vol. II (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2005), 1735. See also K. M. Venugopal, "Pratibhasangamangal," (Talen Meets), *Bhashaposhini,* Annual Issue 40, no.6 (June, 2016), 214, also *Report of the Kavisamajam* (Kottayam: Bhashaposhini Sabha, 1892).

slowly to interconnect a more diverse reading public who in turn could form "the embryo of the nationally imagined community."[506]

Anderson observes that "as literacy increased, it became easier to arouse popular support with the masses discovering a new glory in the print elevation of languages they had humbly spoken along."[507] Typographical uniformity and fixity that was achieved through mass production of school text books and a few decades of journalism and publishing of periodicals had already resulted in the evolution of a standardized vernacular with an acquired morphological fixity. The standardization in form that Malayalam language and literary practices was slowly achieving through the disciplining practices of the press was internalized by the new elite classes.[508] Critical debates and discussions emanating from "the products of culture that had become publicly accessible: in the reading room and the theatre" were interactions through which "an audience-oriented subjectivity communicated with itself."[509] At the same time the nature of this colonial public sphere can be defined as similar to what Veena Naregal observes about its Marathi parallel which evolved in Western India in the 19th century. As she demonstrates, it "could yield a relatively homogenous discourse with potentially hegemonic dimensions…more through the virtual exclusion of counter-discourses in the domain of cultural production."[510]

Another interesting fact is that, at least some of these new literary magazines and the new middle-class litterateurs in the vernacular initially looked upon to the traditional patrons like erstwhile kings and local rulers for economic support during the printing and publishing

[506] Anderson writes this in trying to trace the role of print languages in laying the basis of national consciousness. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 44.
[507] Ibid., 80.
[508] Gurukkal, *Modern Keralam*, 72.
[509] Habermas, *The Structural* Transformation, 29.
[510] Naregal, *Language Politics*, 224.

of their works. The article "Bhashakavita" in the first issue of *Vidyavinodini* urges the need to nourish vernacular poetry and also reminds the readers to treat it on equal terms with English and Sanskrit poetry. It ends by making a plea for economic support from the local elites and rulers for publishing the works of vernacular 'panditas' or experts.[511] Thus, it is clear that the literary precursor to a political public sphere in Malayalam had not completely torn itself off from the traditional feudal models of patronage. The pre- print practice of adding prefatory poems composed by the patron to the text also extended to the era of print. Usually prefatory poems by writers from royal families like Kerala Varma would appear in most of the 19th century books since authentication by literary stalwarts like him was an inevitable component for any text to ensure public acceptance, though practices of economic patronage had ended to an extent by the turn of the 20th century. At the same time, the commonness of a shared linguistic identity extending from the past into the present was proposed through a common morpho-syntactic structure, vocabulary and script projected through print. This had to be sufficient to break the modern literate reader from the older affiliations of family, caste or religion which is acquired by birth or during the course of childhood. Print redefined an internally fragmented society as a single linguistic community through standardizing the vernacular.[512]

The advent of print capitalism and the use of it by a literate bourgeois middle class in the Habermasian model would ideally lead to the evolution of a modern public sphere of democratic politics. Instead, the educated Indian middle class had to face "failures in the realm of 'true' public sphere politics since colonial India was governed by the 'rule of colonial

[511] *Vidyavinodini* 1, no. 1 (Tulam, 1065 M.E-1889): 8.
[512] Kavumbayi Balakrishnan, *Malayalashastrasahitya Prasthanam,* (Science-literature Movement in Malayalam) (Thrissur: Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad, 2007), 188.

difference'."[513] Hence, "in the beginning, nationalism's task" was "to overcome the subordination of the colonized middle class, that is, to challenge the 'rule of colonial difference' in the domain of the state."[514] As in all other cases, "the project was that of cultural 'normalization', like bourgeois hegemonic projects everywhere, but…that it had to choose its site of autonomy from a position of subordination to a colonial regime that had on its side the most universalist justificatory resources produced by post-Enlightenment social thought."[515]The subordination and cultural inferiority felt by the middle class, upper caste natives through their acquaintance with those colonial hegemonic positions reflected even through other native discourses is also worth mention. Father Chavara Kuriakose Elias, one of the first natives to set up a press without any foreign aid in Kerala had written this to the native believers of Catholicism about the need and selection of the knowledge form called 'the book' in the second half of the century: "The knowledge- books of heathens teach nescience and spread ignorance. To store such books and similar other books of heretics, like the ones with vulgar songs etc. is equal to hiding fire inside hay. Those books of knowledge like philosophical works and the ones which can enhance devotion happen to be the wealth that needs to be stored for the next generation."[516] This criticism that sprang up from a colonial outlook coincided with the very notions about books and reading that were held and promoted by modernity and this acted as a benchmark for further literary production by native writers. Steps of 'native reform' along these lines which were taken up by the middle-class intelligentsia in the direction of overcoming their subordination and inferiority led to the setting up of standard parameters that defined the native cultural, literary and linguistic markers of

[513] Referring to Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Delhi: OUP, 1994), 16-18 quoted in Sanjay Joshi, "Re-publicizing Religiosity: Modernity, Religion and the Middle Class," in *The Invention of Religion: Rethinking Belief in Politics and History*, eds. Derek Peterson and Darren Walhof (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 80.
[514] Partha Chatterjee, "Whose Imagined Community?," 31-32.
[515] Ibid., 33.
[516] Sreekumar, *Acchukoodatthile Keralam*, 40.

'tradition' for the region. So, the literary public sphere in print that emerged in the late 19th century was primarily concerned with the creation of a 'modern Malayalee self', whose modernity was a hybrid one since it was marked by an urge for revival as well as for reform.

It is not that print culture in the modern capitalist age created a modern individual self in the context of India by completely swiping off the feelings of 'belongingness to any community' which was already built into the new literate self. Instead, it just attributed new kinds of 'community' identities or re-shaped the boundaries of currently existing community identities. As observed by Gyan Prakash, in order to avoid the danger of falling into the dichotomies of capital/ community, modernity/ tradition etc. which leads to the acceptance of "capital's construction of community as its pre-modern Other," community needs to be "understood as an aspect of modernity's history-not a premodern Other that challenges capital with an archaic language."[517] India's confrontation with the principles and instruments of European modernity occurs as a result of colonial occupation in its land. We have seen how print in the vernacular was in fact instrumental in reinforcing the boundaries of caste and religious identities which also got enumerated through census.[518] Hence, the gaining of access to and use of instruments of modern capitalism like print led to different processes of subject formation as different from the case of Europe. Dilip Menon observes that, in the case of India, it is those contradictions that arose out of a specific colonial modernity which led to the rise of debates marking the evolution of a 'public sphere'. Along the lines of Sandria Frietag, he states that it is the conscious retracting of "the colonial state from what it perceived as private issues" which allowed the people of India to discover that " this removal left them much room to

[517] Prakash, "Civil Society," 28.
[518] For more details on colonial census, see Arjun Appadurai, "Number in the Colonial Imagination," in *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Mineapolis: University of Minnosetta Press, 1998), 114-136.

experiment and contest freely the status and ideological constructs they expressed in public."[519] Matters of religion, customs, family, linguistic and cultural life were thus relegated to the realm of the 'private' by the colonial administration and were safely left to the hands of the native intelligentsia to decide upon. Apart from literary discussions, the journals inaugurated discussions on various medicinal practices, existing caste hierarchy, food habits of the East and West etc. as well as debates on marriage and family reforms which in turn had an effect on further legislations in these matters. The questions about the nature of female education that needs to be imparted and the debates on the nature of language and literature which should represent the newly carved out region of Malayalam speakers etc. are a few such examples.

The imagining of a community as a force of difference and critique, emerging in the historical functioning of modernity is what led to the formation of a language-based identity in the 19th century. When various features and boundaries of this new community identity in which the modern Malayalee self was getting designed, it had to be free of colonial interventions. It was getting imagined as a realm where the native middle class had the ultimate decisive power. Many studies throwing light on print culture in Kerala have emphasized that the 19th century Malayalee public sphere was largely literature-centric and male-centric in nature.[520] Novels, short stories and criticisms of literary works began to be published, read and discussed extensively in Malayalam during this time although the writers, critics and discussants in the 19th century literary ecumene were primarily males. The criterion of 'merit' which was to become the principle of inclusion to a male-dominated nascent literary public of the late 19th century was supposed to upturn the existing practices of literary publicity

[519] Sandria Freitag, "Contesting in Public: Colonial Legacies and Contemporary Communalism," in *Making India Hindu: Religion, Community and the Politics of Democracy in India*, ed. David Ludden (Delhi: OUP, 1996), 212. quoted in Dilip M. Menon, "Religion and Colonial Modernity: Rethinking Belief and Identity," *Economic and Political weekly* 37, no. 17 (April 27- May 3, 2002): 1663.
[520] Sreekumar, *Acchukoodatthile Keralam*, 65.

extending from the feudal times. C.P. Achyuta Menon, who later became the editor of *Vidyavinodini* remarked in the review of a play by a female playwright in 1891 that "women and kings always received exaggerated attention as writers, but in the emergent modern literary public, this was not to be so, they had to conform to the highest standards of aesthetic merit like anyone else."[521]

This literary precursor to a political public sphere was the stage for conflicting voices and positions on what constitutes the 'literary' in Malayalam, also crucial in defining the character of the Malayalam language and its corresponding literary milieu which was getting shaped gradually. On the one hand there were discussions which led to paving the foundations of a literary strand and prose models in the language "which would embody the rich treasure of the liberal, democratic, rationalist and socialist thought of the modern West", aimed at making those principles of 'Western modernity' "accessible to the non-English knowing mass of the people."[522] At the same time, there were positions upholding a neo-classical trend, urging to preserve and promote the existing Sanskritic models of literary composition along with features of a high-flown prose style upholding medieval feudal values. The development of modern forms of writing, primarily in prose, which gained popularity towards the final years of 19th century was a crucial step in the history of a Malayalee literary public sphere. A strain of scientific prose replete with equivalent Sanskritic vocabulary was also getting developed as a parallel jargon meant to be used for native educational purposes.

The stages that led to the shaping of a Malayalee nationalist sentiment which occurs through the newly evolved literary public sphere in the late 19th century needs to be traced. The

[521] Achyuta Menon quoted in J. Devika, *Womanwriting=manreading?* (India: Penguin, 2013), 23.
[522] A.R. Desai, *Recent Trends in Indian Nationalism* (Mumbai: Popular Prakashan, 2000), 109.

discussions in some important 19th century magazines about the past and future of the language which henceforth defined the linguistic and literary identity that Malayalam language should engender needs to be examined. Various experiments by writers in re-introducing the existing communicative forms to suit new purposes of the times also needs to be looked into.

Early Literary Magazines and Literary Associations in Malayalam: Defining the Identity of a Middle-Class Publicness

Printed newspapers and literary magazines of the late 19th century like *Vidyavilasini, Malayala Manorama*, *Bhashaposhini* and *Vidyavinodini* deserve special attention in this study because their contents fall under the first printed works in Malayalam that constitute the early modern literary field of the language. Moreover, many of the essays, novels, historical accounts and even verse compositions published in them have relevance at other levels, since they were instrumental in defining the past as well as in determining the modern-day nature of Malayalam language, its geo-political boundaries and its literary field. The intense preoccupation with one's land and its language derived out of a sense of cultural inferiority that was felt in relation to the colonial master is a feature shared by many of the writers and intellectuals who actively participated in the public sphere discussions during the times. The role of literary sabhas, especially that of Bhashaposhini Sabha needs to be examined to understand the nature of various discussions about language and literary reform that existed during those times. Since language had already become an important marker of native identity through colonial census and ethnographic accounts, as we have seen in the first and second chapters, it also had to become the focus of 'native reform.' As a result of this, an urge to enrich the language of the land by introducing new works into its literary field could be seen in the early literary exchanges.

The Kottayam Kavi Samajam which was convened under the auspices of *Malayala Manorama* in August, 1891, as a preparatory ground for the Bhashaposhini Sabha had already decided to scrutinize all unpublished works available in the language and to selectively publish those among them which would be useful for the burgeoning of the language.[523] This was in addition to the speeches on language reforms to be organized and poetry competitions those were to be conducted by the Bhashaposhini Sabha which was about to take birth soon. Drawing inspiration from this, many native poets got engaged in various efforts to compose works in verse or to equip available verse forms in the language for new purposes. As different from this, later native efforts were focused on developing a public prose for carrying out deliberations as well as for the propagation of new ideas and knowledge in the tongue. A few articles from these early magazines and newspapers, nature of the content published in them as well as the annual reports of Bhashaposhini sabha, which the major literary association of the time throw light on to the way the discourses on history and reform of the land, language and the people were getting shaped.

a. Role of Verse in Textual Production and in 'Enriching' the Vernacular:

All the native literary journals between 1880 and 1900 published a considerable amount of verse along with prose content. In addition to long poetic compositions by upcoming authors, scholarly commentaries and translations from Sanskrit epics, there were shorter ones like two liners or four liners- 'shlokams'[524] and 'aptavakyams'[525] cited from puranas and other moral texts. Verse compositions in various languages and registers were popular in the region in the pre-print era. It was either in the form of Sanskrit texts in circulation among aristocrats and

[523] Kandathil Varughese Mappila, *Bhashaposhini Sabha*, (Kottayam: Malayala Manorama Company, 1067 M.E.-1892), 7.
[524] A couplet of Sanskrit verse, especially one in which each line contains sixteen syllables.
[525] In general terms, it means the statement by an authority or of a trustworthy person. It can also mean a valid source of knowledge in philosophical terms.

scholars who dealt with classical knowledge and literary texts or in the form of local knowledge texts, songs and proverbs in the vernacular and in mixed Manipravalam forms. Ananda E. Wood observes that, "In India, vernacular traditions like those of Malayalam… were formed by assimilating Sanskrit, Tamil and Islamic learning"[526] which was to a great extend dependent on verse forms which later flourished in the popular vernacular verse as well.

This pre-dominance of verse in the ancient classical textual forms and in the medieval orality of the emerging vernacular space was not replaced altogether by a printed prose in the 1880s or 1890s. C. Kunjirama Menon, the editor of the 19th century newspaper *Kerala Patrika*, recollects in a preface which he wrote for the 1912 book *Vrittantapatrapravartanam*, about the shortage of journalists who could write good and presentable prose articles and news reports for their newspaper. According to him, this was owing to the fact that, those who received vernacular or Sanskrit education in those times were only familiar with verse form or Kavita.[527] There was a perceptible dominance of verse forms based on the classical literary model of Kavyam in the early printed periodicals owned and published by the natives too. The magazine *Vidyavilasini* established in 1881, with the proclaimed goal of compensating the lack of books in Malayalam which could impart knowledge, intellectual progress and entertainment among natives used to serially publish Kerala Varma's translation of *Shakuntalam* from Sanskrit to *bhasha* in its early issues.[528] The translation was largely a mixture of verse and prose in form and was highly Sanskritized in vocabulary. Kerala Varma was a scholar who strongly believed in the rendering of Sanskrit works into the vernacular to aid its development. The reasons for

[526] Wood, *Knowledge Before Printing*, 174.
[527] C. Kunjirama Menon, "Preface," *Vritanta Patrapravartanam*, 3rd ed. (Thiruvananthapuram: Sahitya Pravarthaka Cooperative Society, 1957), 13.

[528] N. Sam, "Vidyavilasiniyum Vidyavinodiniyum," (*Vidyavilasini* and *Vidyavinodini*) in *Malayala Patrapravartanam Pattonpatham Noottandil* (Malayalam Journalism in the Nineteenth Century) (Kottayam: D.C. Books, 2003), 85-88.

selecting one particular source text for undertaking the translation has been given by him in the preface to his work. There, he mentioned that he had not chosen the other more popular versions of *Shakuntalam* available as sources, since all those had a regional colour added to the story. The popular versions available were Thunchath Ezhuthachan's text or the Ramanattam texts that were used in performance. He held that in order to feel "the poetic flavour of Kalidasa, the great poet's version of the text itself needs to be rendered."[529] This is an instance which shows that the medieval assimilation of classical texts into the vernacular, that Wood mentions about, continued in the post-print era also which in turn effected the continued transfer of Sanskritic poetic forms and themes into the vernacular literary scene. Such classical scholar- writers like Kerala Varma, Punnasseri Neelakantha Sharma and majority of their contemporaries considered the Sanskritic shlokam form as the natural choice for literary publication in the print form as well. The predominance of verse in the newly evolving literary scene was not seen as an impediment for intellectual progress by most people in those times and in fact had an added label of scholarliness and entertainment value attached to it. Hence, even non- literary prose forms like essays and even editorials in the early literary journals had verse forms interspersed in their content body.

As mentioned in chapters two and three, the natives of Kerala were introduced to the vocabulary of 'richness' and 'poverty', as qualities newly attributed to languages and literatures through the vocabulary of colonial philology. These concepts from colonial and missionary philological discourses were available in various forms for the literates through school education, early newspapers and books. An introduction to this vocabulary and concepts of philological discourse sparked the native urge to make the *bhasha* 'rich' by composing and translating new works into it. Consequently, composing various kinds of texts including the

[529]Ibid., 89.

ones in the mixed Manipravalam form of verse and prose were also undertaken by the natives as worthy efforts in the direction of enriching the vernacular. A similar drive was there behind the composition of *Arthalamkara Manipravalam* by Velutheri Keshavan Vaidyar as well.[530] It was a text on stylistics written by Keshavan Vaidyar, who was also a friend of the social reformer Sree Narayana Guru. Composed in the mixed Manipravalam form, it had a mixture of verse and prose when it was serialized in *Vidyavilasini* from 1881. Many other texts in such mixed forms as well as verse compositions in translation appeared as a part of the effort to make the *bhasha* 'rich'. Such endeavours like adding a work to the repository of printed books in the vernacular language in any form was considered as a great service to the language in the 1880s and in the early years of 1890s.

Popular plays which included many songs that were composed in common people's language, coming from the *pattu* tradition of Dravidian heritage was a popular performance form in those times. Thus, the scripting of many 'Sangeetanatakams' or musical dramas to bring the musical quality of Tamil plays into the literary scene, a quality which translations from Sanskrit lacked earlier, also became a phenomenon of the early 1890s. The writing of *Sangeeta Naishadham* (1892) by T.C. Achyuta Menon, who was the author of many attakkathas, with 19 shlokas and 141 songs is an example. This was followed by *Umavivaham* (1893) by Kodungalloor Kochunnni Thampuran, a Sanskrit scholar and by Varghese Mappila's *Ebrayakkutty* (1893) etc. which were created with the same intent.[531] The scattered verse forms in many other modern literary forms like short stories and reviews published in magazines also show that verse was surviving in a new form in the post-print literary culture in its own way. Many early novels in Malayalam like *Saraswativijayam* and *Indulekha* which were published

[530] Ibid., 91-92.
[531] Mathew J. Muttathu, "Chakkichankaram Munnirti Adyakala Malayala Natakangaleppatti Oru Taratamyapadhanam" (A Comparative Study of Early Malayalam Drama with Special Reference to Chakki-Chankaram (PhD Diss., Mahatma Gandhi University, 2005), 74-77.

during the times also stand proof to the fact that a strict division between prose and verse as separate compositional forms was not conceived in general. Moreover, verse forms of those times were not necessarily poetry as we understand it most of the time, in the modern sense, since personal letters and criticism could also be written in verse during those times.

A large number of verse pieces appeared in various entries of the magazine starting from the quoted poems in the opening "Prasthavana" and in the article titled "Bhashakavita" which were included in the first issue of *Vidyavinodini* in 1889. The auspicious invocations in the beginning of each issue titled "Mangalam" and the verse pieces that appeared at the end of articles in all issues were mostly four lined shlokams. Most of the shlokams included in its issues were poems by writers like Venmani Acchan Nambootirippad, Venmani Makan Nampootirippad, Poontottam Nampootiri etc. who belonged to the Venmani school of poetry which used common day themes for writing in a less Sanskritized poetic style. *Malayala Manorama* established in 1890 by Kandathil Varughese Mappila gained popularity as a newspaper from the beginning, especially because it had a section titled 'Kavita Pankti' from the start. It was kept aside for poetry and could attract the attention of many scholars and writers who later came together to form the Kottayam Kavi Samajam in 1891. The editor of the newspaper, Kandathil Varughese Mappila too encouraged his contemporaries to compose poems on a variety of novel themes like museum at Trivandrum, the Quilon Thread Mill etc.[532] This Kavi Samajam was the precursor to Bhashaposhini Sabha, a literary organization which got established by the end of 1891.[533] Thus, this Samajam and its interests in Kavita were instrumental in bringing together writers from various regions of Kerala to share a common platform extending outside the printed space for the first time. The mouthpiece of the Sabha, a

[532] C. J. Roy, *Kandathil Varghese Mappilai* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2002), 37.

[533]According to the opinion of Kodungalloor Kunjikkuttan Thampuran, a literary figure of the times, one of the first objectives of the Bhashaposhini Sabha was to establish an organization comprising of the 'users' of the bhasha from all the regions, in order to strive for the reform and advancement of Malayalabhasha.

magazine by the name *Bhashaposhini* which got published from 1892, also carried verse invocations as "Mangalam" in the simple Manipravala style composed by Sanskrit scholars like K.C. Keshavapillai and serialized translations of verse works like *Mazhamangalam Bhanam* by Kaviyoor Raman Nambiar and so on. 'Samasyapooranam', the puzzle of adding lines or filling the missing lines in a given piece of verse was another important entry of these newspapers and magazines including *Malayala Manorama*. It was perceived to be a popular entertaining content which could attract readers in those days. Hence, active reader-participation in the form of letters solving 'Samasyas' marked the inauguration of letters written by readers during those days. *Kavanodayam* was another bi-monthly journal which was established in 1894 by Kadathanatt Udayavarma Thampuran, member of a royal family, from Malabar. The journal aimed at publishing ancient works of literature in the *bhasha*. It was also instrumental in publishing a lot of poetic works like *Chandrotsavam, Sreekrishnavilasam* etc. in the mixed Manipravalam form apart from Valmiki's *Ramayanam*, the renowned writer Kottaratil Sankunni's classic play *Janakeeparinayam* etc.[534] Yet, the status of verse in the literary sphere of 1880s and early 1890s undergo some changes in a decade. This will be discussed in detail in the next subsection.

b. Modernity and the Emphasis on Useful Prose:

Keshavan Vaidyar, the author of *Arthalamkara Manipravalam* (1881), wrote in the preface to his book that, "Though the ancient poets of our land of Kerala have composed some mythological songs and devised a few knowledge systems like astrology or medicine in verse form, works like grammars and so on which are meant for the reform of one's language have come into being only through modern writers."[535] Vaidyar's classification of the songs and poems by the ancient poets of Keralarajyam as one kind and the works of the above mentioned

[534] A. Indira, *Kedavilakk: Malayalatile Adyakala Masikaparichayam*, (Ever-growing Lamp: An Acquaintance with Early Magazines in Malayalam) (Thrissur: Kerala Sahitya Akademi, 2012), 55.
[535]Sam, "Vidyavilasiniyum Vidyavinodiniyum," 91-92.

'modern' writers who contributed to the reform of the language as the other kind is interesting. Here, he drew a contrast between works of grammar, stylistics etc. which could provide 'useful' guidelines for standardizing native language and literature and other works which were merely compositions in the language which were incapable of providing a structure to the language or for the writings in it.

The vocabulary and principles of colonial philology which stressed on the production of 'useful' works in prose were already described in chapter three. As we have seen, the ascription of cultural and linguistic closure to various social groups as well as descriptions on the measures of 'progress' and 'modernity' achieved by various groups also happened to be unavoidable features of those philological accounts and consequently of Vaidyar's evaluation too. The impact of similar utilitarian concerns that were visible in the 19th century missionary accounts also affected Keshavan Vaidyar's choices of composing a 'useful' text on stylistics. This binary of tradition/ modernity which Keshavan Vaidyar used in the classification of works in Keralarajyam was nothing but a product of colonial modernity. Though he talks in terms of the need to create useful texts that can bring reform, unlike many of his contemporaries, Keshavan Vaidyar does not hold the binary about the modern, progressive nature of a new prose as against a pre-modern, conservative verse of the older world.

The relationship between land, language and literary expression was central to the debates concerning linguistic reform in the last decade of the nineteenth-century. This is evident from Kerala Varma's letter, which was read out in his absence during the first meeting of the Bhashaposhini Sabha in 1891 where he expressed his hopes about the newly formed pan-Kerala- association of writers. Kerala Varma's letter goes like this:

> The incarnation of *Malayala Manorama* in the auspicious time can undoubtedly be called as the time of revival of the Bhashakavita… Reform of a region/ nation cannot be achieved through anything other than through the language of the land. Hence, the effort to reform Malayalabhasha, which is one among the main objectives of this Samajam can be thought about as a precursor to many other reforms.[536]

This also turned out to be the lines through which the reform of the language and the progress of its speakers- the people of the land were described as interconnected, and Kerala Varma hints at the re-incarnation of vernacular poetry effected through the efforts of *Malayala Manorama* (extending through its further efforts like Kavi Samajam) as a step to realize native progress. According to Kerala Varma, the revival of poetry in the Bhasha could be well counted as a step towards achieving Malayalee progress. It is evident from his rejoicing in the re-birth of Kavita in the vernacular that, for classicists like him, the utilitarian concerns that determined the missionary efforts in the promotion of prose, was not to become the driving force of 'reform of the *bhasha*' and the 'nation' and they despised such efforts.

In contrast to this, the proliferation of a utilitarian view of languages and literatures led to further classification of useful genres of literatures and texts as well as efforts by some natives to produce more works of the 'useful' kind by the end of the 19th century. These also resulted in discussions on the relative capacities and merits of languages in becoming vehicles of progress and modernity. The opinions expressed by a few educated native aristocrats in the first meeting of the Bhashaposhini Sabha like Rajaraja Varma Kochu Thampuran B.A., Vayakkara Moossat and Ravi Varma Kochu Thampuran B.A could reveal their inclination to such views. According to the famous grammarian and translator, A. R. Rajaraja Varma and Vayakkara Moossat, the author of many *attakathas;* standardizing verse and prose along with the promotion of mostly prose books of great 'use' was to be the major objective of the Sabha.

[536]Mappila, *Bhashaposhini Sabha*, 20.

Ravi Varma proposed the inception of a magazine by the Sabha which will comprise of articles on those 'sciences'[537] that are not available in Malayalabhasha as well as some reviews on new books.[538] These opinions were backed by Kodungalloor Kunjikkuttan Thampuran, one G. Kochukunju Menon and Kunnukuzhiyil Kochuthomman Apothecary, a doctor, respectively. The missionary publishing endeavours which already worked on similar objectives and was propagating similar ideas was already discussed in chapter three. Notions like the need to encourage prose writings to make good of its lack in the language which Ummen Philippose had stressed in his translation of *Almarattam*, the necessity in introducing scientific principles in Malayalam and the importance that should be given to the 'mother-tongue' in imparting scientific knowledge etc. which were already available through the writings of J. L Frohnmeyer etc. may have influenced these educated natives. The presence of those group of members in the Sabha from its first meeting, who conceptualized methods to modernize the language not through the revival of Bhashakavita, but through the promotion of 'modern science' and 'useful' knowledges mostly in the vernacular prose is noteworthy.

These early opinions later on led to the further development of the utilitarian stream of thought about language and literature among the newly educated natives which got expressed more strongly through the magazine *Bhashaposhini* and in the later meetings of the Sabha as a well-accepted proposition. Kerala Varma himself opined in the second meeting of the Sabha in 1892 that "the presence of prose works that can aid common good, those which detail on themes leading to knowledge promotion is the major reason for the enrichment of a language."[539] He also stated that it is with an increased reform of the natives that they started moving away from the older practice of composing verse according to certain metrical form.

[537] The word used is 'shastram' which can be translated as science or in a broader way as knowledge.
[538] Mappila, *Bhashaposhini Sabha*, 22.
[539] Ibid, 50.

He also gave the credit to the Madras University, which adopted Malayalam as a subsidiary language for its exams and the efforts of Dewan Madhavarayar in opening vernacular schools to promote education as being instrumental in the inauguration of and an increased circulation of prose works. The advocacy of efforts to bring a general uniformity in form for verse and prose is also part of his speech.[540]

In fact, in a *Malayala Manorama* article published in 1891, Varughese Mappila tried to defend his decision to bring forth an association encouraging mainly the Bhashakavis and for the conducting of competitions in versification as the first steps taken by him for enriching the language. The criticisms that sprang from those quarters which held a 'modern utilitarian' opinion about the steps to be undertaken for reforming a language and its people were addressed through this 1891 article. In the article, he retorted that, though "it is an accepted fact that language reform is an inevitable step for the welfare of any society, the doubts expressed by these critiques can only be about the means that was used by the members of Bhashaposhini Sabha in achieving that goal."[541] Here, it is evident that he was responding to the criticisms raised by the English educated natives since he readily admitted that exams in extempore versification which were perceived by the advocates of modernity as 'detrimental' had to be adopted for practical purposes[542]. He used an apologetic tone to substantiate that if this mode of verse competitions and tasks in composing lengthy plays had not been devised, nothing substantial in the direction of forming an association for enriching one's language would have happened. He also argued that the natives who were proficient in English and those who were highly educated would never have taken a step for reforming the vernacular nor would they have come forward to join such the association otherwise, and hence was the initial

[540] Ibid, 53.
[541] Kandathil Varughese Mappila, *Malayala Manorama*, Vrischikam 21, 1067 M.E-1891.
[542] Ibid.

choice of this mode for working.[543] This affirms that Varughese Mappila also promoted compositions in the verse form purely because that was the popular literary form in circulation at that time. Various steps which he undertook later for language nourishment and opinions expressed by him about enriching and reforming the vernacular prove his preference towards promoting prose works.

Thus, it can be concluded that prose in the *bhasha* began to stand as the icon of linguistic reform which was to a large extent based on the objective of expanding a modern platform for public opinion by the end of the 19th century. Henceforth, all discussions about enriching the local language and reforming it were primarily focused on the prose form of the Bhasha. Subsequent native discussions on linguistic reform and steps undertaken by them to promote the Bhasha are included in the next chapter. Corresponding to those native efforts in structuring the language along contemporary lines, to define the 'modern' identity of 'its people' was an urge to further claims to map the identity of original Malayaleeness by attributing its origins to certain community groups. Such claims to original ownership of a Malayalee identity projected through native philological accounts, achieved through defining the present state of a caste as the one which supposedly extended intact to a traceable historical past of the region need to be discussed.

c. History of Language, Land and its People:

Vidyavinodini, the second literary magazine to be published in Malayalam from Thrissur, with C. Achyuta Menon as its editor was popular among the literates of the 19th century. Various issues of the magazine included many essays on the history of the land, composition of its population, the history of languages spoken in the region of Kerala etc., apart

[543] Ibid.

from literary compositions and reviews or criticism of literary works by established poets and writers of the times. A serialized history of the land titled as "Keralolpathi" (Origin of Kerala) in the first issue (Tulam, 1065) of the magazine, later got published as "Adikerala Charitram" (Ancient History of Kerala) in the subsequent issues. The change in title from the second issue might have been to distinguish itself from the early historical accounts in circulation like *Kerala Mahatmyam, Keralolpathi* and *Kerala Pazhama,* which were already published from presses including the B.M.S. press by Gundert, in the case of the last two texts. *Adikeralacharitram* held the view that, among all the caste groups in Kerala, it is the Nair community that has the real ownership of the land of 'Keralam.'[544] There are reasons cited in the serialized essay to claim their prominence as a community of people who are the original inhabitants of the land by pushing aside the Brahmin claim over the land propagated through *Keralolpathi* and *Kerala Pazhama*. The myth of Kerala's creation -as a land dug up from the sea by Parasuraman and gifted to the Brahmins by him later on- was propagating through the above-mentioned myths in the 19th century. This myth had acquired the status of a historical account through various printed works that had already come out of many missionary and native presses and *Adikeralacharitram* was trying to provide a counter narrative to this. A history of the region as a space inhabited by various group of immigrants who came from different regions who later on made Kerala their land is presented through this new account.

The origin and evolution of races, communities and their languages in the Indian subcontinent, the history of their migrations and the inter-relationship between these languages and races which led to the formation of a modern Malayalee identity is probed in the serialized article *Adikeralacharitram*. It mentioned about the native castes of physical and agricultural

[544] This argument is put forth by Ashokan Nambiar C., *Print, Communities and the Novel in Nineteenth-century Kerala* (PhD Diss., University of Delhi, 2015).

labourers like the Pulayas, the Vettuvas, the Kuruchiars etc. who were always there in the land, before the non-native migrants occupied the land. All the upper and some of the backward castes in the land were referred to as immigrant non-natives who were brought to Kerala by Parasuraman which included the Namboothiri Brahmins, the Nayars, Ezhavas, Syrian Christians etc. The first group of native people referred to as 'nikrishta jatikkar' (inferior castes) are shown to be not capable of having any claims to take up 'Malayalee' identity whereas the above-mentioned immigrant castes are projected as eligible to take up that identity.[545] As already mentioned in chapter two, ethno-history which emerged as a discipline during this time had erased the boundaries between anthropology and history drawing out connections between history of various ethnic groups, the territories occupied by them and languages spoken in these territories. In the descriptions given about the immigration of various castes to Kerala, the narrative about the settling in of Nayars was marked by a tone of certainty. The coming of Ezhavas with the coconut tree from an island and references to this incident in a traveller's notes in the sixth century was mentioned in the account; but the tone of indefiniteness about the details of their arrival and the claims of ownership that the community has in the land of Kerala was not well emphasized. The references cited from *Keralolpathi* about Parasuraman's bestowing of powers to Nayars by fixing their status as the protectors of the land and through ascribing them the role of protectors of the rights of Brahmins, the account provided a certain authentic claim for the community over Kerala.[546] Thus, the binary of native/ non- native initially used in the narrative extended more claim on the land to certain immigrant non-native castes like Brahmins and Nayars. At the same time, this binary that tried to sketch the legitimate owners of the land and of Malayalee identity by citing *Keralolpathi* and other travel accounts, was further complicating the narrative with another binary of the Brahmin/ non- Brahmin.

[545] *Vidyavinodini* 1, no.4 (Makaram, 1065 M.E. - 1890), 5- 6.
[546] *Vidyavinodini* 1, no.5 (Kumbham, 1065 M.E-1890), 5-6.

The text *Adikeralacharitram* went on delineating the racial and linguistic roots of communities and described the process of language change that occurred with the migration and mixing of various immigrant groups. The Dravidian Proof mentioned in an earlier chapter, which cited the influence of Sanskrit and Brahmin invasion to the south of India as the reason for the deviations of the tongue from Tamil/ Dravida roots, had an influence on the narrative. Parts of P. Govinda Pillai's history of the Malayalam language and literature which was already published serially in the earlier monthly journal *Vidyavilasini* from 1881 onwards was relying on *Keralolpathi* and *Kerala Pazhama* apart from other accounts of Gundert and Caldwell to sketch a history of the language and its literature. He also held that Dravidian is a separate kind of its own and Malayalam is a Dravida tongue which has lately attained the status of sisterhood in relation to Tamil. *Adikeralacharitram* also followed the same line of argument to uphold the Dravidian roots of the language and to propose the origins of Malayalee identity as derived out of Dravidian race. Among the two major immigrant communities, the Nayars were shown as Dravida migrants having more claims of native ownership through the article-sections published in Kumbham and Medam issues of the magazine in 1890:

> The Nayars are immigrants who came to the land of Malayalam from the Eastern coast and they are Dravidians. Since the caste names used by certain Dravida Shudras in that coast like Naikar and Naidu and the name Nayar are related, it can be almost stated with certainty that these are two branches of the same Dravidian race. The languages that they use also point towards this. Some people hold the opinion that Malayalam language is just a branch of Tamil and hence should not be treated as a separate language…When one searches for the origins of Malayalabhasha, it will be clear that its roots are Dravidian and that the Nayars who use that language as their mother tongue are Dravidians. It is an undisputable fact that the language of Brahmins who were brought from Aryavarta was Sanskrit and the language of the neighbouring Shudras was Tamil.[547]

[547] Ibid.

The Arya- Brahmins who came to the land with Sanskrit as their language were not given equal claims over the land and its language in comparison to the Nayars who had Malayalabhasha as their mother tongue and who could qualify themselves as Dravidians. The Brahmins, who spoke Sanskrit which was described as the language of the foreign land Aryavartam was thus shown as outsiders to the land and the influence of Sanskrit was projected as the reason for the corruptness in Dravidian tongue. The narrative of *Adikeralacharitram* thus substantiated that Nayar identity could be equated with the Malayalee identity since they were Dravidians who were ascribed the status of protectors of the land by *Keralolpathi* and were the owners of the language, for Malayalam was their mother tongue.

Ananda E. Wood observes that "as the vernacular cultures of India were thus in the process of developing themselves on the model of classical systems, the rule of the British brought political stability, the growth of modern communications and a stimulating influx of new culture from the West, resulting in a renaissance of the Indian tradition…"[548] The renaissance inspired by this new culture from the West that Wood talks about was thus one which was grounded on the binaries of European modernity, viz. based on the tradition/ modernity opposition posed as central to its vocabulary. The effect of employing such a binary was the creation of a new Malayalee self that could express itself as a public, in a modern prose devised with enough qualities to carry novel ideas of Western science and other Occidental knowledges. This new prose was supposed to be free of the caste- associations and class affiliations that the older divide of classical Sanskrit and the spoken caste-based *acharabhashas* were endowed with. At the same time, the same language labelled as Dravidian and having a particular evolutionary history related to confluence of Arya- Dravida races was to stand as the common marker of a 'modern' linguistic group. This language had to be the identifier of a

[548] Wood, *Knowledge Before Printing*, 177.

linguistic community which was coming forth as a nation, whose claimable past could be traced to select community groups existing in the modern times. The way in which the vocabulary of binaries originating from the discourses of modernity and philology was used to create a hierarchy of prose/ verse, Dravidian/ Aryan, Non- Brahmin/ Brahmin etc. became crucial in the definitions of 'modern' Malayalam and Malayalee as a community during the final decades of 19th century. We need to also look closely at the imaginings of a 'secular Malayalee' identity, a publicness which extended beyond these neatly arranged binaries as something that got invoked through the turn of the century.

The Expanding Public Sphere and the Secular Publicness of Malayalam

Things took a different turn towards the first decade of the 20th century. This was the time when "non-constitutional politics"[549] grew fully as a more autonomous domain comprising of independent institutions like the press and literary associations and as stated by Orsini, "provided spaces where colonial culture could be replaced by a national one."[550] Communication channels and distribution chains of printed works stretching across the region of Kerala was a necessity for establishing such a homogenized 'national culture'. New print houses like the 'Bharatavilasam' press, established in 1903 by a Christian trader from Cochin, Maliyammavu Kunjuvareed played a pivotal role in bringing out works by writers from all the three regions of Kerala under the name of a single publishing house. Bharatavilasam press acquired the status of a publisher with a pan-Kerala impact so that it published works of Kesari Nayanar, an active political journalist and writer from Malabar during those days and brought out works of Kerala Panini A.R. Rajarajavarma, a grammarian, linguist and writer from

[549] Francesca Orsini makes a distinction between 'constitutional politics' which took a compromising stance and tried to attain political change, without achieving social change and 'non-constitutional politics' which established counter-institutions against colonialism and held a confrontational attitude. Social change was the main agenda of the latter brand of politics, according to Orsini. See Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere*, 320-22.
[550] Francesca Orsini, "The Hindi Political Sphere," in *The Indian Public Sphere: Readings in Media History*, ed. Arvind Rajagopal (Oxford: New Delhi, 2009), 123.

Travancore by giving equal importance to both these.[551] The Bharatavilasam Sabha, a literary association established in connection with this publishing firm at Thrissur in 1909, enhanced the increased participation of litterateurs from Cochin and Malabar regions. This could not be achieved earlier through the Bhashaposhini Sabha, which had already been pointed out as its shortcoming. Yet, the composition of all the major literary associations mentioned till now and majority of the authors who got published through these publishing ventures were largely upper caste and male. At the same time, the presence of already established newspapers in Malayalam had brought forth the idea of an imagined community of all Malayalam speakers across regions and communities in print. A newspaper was to be understood as something which represented the public (opinion) towards the turn of the first decade of century by many a literate native in the region. So also, the notion that a newspaper was something that should be 'useful for people of all castes and religions' for this purpose was getting more acceptance by the end of the first decade of the 20th century.

A quick glance at the contents of *Keralachinthamani* magazine, which was published with the label of a 'political monthly' from 1906 onwards would reveal this shift in sensibility. Enough space was set aside in the magazine for discussing issues of social and cultural importance as well. In the 1910 volume of *Keralachinthamani*, a poet- journalist V.C. Balakrishna Panikkar (1889-1912) writes about the lack of initiatives from the part of natives of Cochin state in the direction of enriching '*pothujanashakthi*-power of the public'. In the article "Abhivriddhiyo Adhapathanamo" (Progress or Downfall?) in his column titled "Chinthamani," he made the judgement that the state of various Sabhas – (literary/ political) associations and newspapers in the land gave the impression that the people of Cochin had not tried hard to strengthen 'public-power' since there were hardly any representative bodies in

[551] Sreekumar, *Acchukoodatthile Keralam*, 44.

Cochin state to express the opinions and needs of nine lakh people to the government.[552] He also complained that, "there aren't any associations for reforming social customs, modernizing the language and promoting education, nor are there any well-functioning youth associations which are highly necessary for imparting civic sense among natives."[553] These statements by Panikkar point to the fact that he was convinced of the importance of 'communication that could be termed as public' and hence was also feeling compelled to ensure that such channels of communication which could represent 'public power/ opinion' needed to be kept alive through newspapers, literary associations and other civil society organizations. In his article titled "Keralachinthamani" published in the eponymous magazine, Panikkar stated that the prime intent behind starting such a magazine was to make good the lack of "a newspaper which could be of equal use to people of all castes and religions"[554] in Cochin State. It can be inferred that there were reasonably active channels for the exchange of ideas that was already established in Travancore and Malabar in the newly- shaping vernacular for almost three preceding decades. What Panikkar seems to be referring to here is a civil society which was already getting shaped "as the corollary of a depersonalized state authority"[555] in Travancore towards the early years of the 20th century and the need for the people of Cochin to follow suit. This also fits well with Orsini's observation that non- constitutional politics "emphasized the political role of the press as a vehicle of popular public opinion" and it was the moment where the political press in the vernacular changed from "being 'journals of ideas' for the educated few, to newspapers rooted in local society, reflecting and addressing the 'sadharan samaj.'"[556]

[552] Priyadarshanan, "Pathrapravarthakanaya Mahakavi," (The Great Poet- Journalist) in *Kerala Pathrapravarthanam: Suvarnadhyayangal*, (Journalism in Kerala: Golden Episodes) (Self-pub., 1999), 19-20.
[553] Ibid.
[554] Ibid., 21.
[555] Habermas, *The Structural Transformation*, 19.
[556] Orsini, "The Hindi Political Sphere," 130.

By then, a legislative council called the Sree Moolam Praja Sabha had already been formed by the king Sree Moolam Thirunal of Travancore in 1888 and was expanded to an 88-member house in 1904 though this lower house had a limited representation of landlords and merchants. The point worth attention here is that, the 'public' that was referred to by Panikkar as the one which had to express its opinions on various affairs through the non-constitutional political domain of newspapers and as that which should try to safeguard its interests became almost coterminous with the citizens/ residents of a princely state or a province, by this time. Panikkar's words makes it clear that, it was no longer the call for a variety of community/ religious associations and their distinct publishing enterprises negotiating with modernity and modern institutions that defined these changing times; but was rather the demand for such a media which could represent a 'public' that had a composition which transcended those older affiliations. The role of print in loosening the old identity affiliations that existed in a traditional society, in ending narrow associations based on kinship or caste and in giving birth to new social formations in contrast to the old social collectives is very much evident from this passage by Panikkar.

At the same time, a variety of collectives aimed at community reform was coming up as Societies, Sanghams and Yogams towards the first and second decades of the 20th century. Such an expanded view of a 'public association' for socio-political reform could be materialized only over a couple of decades after the establishment of literary Sabhas like Vidyavilasini Sabha or Bhashaposhini Sabha which were exclusionary in their caste and religious composition. There were also rare instances where community belonging didn't matter much, like the readiness on the part of Varughese Mappila in publishing short stories by Moorkkot Kumaran in *Malayala Manorama* and *Bhashaposhini*, despite the author being a

member of the lower caste, of Thiyya[557] origins. Magazines like *Vivekodayam* and *Sadhujana Paripalini* began to be run by associations like the S. N. D. P Yogam established in 1903 and Sadhu Jana Paripalana Sangham (S.J.P.S) established in 1907 by Sree Narayana Guru and Ayyankali respectively, in the early decades of the 20th century. Erstwhile lower castes who were thus organized on community lines got at least minimal access to the 'public sphere' through associations and magazines which stood for their interests, bringing 'public' visibility for the writers from the Ezhava, Pulaya as well as Dalit and other backward castes. Similarly, Vakkom Moulavi's efforts in socio-cultural reform of his community resulted in the establishment of the magazine *Muslim* in 1906 apart from the formation of Thiruvitamkoor Muslim Mahasabha under his initiative. He wrote about the need to have a Sabha for Muslims in the article "Muhammadeeya Sabhayute Avasyakata" published in his newspaper. He mentioned there that "the need for such an association is at its peak and if the Muslim brethren from Malabar, Cochin and Travancore come unitedly to form such a Sabha, the shortcomings of the community can be solved through it."[558]

By the time V. C. Balakrishna Panikkar wrote in the beginning of the 20th century, about the lack of newspapers in Cochin, new literates in Malayalam must have already seen newspapers and journals like *Keralapatrika* and *Keralasanchari* from Malabar under the editorship of Vengayil Kunjiraman Nayanar, *Keralapanchika* edited by Swadeshabhimani K. Ramakrishna Pillai from Travancore and various other enterprises of native journalism. These already available patterns of political journalism in an increasingly democratizing Travancore society and British Malabar turned out to be the compelling models for asserting 'public power' according to Panikkar. The reform efforts of these native intellectuals like Kunjiraman Nayanar

[557] I. R. Krishnan Metthala, *Moorkkot Kumaran: Jeevitam Samaramakkiya Netav*, (Moorkkot Kumaran: A Leader Who Made a Protest out of One's Life) (Kottayam: SPCS, 2016), 61.
[558] P. Govindapilla, "Vakkom Moulaviyum Aikya Muslims Sanghavum," in *Matacharyar*, *Matanishedhikal*, (Spiritual Masters and Refuters of Religion) (Trivandrum: Chinta Publications, 2014), 51.

and many others like Ramakrishna Pillai were aimed at creating 'refined' individuals and society. Interestingly, though the 'public' which was supposedly addressed by the already existing political journalism could be thought of as constituted of civilians of respective provinces or princely states; the periodicals including the ones which were mentioned earlier which had taken the label of literary journals could also muster in a 'public' that cut across the geo-political divisions of Malabar, Cochin and Travancore. The contents of these literary journals reveal that they had a crucial role to play in bringing an isomorphism between both these 'publics', the political one which was territorially bound within the bounds of provinces or kingdoms to an extend and the language based one which was being reinstated in the realm of the literary. Native efforts and discussions to modernize Malayalam therefore meant to equip the language which was reinstated in the realm of the literary public with the features that could transform it to become "the language of the state and educational institutions"[559] across the three regions.

Bayly's description of the 'Indian ecumene' as a form of cultural and political debate pre-existing print and later on as one which was co-existing with newspapers and public associations also needs to be discussed at this point. He argues that "the words for association-samaj and sabha-which become part of the western style debate of the later 19th century were not simply communities", and could "designate collectivities which spilled over the boundaries of social and religious groupings and represented temporary collections of individuals engaged in debate or judgement…"[560] A quick survey of the nature of publications, literary organizations and community collectives from the 1890s to 1920s show that there is an expansion of the Malayalee public sphere in the span of three decades which is marked by the entry of more

[559] Mantena, "Vernacular Futures," 530.
[560] C. A. Bayly, "The Indian Ecumene: An Indigenous Public Sphere" in *The Indian Public Sphere: Readings in Media History,* ed. Arvind Rajagopal (Oxford: New Delhi, 2009), 57.

diverse groups acquiring the status of Malayalee publicness. The influence of liberal-democratic premises largely based on the parameters of bourgeois humanism got manifested in social thought and action towards the second decade of the 20th century. Secular humanist and atheist principles also began to appear in the writings of C. Krishnan, who was the editor of *Mitavadi* and in articles by C.V Kunjiraman and A. Ramavarma Thamban whose inclination to rationalist thought got expression from the second decade of the 20th century through newspapers like *Kerala Kaumudi* which was edited by the former. As noted by the Marxist historian K.N. Panikkar, for these native intellectuals, "efforts at social and religious regeneration was to create a new ethos which would complement the emerging bourgeois order."[561]

Malayalam was raised to the status of a language that could be used by various social groups inhabiting Kerala for re-defining their modern identity through making the language a mediating force which enabled these divided groups to negotiate with 'modern institutions' of colonialism by coming together as a 'common public'. While trying to understand the evolution of this newly imagined notion of the 'public' that Panikkar talked about, the role of print-capitalism in creating a considerably large 'reading public' in a single language needs to be acknowledged. The interesting fact is that *Bhashaposhini* and its literary collective were trying to project the beginning of 'modern era' of Malayalam language and literature with the publication of *Malayala Manorama* newspaper itself. The entry titled "Oru Puthiya Pustakappattika", a new list of books in the language, included in the tenth issue of *Bhainshaposhini* published in 1897 classified all the prose works published till date in the language into 'Poorvakalam' (olden times) and 'Adhunikakalam' (modern times) according to

[561] Panikkar, *Culture, Ideology, Hegemony*, 96.

their dates of first publication.[562] Here, the classification itself was mentioned to be done on the basis of considering the date of *Malayala Manorama*'s introduction to the scene of Malayalam journalism. The attribution of such a break for classifying the literary past of a language and its modernity itself was stressing the importance of marking the Malayalee modern as coinciding with the inaugural moment of a sustained Malayalee literary publicness.

The setting up of publishing firms in Malayalam by economically well to do members from those caste and religious groups which were erstwhile excluded or had kept themselves aside from establishing publications in Malayalam was a major reason behind the expansion and relative democratization of the literary public sphere by the beginning of the 20th century. Publications like *Keralachinthamani*, established in 1906, with the specific aim of reforming and enriching Malayalam, *Mitavadi*, from 1914, trying to spread the messages of socio-cultural reform taught by Sree Narayana Guru, *Muslim* in 1906 as a social reform initiative by Vakkom Moulavi are a few examples. The entry of writers and literary figures from various social sections and regions of Kerala including the entry of women, expressing their opinions through these set of new periodicals which categorically dealt with issues of language and literature in Malayalam could relatively ensure a diversity of voices within the representative public in an evolving democracy. In 1902, *Rasikaranjini* was established with goals of language reform; *Lakshmivilasam*, started by 1906 as a magazine on trade and economics and *Atmaposhini*, was inaugurated in 1910 with an aim of spreading the principles of modern humanism. These were the pioneers among Malayalam magazines to include writings by Muslims, lower castes and women on their pages. These were also expanding the horizons of the language by introducing newer discourses of secular humanism, vocabulary of the market and modern-day linguistics,

[562] Kandathil Varughese Mappila, "Oru Puthiya Pustakappattika," *Bhashaposhini* 1, no. 10 (Midhunam, 1072 M.E.-1897), 221-224.

all at the same time. The role of religious reformers who advocated the use of Malayalam as a liturgical tongue also needs to be taken into consideration since this collapsed the distinction between the liturgical and spoken tongues to an extent.

A new 'publicness' based on a common language had already been taking shape at the cross roads between the printed journalism and the new temporary collectives by the end of 19th century. Varughese Mappila has supposedly said these words while he had to resign from the Secretaryship of the Bhashaposhini Sabha during its fourth annual meeting held at Trivandrum in 1894: "This is a public institution; anybody can be at its helm of affairs. It should not be a single person's property."[563] This 'publicness' centred around institutions built around a common language and literature which was simultaneously getting shaped in print also differed from the older literary publics that existed in South India when communication was predominantly in the scribal and oral modes. A variety of the above-mentioned periodicals that came out in the preceding three decades starting with *Vidyavilasini* from Trivandrum could methodically project the identity based on the spoken code as a possible banner for the unification of various groups of people in addition to undermining erstwhile kinship and clannish credentials. Robin Jeffrey observes that "the nascent public sphere was largely perceived to be fulfilling the pedagogic function of shaping ideal industrious subjects for the nation."[564] The third meeting of Bhashaposhini Sabha which was held in Calicut as a part of extending the activities to Malabar stands proof for this. The Calicut annual meeting had included a new item of competition in prose writing, exclusively meant for the Mappila Muslims. Termed as 'Mappilamarute Gadya Pareeksha', the task given to the participants who were Mappilas was to encourage the people of their community who supposedly shunned away

[563] Roy, *Kandathil Varghese Mappilai*, 74.
[564] Robin Jeffrey, *India's Newspaper Revolution: Capitalism, Politics and the Indian-Language Press,* 2nd ed., (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), quoted in Devika, *Womanwriting=manreading?*, 25.

from 'modern education'.[565] The Mappilas who did not attend English or vernacular schools and underwent Madrasa education in Arabi-Malayalam were to be encouraged to 'embrace modern' education to be part of the 'mainstream Malayalee public.' Hence the topic that was given to them to write an essay on was- "The possible disadvantages that has to be faced by a community, if it alone is the one that lacks education, in a country inhabited by numerous communities."[566] Another interesting fact is that when the Sabha instituted a prize for composing books and constituted various committees to scrutinize new books composed in Malayalam under various categories, viz. natural science, plays, translations of plays from English, poetry, novel etc. one of these committees was meant to scrutinize the works in the category Nazrani[567] novel.[568] The novel written by a Nazrani, about the life of Nazranis was to be treated as a separate category of writing, at the same time the distinctness of Nazrani community identity that is projected through a separate genre called Nazrani novel was not proposed as something that needs to be manifested in a language different from Malayalam. This community identity affirmed distinctly could very well be imagined as compatible with the modern linguistic identity invoked on the basis of Malayalam and was not shown as contradictory in itself.

A new community of taste that was derived out of the aesthetic culturing of individuals in the literary public was to be grounded on 'general themes in a common language'. Kerala Varma, in one of his 1891 speeches at the Bhashaposhini Sabha is said to have remarked that "literary writing would have to move away from its dependence on Hindu myths and legends."[569] The quality/ nature of new literature that the Malayalees needed was thus defined

[565] Sam, "Vidyavilasiniyum Vidyavinodiniyum," 165.
[566] Ibid.
[567] The term is used to refer to Syrian Christians in Kerala in general and has the meaning- people from Nazreth.
[568] Venugopal, "Pratibhasangamangal," 218.
[569]Devika, *Womanwriting=manreading?*, 26.

as secular in a way when he reminded the audience that "only general themes would give pleasure to the people of Kerala who belong to different religious faiths."[570] It is evident that the reading practices inaugurated by the press was acting as a self-articulated force for one's own transformation. This is evident from the nature of new literary associations that were formed during that time and the kind of discussions that took shape through many of these collectives which soon extended into the realm of political within a short span of time.

The continued efforts by various public sphere discourses and actions to bring the Mappilas to the label of Malayalee identity and thus to possess any claim to the land through 'embracing the secular publicness' of Malayalam finally led to such discussions within the community of Mappilas later. The advice given to the community by Sayyid Sanaulla Makti Thangal, a Mappila reformist leader from Malabar, the first one to write a book in Malayalam,[571] was to accept Malayalam as a language for prayers by the community. According to Thangal, the need to learn Malayalam was a religious need as well as a necessary condition for achieving material gains. He informed his fellow-beliers of Islam that "to ignore and belittle the language of Malayalam which was the primary instrument in teaching religion, i.e. in matters of faith (*Iman*) and in sending prayers to God not only till death, but also after death would be considered as a desirable thing only by the foolish."[572] He was not only promoting Friday sermon in the vernacular but also reminded the Mappilas about the need to grasp it to learn 'useful ' knowledges as well as to get entry to government jobs and services.[573] The reformist sect of Marthomite Christians who broke themselves from the Orthodox church of Syrian Christians under the leadership of Palakkunnatt Abraham Malpan had made the

[570] Sukumar Azhikode, *Malayala Sahityavimarshanam*, (Malayalam Literary Criticism) (Kottayam: D.C. Books, 2004), 58.
[571] He wrote *Kadhora Kudharam* in 1884.
[572] K. K. Muhammad Abdul Kareem, ed., *Makthi Thangalute Sampoorna Kritikal* (Thiroor: Kerala Islamic Mission Trust, 1981), 20.
[573] Ibid.

choice of Malayalam as the language of liturgy much before this. The influence of C.M.S missionaries on Syrian Christians is evident in this choice of the 'people's language' for liturgy instead of the inaccessible classical Syriac which was used for liturgical purposes.[574] Thus, Malayalam could be seen as achieving the status of the 'common people's Swabhasha', own language or language of the religious and political selves by the 1920s. Its win over the sacred classical languages of priestly and aristocratic classes viz. Arabic, Sanskrit and Syriac, the language of the religious, literary and the political realms is an important phenomenon of the times. This can be seen as an important stage where the Malayalam language could achieve the status of the projected 'secular publicness' it supposedly possessed already according to missionaries and the native intelligentsia. This was done by extending its identity to the communities which were linguistically and culturally kept outside the purview of a past and a present that was invoked by the tongue, acting as a manufactured symbol of modern publicness in the land.

The emergence of the middle class as a separate social entity in the 19th century by making use of the medium of print led to their occupying the centre stage in public sphere politics. The ways in which this class embraced the new cultural values and social manners of the colonizer which was perceived to be 'modern' in those times, also involved reforming the vernacular and projecting it as the label of a linguistic public. Initially, these efforts were not only to secure a dominant position over the traditional elites and erstwhile aristocracy, but also to simultaneously continue their supremacy over the lower sections of the society. The democratization of public sphere politics in the 20th century with the entry of groups erstwhile kept outside public spaces and institutions led to the expansion of the Malayalee literary public

[574] P. Govndapilla, "Palakkunnatt Abraham Malppanum Kristeeya Navoddhanavum," (Palakkunnatt Abraham Malppan and the Christian Reform) in *Matacharyar Matanishedhikal* (Trivandrum: Chintha Publications, 2014), 13-15.

sphere by the middle of the 20th century. The binary of traditional/ modern selfhoods where the former is defined as communitarian and the latter as more independently individualist in nature, which itself is a product of colonial modernity, acquires prominence in the native discourses of early years of the 20th century. When various communities had to undergo 'reform' to embrace 'modernity', accepting the vernacular as a marker of entry to ensure secular 'modern publicness' became an obligatory condition to be met by them.

The notions about an identity that is primarily related to the vernacular language developed in the Malayalee literary public sphere through the discussions which appeared in the popular periodicals of the times. These discussions and debates during the last decade of the nineteenth and the first decade of the 20th century, led to the evolution of the notion called the 'matrubhasha' and the development of an affection towards the mother tongue by the 1920s. The nature of the expanding literary sphere which had a significant effect on defining the course of some literary experimentations and re-defining the tongue, domesticating it for the purposes of commoners need to be examined. Projecting the less- Sanskritized linguistic forms available in older writings and incorporating such forms in the 'new writings 'of the time period as in the case of 'Pacchamalayala Prasthanam' to make the mother –tongue accessible to a larger public in the literary and non-literary spaces of the language also need to be discussed further.

Chapter 5

The Making of a Mother Tongue: Discourses of Reform, Purism and Linguistic Patriotism

The events and discussions of the 19th century exalted Malayalam language to the status of *Swabhasha*, which literally means one's own language. This concept had also acquired meanings like 'the language of one's religious and political self' by the beginning of the twentieth century and had also successfully marked out what constituted the 'foreign' and the 'outside' to an extent. A unified language and a defined cultural identity of the region based on this language was developed through various discussions and debates that took place in the literary magazines and associations in the following decades. These modern notions of a linguistic identity and territorial closure centred on Malayalam language partly achieved through unified colonial administrative practices and partly through exchanges in the native literary public sphere consequently led to the creation of concepts like *Swadeshabhimani* as well as *Bhashabhimani* or *Swabhashabhimani* as its correlates. Both these terms, Swadesha (one's own country) and Swabhasha (one's own tongue) were frequently used in the intellectual exercises of the early 20th century, whereas the primary sense of 'abhimani' happened to be 'an individual who is proud of something,' 'a devotee' or 'a fan.' An additional sense of 'an urge for welfare work' present in the person was also implicitly attached to the usage 'abhimani' all the while. So, having pride associated with one's identity marker, whether it had to do with the region/ nation or language, it always had an implied sense of 'reform' attached to it.

K. Ramakrishna Pillai, a journalist of the times who has been later referred to by Malayalees as Swadeshabhimani, which literally means 'one who has pride in one's nation' used to write about the prevalent corruption in Travancore government. He argued for the democratic rights of citizens in the eponymous newspaper *Swadeshabhimani* which was

launched by Vakkom Abdul Khader Moulavi in 1905. Such criticisms posed by Pillai while serving as the editor of the newspaper were popularly considered as exemplary models for initiating political and social 'reform.' This also resulted in the ascription of the alternative title Swadeshabhimani to him though he wrote articles under the pen name 'Keralan,' i.e. a citizen of 'Keralam.' Similarly, *Swabhashabhimani* or simply *Bhashabhimani* was used to refer to someone who had pride in one's own language and who actively participated in planning and implementing various welfare measures aimed at reforming one's language. The opening lines of an article titled "Malayalabhasha," which got published in 1902, addressing its readers as *Bhashaabhimanis,* set the standards that were ideal for a 'reformer':

> It is a well-known fact among the *Bhashabhimani*s that Malayalam language has been undergoing a series of abrupt changes in the recent times. I wonder if there exist many people who can examine patiently, if all that is considered as enrichment now is enrichment or not in reality, and whether all that is rejected as shortcomings are in fact disadvantageous or not. Also, if there is anyone who thinks aboutany remaining methods of reform, if there existed any, which are still unexplored, without taking sides in the ongoing hustle of language reform. People who keep themselves away from all the fuss and who think freely to give an informed opinion will be of ultimate benefit, not only in issues related to language, but for all matters in general.[575]

It is clear from this passage that addresses Bhashabhimanis that, an 'abhimani' could not be just someone who had a passive pride in 'his' language, but 'he' also had to be a passionate participant in the act of 'reforming' the Bhasha, i.e. a loyalist of the vernacular. Many such discussions on reforming and promoting the language through standardization and selection of appropriate literary registers had already been inaugurated by that time. A loyalist or a reformer was supposed to be someone who could "think freely to give an informed opinion," and the author made it a point to mention that this is applicable "not only in issues related to language," which points to the fact that reform of 'bhasha' was only one among many

[575] "Malayalabhasha," *Rasikaranjini* 1, no. 2 (1078 M.E.-1902): 34.

other matters of concern for a Bhashabhimani. The discourse of 'reform' which was connected to an urge to be 'modern' was not something restricted to the question of language since the effect of colonial modernity was visible in all realms of indigenous life, leading to "the slow transformation of the subjectivities of the colonized and creating new notions of civilization and progress."[576] Therefore, the general discourse of reform that was widespread in the late 19th century and early 20th century Kerala had a variety of objects ranging from social manners, marriage practices and systems of inheritance, medicine and practices of healing, religious customs etc. to food habits and gender relations. According to Lata Mani, the establishment of colonial rule in India, followed by its "incorporation into the capitalist world system" resulted in "a thoroughgoing re-evaluation of Indian "tradition" along line(s) more consonant with the 'modern' economy and society."[577] In this context, the question of language- reform can be seen, in fact, as the search for a new vocabulary and revised structures of communication which could enable the 'modern Malayalee subject' to express his / her novel ideas and aspirations in lines with these modern ways of being. Hence, these discussions on language are worth examining, since they turned out to be the preliminary moves in defining 'a modern Malayalee individual self' and in defining the 'unique civilizational heritage' around which a 'nascent vernacular nationalism' could be woven.

The role of some Bhashabhimanis in making the initial proposals to promote the Bhasha of the 'commoners' and in demarcating the features of the Malayalam language was crucial. As mentioned earlier, though the qualities of a 'Bhashabhimani,' or a 'vernacular devotee' were spelt out in the public sphere discussions only by the early 20th century, the agenda of language-reform had already been there as part of various discussions which started in the

[576] K. M. Sheeba,"Modernity in Social Reform Discourse: The Women Question in Colonial Kerala," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 63 (2002): 933, accessed June 17, 2018, http://www.jstor.org/stable/44158163.
[577] Lata Mani, "Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India," *Cultural Critique*, no. 7 (1987): 119-20, accessed June 17, 2018, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1354153.

1890s. The efforts of language reform need to be discussed in detail since such attempts to promote the Bhasha of 'commoners' were the first steps towards ensuring principles of justice in an evolving democracy, whereas the development of purist attitudes to language was effected later at a time when the efforts to demarcate the features of the vernacular were taken up. A sentiment of linguistic patriotism also grew out of such linguistic pride and purist tendencies which constantly reminded the speakers of the need to preserve the 'natural capacities' of the mother tongue by preventing it from being eroded off. The mechanisms that contributed to the personification of language in the image of a mother, including the portrayal of her in differing ways by several Bhashabhimanis, need to be examined closely. The patterns of argument through which the urgency to protect one's mother tongue was foregrounded or the manner in which the history of the feminine tongue was narrated need to be unknotted in order to understand the different images in which the past, present and future of a Malayalee identity were drawn out by the 20th century Malayalee intellectuals.

Language Reform and the Urge to be 'Modern'

The discourse of reform associated with language was essentially connected to promoting it as an identity marker defining the new middle class regional subjectivity in the making. Most of the late 19th C magazines and newspapers published by members of the new middle class that introduced discussions about language also had numerous articles on the need for women's education, on the dis/advantages of matrilineal inheritance practices and opinions on the need to maintain physical fitness and personal hygiene, and the benefits of modern medicine etc. This showcases the new Malayalee middle class subject's urge to be transformed into a modern individual and his/ her search for a new identity in the changing times, under the rule of a colonial government. Thus, theurge for language- reform came out of the realization that the categories which defined the modern notion of 'citizenship' under the new colonial

legal system and the conceptual models which constituted a 'refined individual' in a society driven by Elizabethan and Victorian valueswere incompatible with the existing vocabularies which defined indigenous living practices and modes of being. These discussions about reforming the vernacular are very similar to what Partha Chatterjee has described as efforts made by the bilingual elites in Bengal towards developing the Bengali language in the 19th century. He refers to the network of printing and publishing houses, newspapers, magazines and literary societies that were created outside the purview of the state through which "the new language, modern and standardized" was given shape and how the natives took it as their "cultural project to enable it to become an adequate language for 'modern' culture."[578]

Categories of 'Modern' Being:

The discussions that happened around Nayar marriage reforms, details of which are available in the 'Malabar Marriage Commission Report' (MCCR) show this aspect of the development of the vernacular clearly. The Marriage Commission was constituted by the Madras Government in 1891, on the demand of the educated Nayar members of Malabar. The Commission was meant to look into the desirability of bringingchanges in practices of 'marriage,' i.e. *Sambandham*[579] and into the re-organization of Nayar *Tharavad* (matrilineal joint family)as well as into the need to change *Marumakkathayam*(matrilineal system of inheritance)that existed among the Nayars of Malabar.[580]The Report of the Commission which

[578] Chatterjee, "Whose Imagined Community?," 28.

[579] A system of cohabitation followed by most Nayar communities and some upper caste Hindu communities called as Ambalavasis and among certain sections of Backward Castes and Muslims in 19th century Kerala.

[580] The newly educated members of the Nayar community began to feel that the matrilineal system of inheritance and the existing structure of joint family was incompatible with their economic and social aspirations in a new capitalist era. These family and inheritance forms were also related to the conjugal practice of *Sambandham* existing in those times between Nayar women and Brahmin or other upper- caste males. Missionary and administrative accounts which labelled Sambandham as a loosely tied conjugal relation or at times as concubinage, also resulted in this demand for bringing in new legislations on this, from the part of educated Nayar youth. For details see Praveena Kodoth, "Sexuality, Sambandham and Marriage Reform in Late Nineteenth-Century Malabar," *Modern Asian Studies* 35, no, 2 (2001): 349-84; G. Arunima, *There comes Papa: Colonialism and the Transformation of Matriliny in Kerala, Malabar, c 1850–1940* (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2003).

was looking into the need for bringing a legislation on marriage stated about "the problem of not finding a term to denote the man-woman relationship involved in the *Sambandham* practice (a liaison relationship between Nambudiri men and Nayar women)."[581] The Report states:

> In the first place it begs the question at issue, and thus suggests an initial difficulty, which is the want of suitable and inoffensive English terms to denote the customary cohabitation of the sexes under the *Marumakkathayam* law, and the cohabiting parties. To start by calling such cohabitation marriage, and the customs regulating it, marriage customs is a petitio principii which is likely to lead to confusion, but which it is not easy to avoid. Some have not scrupled to call the man a "paramour," the woman a "mistress," and the cohabitation " a fugitive conexion (sic)." "Consort" may do well for the royal families, but is ridiculous when applied to lower classes."Concubinage" and "Concubine" (terms sometimes adopted by the High Court) convey reproach."Lover," "gallant," "partner," are all objectionable.In this difficulty it has,out of courtesy, become the practice to acquiesce in, and adopt, the use of the term 'marriage' instead of "fugitive connexion (sic),"and of the terms "husband" and "wife," instead of "paramour" and concubine." The Marumakkathayam Hindus never in Malayalam apply the term"marriage" to the union of man and woman. The abstract Malayalam terms for "marriage" are Vivaham and Kalyanam. The former term is never used (or until the last few months was never used) of a Marumakkathayam union: the latter is used to denote the ceremony of tying on the tali (or marriage badge) which is now admitted to be merely a mock marriage, as will be explained further on. Amongst Makkathayam[582]Malayalis the common term for "to marry " is kettuga, to tie. The husband is "Kettiyavan"= he who is tied to you, and the "wife " is "Kettiyaval" = the woman tied to you. These expressions are never used by Marumakkathayam people in speaking of their own sexual relationships…The next difficulty is to clear our ideas as to what we mean by marriage, for until this is done it is impossible to say whether Marumakkathayam does, or does not, possess the institution.[583]

The extracts from this Report makes it evident that, educated members of Nayar community, giving depositions to the Commission not only felt the need to reform 'traditional' familial and marriage practices, but also found the old-time vocabularies and discursive patterns comprising caste-lects and regional dialect variations as unsuitable for the purpose of expressing themselves in a colonial court of law. So, as far as a Nayar elites of the time were concerned, just a revamping of the existing practices of conjugal relations in order to install a

[581] Sheeba, "Modernityin Social Reform Discourse," 933.
[582] Patrilineal system of inheritance which existed among many other castes of Kerala.
[583] Malabar Marriage Commission Report, (Madras Archives, 1891), 12-13.

somewhat ‘standardized’ practice of marriage approved as ‘modern,’ similar to the one followed by Makkathayam Hindus was not enough. In addition, the changed state of affairs necessitated a simultaneous revision of vocabulary and conceptual categories since the existing ones could onlydescribe and define a pre-modern way of existence in a feudal society and were posing a hindrance for the educated Nayar subjects possessing an urge to express themselves as modern individuals.

In a similar vein, most of the old-world terminology of the indigenous life-world which turned out to be ‘obscure’, ‘vulgar’, ‘offensive’ or ‘outlandish’ owing to its incommensurability with the existing categories of Victorian English society and its language-use was also to be held as being responsible for the lack of lucidity of ‘modern’ Malayalam in the offing. Moreover, a new set of vocabulary items and a new conceptual schema capable of expressing the ‘refined’ experiences of a ‘new world in the making’ had to be borrowed or needed to be coined afresh. Shivarama Padikkal comments on the manner in which traditional cultural identities were altered or destroyed through the changes in patterns of thinking that were brought in by colonial education: “The educated class now had to employ Western categories in acquiring knowledge about the world, in ordering the knowledge it gathered, in describing, and in conceptualizing. Or it came to establish and explain its own identity in terms of Western ideas.”[584]To fulfill this need, a series of fresh literary compositions in existing literary genres, translations from English as well as borrowing of new discursive forms and literary genres from English and other European languages were also encouraged by the Bhashabhimanis like Varughese Mappila.

[584] Shivarama Padikkal, “Inventing Modernity: The Emergence of Novel in India,” in *Interrogating Modernity: Culture and Colonialism in India,* eds. Tejaswini Niranjana, P. Sudhir and Vivek Dhareshwar(Calcutta: Seagull, 1993), 224.

A New Ethics of Textuality:

The incompatibility between the language use of the old-world and the 'knowledge order' of the newwas not limited to the level of conceptual categories, but it was also something based on a changed ethics of textuality itself. A shift from the old-world textualities of Southern India where the purpose of a text was hardly about the "transmission of denotational textuality" to one that is based on ensuring "referential fixity" and "semiotic transparency" is noteworthy.[585] Bernard Bate observes that in 19th Century Tamil Nadu, a text was considered as something that had to be "memorized and sung at highly restricted times and only in certain spaces" where "although the denotationality of the text (logos) was important to the reciter and to some in the audiences, it was the sheer sound of the text (nada) that would have beneficial consequences for the vast majority of hearers."[586] At the same time, by the end of 19th century, "the project to produce a universalizing system of signs" which formed the driving principle of "Protestant textuality" had already "sought new institutional means and performative spaces such as schools and bazaars to bring the text to all the people."[587]

The rejection of a highly Sanskritized Manipravalam register which can be seen in Varughese Mappila's writings from the beginning can be explained in the context of a similar search for a new conceptual schema capable of expressing the 'refined' experiences of a new world and in the changing ethics of textuality in a 'modern' world. The review that he wrote in *Bhashaposhini* for Kerala Varma's translation of *Abhijnana Sakuntalam* into the Bhasha as *Bhasha Shakuntalam*, on the one hand appreciated the efforts of Kerala Varma in translating the work of Kalidasa, but at the same time "strongly objected against the profusion of Sanskrit

[585] Bernard Bate, "The Ethics of Textuality: The Protestant Sermon and the Tamil Public Sphere," in *Ethical Life in South Asia*, eds. Anand Pandian and Daud Ali (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 110.
[586] Ibid.
[587] Ibid., 111-12.

vocabulary in the translation."[588]"He also strove hard to change the indifferent treatment given to Malayalam by the literates," including Kerala Varma, "who considered (that) the language and literature of Sanskrit alone was worthy of proper study and appreciation."[589] The objections raised by Varughese Mappila against the profusion of Sanskrit vocabulary were in fact derived from the existing 'Protestant-fear' about the lack of "referential fixity" in Indian languages, based on the systematic complaining of missionaries "that heathens could make words mean precisely what they wanted them to mean."[590] In addition to the 'modern' objective of "deploying signs in socially universal contexts,"[591]his objections sprang out of a larger 'modernizing' project of discouraging a Sanskritic textual tradition. This is the case because the principles which determined the aesthetic value and composition of traditional classical texts in Sanskrit, similar to what Bate says about classical Tamil textuality, were primarily ones which were based on the notions of an auditory text. Thus, while the musical quality of the text, the employment of appropriate metre, rhyme scheme etc. predetermined its aesthetic quality, the functional principle which determined the production of such Sanskrit classics was never one which was based on a universalizing intent; instead, these texts were supposed to be recited by qualified persons, in order to be heard by a select audience. Therefore, Mappila's primary intention was nothing less than to oppose the aesthetic, functional and ethical premises of classical Sanskrit textuality.

The native intellectual discourse on language embodied a vigorous determination to make the vernacular capable of taking up new roles which it never had earlier. Translation activities undertaken by Sanskrit scholars like Kerala Varma which formed a part of this new project undertaken by native cultural elites were ones which had not completely pulled

[588] Roy, *Kandathil Varghese Mappilai*, 31.
[589] Ibid.
[590] Bate, "The Ethics of Textuality," 110.
[591] Ibid.

themselves away from the ethics and aesthetics of the traditional kind. Kerala Varma's emphasis on using Prasam (rhyme) which led to a prolonged debate termed as 'Prasavadam' (debate about rhyming) in the literary public sphere, which extended to a period of over a decade is a famous example for this. His obsession with following 'Dwiteeyakshara Prasam,' that is the employment of alliterations on the second syllable of each line in poetry, a feature of most Manipravalam poems is evident in these debates. At the same time, there were active efforts on the part of people like Varughese Mappila to develop the newly defined vernacular as "a vehicle of common people's literature, philosophy, and other forms of intellectual expression."[592] Such a revised notion of textuality and language use is what informed Varughese Mappila's opinion about the strand of Malayalam that should be developed as the language of publicity and literary exchanges too. This was well expressed through an early editorial which he wrote in *Malayala Manorama* in March, 1890:

> The books needed most in Malayalam since long are not books in verse but in prose. In the traditional type of education, learning was done through books of verse, but modern education demanded the use of books in prose, and they were not available. Pioneer works in this field has been done by European missionaries. The Text Book Committee instituted by the Government also has produced some useful books on different subjects. But their language is too tough for children. Moreover, most of the books are translations.[593]

When Mappila referred to the 'pioneering works in prose' designed by European missionaries or while he mentioned the 'useful books' produced by the Text Book Committee, he was subscribing to an idea of textuality that was based on producing "a universalizing system of signs," in addition to advocating for the same. Here, Varughese Mappila's criticism of the tough language used in the books produced by the Text Book Committee was directed at the same books that were published by the Committee under Kerala Varma's supervision.

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[592]Richard Bauman and Charles L. Briggs, *Voices of Modernity: Language Ideologies and the Politics of Inequality* (Cambridge: CUP,2003), 164.
[593]Roy, *Kandathil Varghese Mappilai*, 52-53.

Hence, Varughese Mappila was advocating for the designing of a simple and lucid prose for Malayalam which can be intelligible for a majority of 'common people' who will be soon entering the world of new literacy through modern schooling in the vernacular. Such transformations in textuality, according to Bate, "resulted in textual shifts from the poetic to prosaic…from a sonocentric to a logocentric universe."[594]

Mappila's criticism about the excessive dependence of Malayalam literary forms on Sanskrit verse models and vocabulary led to differences of opinion where Kerala Varma viewed the Sanskritic influence as something that is enriching the vernacular, thereby helping it to flourish, and Varughese Mappila saw it as creating a high register which was unintelligible for the modernists. So, Kerala Varma's response came in 1891 that, "Malayalam has not reached that state in which it could be treated as an independent language" and "it currently occupies a stage where it is gradually flourishing owing to its association with Sanskrit."[595]He also expressed his strong opinion that efforts in language reform should be in accordance with Sanskrit because, in his opinion, a scheme to systematize the vernacular had to inevitably depend upon Sanskrit. He also admitted in the article that while preparing many books for the use of government schools, he had followed that principle of devising a reformed prose on the lines of Sanskrit.[596] Thus, Kerala Varma, like many other Sanskritists wanted to promote an idea of 'enrichment' of the vernacular based on a revivalist agenda, so that the continuing Sanskritic influence on the newly created vernacular will in turn ensure the hegemony of the traditional social elites in the changed socio-political scenario. Another interesting fact is that these developments were coterminous with the efforts of his close associate and Sanskrit scholar – Punnasseri Neelakantha Sharma to popularize Sanskrit education among commoners

[594]Bate, "The Ethics of Textuality,"112.
[595]Kerala Varma Valiya Koyi Thampuran, *Malayala Manorama*, Karkkatakam 4 issue, 1066 M.E. – 1891,3.
[596] Ibid.

and lower castes, for the first time in history. By establishing Saraswathodyodini Gurukulam, in 1888, in Pattambi as an important centre for Sanskrit learning, where an effort to teach the language on utilitarian principles was underway and through the starting of a Sanskrit journal named *Vijnanachintamani* in 1873 which continued its publication for almost 28 years and included articles in a newly designed Sanskrit prose, efforts to preserve the hegemonic status of Sanskrit in the changing times had already been inaugurated by Sharma and his associates from aristocratic upper- caste families like Vellanasseri Vasunni Moosad, Kerala Varma etc.

Kerala Varma advocating the copious use of Sanskrit in literature, by expressing his doubts about considering Malayalam as a fully developed independent tongue and Punnasseri Neelakantha Sharma composing texts in a highly Sanskritized register, by holding the position that it could still fall under the label Malayalam literature were both questioned by native writers like K. R. Krishnapillai and Moorkkoth Kumaran respectively. The principle about the use of language and production of books that guided the opinions of these modernists was also based on the Protestant impetus of producing "a universalizing system of signs."[597]According to the former, who had expressed his unhappiness about excess use of Sanskrit in vernacular compositions, "only Kunjan Nambiar was eligible to be referred to as 'Malayala Kavi' since it was only his poetry that was identified as composed in common people's Malayalam, with the simplest of vocabulary from Sanskrit" and was considered as "one that is endowed with intelligible sentences derived out of day to day chores of Malayalees."[598]Responding to similar criticisms, Neelakantha Sharma expressed his unhappiness about the opinions of these new writers who stood against the use of Sanskrit in Bhasha compositions, whereas Kerala Varma had to later admit the criticisms that were raised against his *Shakuntalam* translation and against

[597] Bate, "The Ethics of Textuality," 110.
[598] Krishnapillai, "Ee Kollashatavarshattile Malayalasahityam," 217-18.

the dominance of Sanskrit vocabulary in his works in general. As a result of these criticisms, his translation of *Amaruka Satakum* which appeared in 1893 was subtitled as, "Translated from Sanskrit to Manipravalm," showing its distinctness in register from what was claimed to be 'Bhasha' by the other prominent writers of the times. And he wrote thus later:

> I am ready to admit that there are numerous unimpressive usages in *Sakuntalam*. It occurred so because of my lack of knowledge in the nature of the vernacular at the time of its composition unlike it is in the present times. I am especially thankful to *Vidyavinodini* for the current expertise that I have got in the Bhasha.[599]

At the same time Neelakantha Sharma continued to maintain his unhappiness about such criticisms and wrote thus in the *Vidyavinodini* magazine published towards the end of the nineteenth century: "I have been informed that certain 'modern' great personalities hold the opinion that the excessive use of Sanskrit vocabulary items while composing poems or prose in Malayalam is not only awful, but that it is some great sin. But, my mind does not allow me to agree to the opinion held by those great minds."[600]Lack of readiness on the part of staunch Sanskritists like Sharma in admitting the criticisms on the part of these modernists in their 'missions' to democratize the linguistic sphere is notable; while it was these untiring 'missions' on their part which in a way led to the creation of "a large-scale social imaginary" and the realization of a"linguistic public" in a "universalized print."[601]In the same year, Moorkkoth Kumaran's article about language reform titled "Bhashaparishkaram" expressing his disagreement with Sharma appeared in *Vidyavinodini*. In it he criticized the tendency among 'many old-school poets' to compose in Manipravalam- to create a mixed form of poetry out of Sanskrit and Bhasha. According to Moorkkoth Kumaran, such mixed variety of poetry can be understood and enjoyed only by those who are experts in both Sanskrit and Malayalam.[602]

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[599] Kerala Varma quoted in Sam, "Vidyavilasiniyum Vidyavinodiniyum," 111.
[600] Neelakantha Sharma quoted in Moorkkoth Kumaran, "Bhashaparishkaram," *Vidyavinodini* 11, no.1 (Thulam1075 M.E.- 1899): 18.
[601] Bate, "The Ethics of Textuality," 111.
[602] Kumaran, "Bhashaparishkaram," 18.

Thus, it is evident that there was an active effort among many native intellectuals, especially from those of the non- aristocratic backgrounds, like Moorkkoth Kumaran to promote a less Sanskritized version of the vernacular which was more accessible for many sections of modernists.

The introduction of an organic view of language in the 19th century, with definitions of 'a rich language'-as one having a repository of literature which it 'owns' and the definition of a language as one that is'poor' or 'dead,' if it is no more in use etc. were already discussed earlier. Such prevalent notions about the organicity of a language and the impetus to overcome the above-cited issues of incommensurability in relation to the conceptual categories of a 'modern' being may be behind such classifications like poverty/richness or progress/decadence etc. which repeatedly appeared in most discussions about language in the age of 'reform.' Thus, the repository of literature which a language had to 'own' in order to be 'rich,' in turn referred to the need to have more universalized texts in it, and hinted at the shift to a textuality based on the linear visual model, or in other terms an "animation of the text."[603]So, more than anything else, it was a call for more printed visual texts, "to produce vernacular texts written in the language of everyday life."[604]Thus, this oft- expressed urge to 'promote' the language by making it 'rich' with a textual repository of its own by encouraging new compositions and translations into it also hinted at the same "shift from restricted to universalized social relations of textuality."[605] Therefore, the translation efforts that were directed at promoting Malayalam as a modern literary tongue were supposed to promote the development of a style of verse based on classics in Sanskrit, while encouraging the development of prose modelled on forms from English classics to an extent. Chidambara Vadyar's, Kodungalloor Kunjikkuttan

[603] Bate, "The Ethics of Textuality,"111.
[604] Ibid.
[605] Ibid.

Thampuran's and Varughese Mappila's special care in developing such a new prose in the vernacular can be seen in the series of Shakespeare translations which he undertook towards the turn of 19th century.[606] Simultaneously, many revivalist efforts to discover a form of an already existing prose in the language too were started. An attempt to revive Champu, the only genre available in the vernacular which had elements of classical prose in it and had a Sanskritic style of composition can also be seen. Such efforts were initiated by writers like Ulloor. S. Parameshwara Iyer, Kadattanatt Udaya Varma Thampuran- the owner of the periodical *Kavanodayam* and a few others. This revivalist strand which tried to "prove that India too had a great civilization," tried to "cull out from old histories, records and stories those elements which would aid the conception of nationhood."[607]Some original Champu compositions were also undertaken in the first decade of twentieth century by Changanassery Ravivarma Koyithampuran and by a female writer named Karuveli Gourikkutty Amma.[608]

The Vocabulary and Language of European Science:

The growth of a new prose in the vernacular led to the introduction of a modern scientific literature side by side with the publishing of new genres like the novel and the short stories. Scientific articles by authors like O. M. Cheriyan and Pailo Paul regularly appeared in various issues of *Bhashaposhini* towards the end of the 19th and the initial years of the 20th centuries. Therefore, another intriguing question that had to be addressed by the native intelligentsia who participated in the public sphere deliberations during these years was whether to prioritize the circulation of scientific texts or popular entertainment books in Malayalam language. C. P. Achyuta Menon stated in 1892 that since one variety spreads

[606] Chidamabra Vadyar's translations of *As You Like it* and *The Winter's Tale* were followed by Kunjikkuttan Thampuran's translation of *Hamlet* (*Hamlet Natakam*) and Varughese Mappila's translation of *Taming of the Shrew* (*Kalahini Damanakam*).
[607] Padikkal, "Inventing Modernity," 224.
[608] Ulloor S. Parameshwara Iyer, "Bhashachambu Prabandhangal," (Champu Writings in the Bhasha) *Bhashaposhini* 11, nos. 9 & 10, (Medam& Edavam, 1082- 1907): 258.

knowledge and the other inculcates wisdom and since both these qualities are necessary for the native speakers of a language, both these varieties had to be promoted for the goodwill of the language and society.[609] He stated that, nonetheless, the books which can entertain readers were to be produced more in number since they can inculcate a reading habit in Malayalam among the people. He clarified that he gave more weightage to novels like *Indulekha* or plays like *Bhashashakuntalam* because of this reason.[610]The new discursive genre of Western science introduced through the vernacular opened up an altogether different world in front of the Malayalees by transforming the existing cyclical sense of time into a linear one and replaced a world view immersed in mysticism with a new scientific temper.[611]The dearth of equivalent categories and concepts in the vernacular for translating a Western scientific discourse led to the development of a new jargon in the vernacular that made use of Sanskrit or English vocabulary which was not so accessible for most newly literates. Since Achyuta Menon's emphasis was on creating a new reading public for the new vernacular literature, he felt that entertaining books of fictional kind could be more useful to achieve that goal.

While Achyuta Menon emphasized the need to produce entertaining books which can inculcate a reading habit, many other members in the literary Sabhas of those times including people like Varughese Mappila, the Assistant Inspector of Schools, S. Subrahmania Iyer and others. considered the need to promote the development of a scientific discourse in the vernacular as an immediate necessity.[612] C. Anthappayi, an important literary critic from erstwhile Cochin was also a staunch advocate of the latter position and the articles which he wrote in the monthly *Ramanujan* during 1906-1907 about the need to establish and strengthen

[609] Sam, "Vidyavilasiniyum Vidyavinodiniyum," 104.
[610] Ibid.
[611] P. Pavithran, *Aashan Kavita: Adhunikananthara Padhangal* (Poetry of Kumaran Aashan: Postmodern Readings) (Trivandrum: Department of Culture, Government of Kerala, 2002), 319.
[612] Anilkumar Vatavatoor, *Science Journalism: Vikasavum, Parinamavum,* (Science Journalism: Development and Evolution) (Trivandrum: Kerala Bhasha Institute, 2001), 15-17.

a strand of scientific literature in the vernacular need to be mentioned here. He drew attention to the lack of books in the Bhasha about animals, plants, pulses and grains, various handicrafts etc. and observed that it was the general state of things across India. He also urged the native Malayalees to come out of their 'addiction' in creating novels, plays, *kilippattu* and attakkatha songs to divert their attention to composing scientific books on various subjects.[613] Later, Varughese Mappila also wrote a series of articles in *Malayala Manorama* on the need to compensate for the lack of scientific books in the vernacular as well as on the problems related to the lack of uniformity in the translation of technical terms into Malayalam.[614] Such a clear prioritizing by Varughese Mappila and Anthappayi of the new scientific discourse and knowledge texts which could bring in the elements of Western scientific rationality and a new sense of 'objectivity' over 'texts of entertainment' is noteworthy. This preference can be seen as the result of their urge 'to revolutionize' the outlook of a new Malayalee reader by bringing in the spirit of the 'superior sciences' of the West, into Malayalam which was erstwhile limited to English language and education.

Cleansing, Standardizing and the Growth of Vernacular Nationalism

As part of encouraging new writers and promoting the production of literary works in Malayalam, a committee was once constituted for examining the new works in poetry that were to published by the Bhashaposhini Sabha. Following this, a poetic work titled *Bhashanarayaneeyam* authored by K.C. Keshava Pillai was sent for scrutiny to this committee in 1893.[615] When most other members of the committee criticized Keshava Pillai's work for

[613] C. Anthappayi, "Bhashasahityathinte Oru Pradhana Nyoonata," (The Main Shortcoming of Bhasha Literature) *Ramanujan* 1, no.1 (Vrischikam, 1082 M.E.-1907) quoted in G. Priyadarshanan, *Malayalapatrapravartanam*, 90.
[614] Vatavatoor, *Science Journalism,* 83-84.
[615] Sam, "Malayala Manoramayum Bhashaposhiniyum," 190.

the excessive use of Sanskrit in it, Kerala Varma's response to the criticisms raised by these Committee members went like this:

> Such criticisms arise out of differences in taste that people have. Some people may opine that Sanskrit usages are bad, while some others say that they are in fact good. It would be great to use Malayalam words itself in the Bhasha, if possible. Yet, my opinion is that it would be impossible to compose a work by only using those. I doubt if there exists any word, which is essentially Malayalam, in order to express certain meanings. A word which is essentially Malayalam doesn't occur to my mind naturally, for all the words like "Anandam", Santhosham" and "Sukham," it is undisputable that Manipravalam which is a compound of Bhasha and Sanskrit will be adequate. Borrowing from other languages is unavoidable in all incomplete languages.[616]

It is evident that Kerala Varma's opinion about Malayalam was that it was a language that was inherently derivative in nature and that it was not capable of having an 'independent' status of its own. As per his opinion, being a vernacular tongue, it should necessarily rely on classical languages like Sanskrit for its 'existence' and 'growth'. Yet, the following years stood witness to the drawing of ever stricter boundaries by many natives that would define what style, registers and vocabulary constituted a literature that could be termed as belonging to the Malayalam language and thus defining texts strictly falling under the category of its 'own repository' of literature. Such efforts by these native reformists to sketch out a specified literary field of and for Malayalam could be seen as responses emerging out of the existing missionary, colonial and classicist accounts that underscored the 'derivative nature' of Malayalam and its 'dependency' on Sanskrit which resulted in the long-term labelling of it as an inferior tongue.

Purism and Prescriptivism:

The rise of 'linguistic purism' or a "desire to protect the traditional 'standard' from 'contaminations' from any source, be they foreign loan words or internally generated variation

[616] Kerala Varma quoted in Sam, "Malayala Manoramayum Bhashaposhiniyum," 191-92.

and change"[617] was the result of such endeavours. Hence, so as far as a newly literate advocate of the vernacular was concerned, the task was two-fold: in addition to countering the arguments of 'derivativeness' proposed by F. Spring's and Joseph Peet's grammars that point to the inadequacy of the tongue on the grounds of it being 'confined to an oral form,' and failing thus to acquire primacy, classicists like Kerala Varma's preference for a Sanskrit-dependent model for the vernacular also had to be countered. A rising purist tendency to cleanse the vernacular of 'outside' elements, with an accompanying attitude of prescriptivism was visible in the discussions about the Bhasha from the 1890s onwards.

Richard Bauman and Charles Briggs illustrate that the advent of modernity is marked by a tendency to view language as "a radically hybrid formation," as something which is inherently natural, but at the same time social too. All efforts at claiming a national identity based on language would hence rely on a romantic view of the common people's speech, where "the natural, unrefined speech of the people" had to be central and the social dimensions of language in use would be simultaneously projected to facilitate or justify existing social hierarchies as well.[618] The rejection of Manipravalam style of compositions and the criticisms raised against attakkathas and against Kerala Varma's heavily Sanskritized translation found in the articles of Varughese Mappila, Krishna Pillai and Moorkkoth Kumaran were relying on such a romantic idea of language in claiming a national identity based on it. A clear demarcation of the *Volk*'s language is attempted through Krishna Pillai's labelling of Kunjan Nambiar as a true poet in Malayalam, since, according to Pillai, it is Kunjan's works which have the elements of natural day to day speech of commoners in them. At the same time, the presence of simple Sanskrit vocabulary was considered an acceptable trait for an ideal work in

[617] R. Anthony Lodge, *French: From Dialect to Standard* (London: Routledge, 1993), 3.
[618] Bauman and Briggs, *Voices of Modernity*, 183-84.

Malayalam, while the mixing of unfamiliar Sanskrit vocabulary items borrowed along with their inflectional endings, as retained in the Manipravalam works of Unnayi Warrier was enough for Pillai to label the texts as having foreign vocabulary in it. Sumathi Ramaswamy draws our attention to the "'ideologies of language,' those networks of representations and significations about language which emerge within particular social, political and religious formations."[619] She states: "However natural and timeless they might appear, conceptions about language among its interested speakers are rarely neutral or innocent, they are generally linked to efforts to create or retain power and control, and they change through time."[620]It is evident that though both Mappila and Pillai rejected Manipravalam as not capable of representing the 'people,' the varieties of the vernacular that each of them foregrounded as their own 'ideal models' appear to have suited the moral and religious concerns that each of them held in person. While the presence of simple Sanskrit vocabulary is an acceptable trait for Pillai, the fears about the floating "denotationality" of the 'heathen tongue' compelled Mappila to reject it completely.

An emphasis on the unintelligibility of Sanskrit among the people of non-aristocratic origins who belonged to erstwhile middle or lower castes and the assertion that Malayalee identity was one which belonged to these new groups of middle class natives and their less Sanskritized tongues can be observed in Moorkkoth Kumaran's and Achyuta Menon's writings. The latter pointed out the presence of rare vocabulary items from Sanskrit and inflectional endings from the classical language as the cause for the 'degradation of the language' and as a shortcoming of writings by many older poets. Moorkkoth Kumaran rejected Manipravalam form altogether on the ground that since Sanskrit knowledge was not accessible

[619] Ramaswamy, *Passions of the Tongue*, 77.
[620] Ibid., 77-78.

to many, the presence of it in vernacular poetry would just make it unintelligible for many. The observations of Velcheru Narayana Rao that "medieval and early-modern representations of language in southern India distinguished between desa bhasha, the language of the land and deva bhasha, the language of the gods, or Sanskrit"[621] proves to be fitting in this context. A clear rejection of high Sanskritized varieties labelled as an aristocratic jargon and as something which stood outside the purview of Malayalam literature was symptomatic of a turn towards linguistic purism and prescriptivism where language and literature got defined in relation to the identity of the newly emerging 'Malayalee' subjecthood.On the other hand, the ideal of the 'pure language' from which such attempts at cleansing the vernacular are derived will in turn "resist and undo the reality of hybridity that characterize the societies in which they emerge."[622]

This 'intelligibility argument' that was raised by Moorkkoth Kumaran and Achyuta Menon against Sanskrit vocabulary was also followed by the idea that "only the national language can serve as a symbol of self-dentification with a newly invoked national culture."[623] Such purist attitudes about language tended to picture English language also as another culprit for eroding the quality of perfect Malayalam usages in writing and speech. Many essayists and critics used to acknowledge the role of English in aiding the development of a modern prose style in Malayalam through many of their articles published in *Bhashaposhini* and *Vidyavinodini*, especially by pointing at the role played by translations from English in this matter. At the same time, many natives considered the practice of mixing English terms and sentences while speaking or writing in Malayalam as posing 'a threat for the vernacular.' A *Bhashaposhini* article by Varughese Mappila titled "Englishu Chernna Malayalam" which was published in 1896 mentioned that "many dynamic personalities among Malayalees who

[621] Velcheru Narayana Rao quoted in Lisa Mitchell, *Language, Emotion and Politics*, 98.
[622] Ramaswamy, *Passions of the Tongue*, 153.
[623] Olivia Walsh, *Linguistic Purism: Language Attitudes in France and Quebec* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2016), 13.

possess a genuine affection for Malayalam" were afraid that such practices would gradually make their language extinct.[624] Certain nativist anxieties of the times were not just directed at the intrusion of Sanskrit or English words or structures into the tongue, but even pointed at the involvement of the "non-natives" in the preparation of pedagogical materials for teaching the language as a reason behind the erosion of linguistic purity. An article that appeared in *Vidyavinodini* in the same year even went to the extent that "if the rumour about Gundert's dictionary that he had prepared it by supposedly taking the aid of his Tamilian servant was true, then the students who are taught Malayalam based on those pedagogical devices would only learn an improper version of it." [625]The idea of an ideal or authentic speaker of Malayalam who can provide reliable information about one's language, and the image of the non-native, an outsider to the imagination of a Malayalee subjectivity is shown to be gaining strength at this point. Such fears and oppositions raised against "foreign influences on the native language... are also associated with the notion of nationalism."[626]

Following such native criticisms, the early decades of the twentieth century witnessed various attempts to foreground a strand of 'pure Malayalam register' by tracing its beginnings to the compositions of Ezhuthacchan, Kunjan Nambiar etc. A style of poetry writing that was different from the Manipravalam style and nourished by poets like Poonthottatt Nampoothiri, Venmani Acchan Nampoothiri, Venmani Mahan Nampoothiri etc. was already developing in the central regions of Kerala by the second half of the nineteenth century.[627] Simple poetic style, with an easily accessible vocabulary almost free of Sanskrit and marked by the use of Dravidian inflectional endings added to the popularity of this school that was referred to as the Venmani

[624] Kandathil Varughese Mappila, "Englishu Chernna Malayalam," (Malayalam Mixed with English) *Bhashaposhini*1, no.2 (Thulam, 1072 M. E.-1896): 25.
[625] Ibid.
[626] Walsh, *Linguistic Purism*, 12-13.
[627] M. V. Vishnu Nambudiri, *Kunjikkuttan Thampuran* (Thiruvananthapurm: University of Kerala, 1998), 15.

school of poetry. 'Pacchamalayalam' writings, which literally mean compositions in 'raw Malayalam,' grew in continuity with the Venmani school into a literary movement mainly in the field of poetry, towards the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries.

When C. P. Achyuta Menon once expressed his opinion that though a few poems can be composed in the Bhasha in a completely Sanskrit-free style, a longer piece of poem like a Kavyam cannot be composed entirely in a Sanskrit-free vocabulary, KunjikkuttanThampuran, the bilingual writer from Kodungalloor expressed his disagreement.[628] Later, the poet KunjikkuttanThampuran published a long poem consisting of 52 shlokams in a Sanskrit-free simple style in the 1890 issue of the magazine *Vidyavinodini* which inaugurated the Pacchamalayalam movement in literature. From then onwards, many works which belonged to the movement and essays advocating the use of pure Malayalam that foregrounded a natural Malayalee identity began to be published through *Vidyavinodini* and *Rasikaranjini* magazines in the following decades. It can be observed that an article by an unknown author got published in *Rasikaranjini* in 1902 which held a purist attitude towards language. The argument stated there went to the extent of differentiating between a 'Paccha-Malayalee' who is the natural upholder of an untainted pure Malayalam of the rural areas as against the English educated language reformers who mixed the code of the city with the pure variety of Malayalam:

> The sentence styles in Malayalam language are undergoing changes on a daily basis. Lots of new words have been entering the language. Some are forcibly pushed in too. It is an undisputable fact that these changes that the language has undergone are mostly from those patriots of language who are English educated. It can't be said that *Paccha Malayalees* are involved in this…In other places, a reformed linguistic style takes shape over a time with the intermixing of rural dialects and urban dialects as an evolved form of the rural tongue. Yet, there is a difference in the case of Malayalam. The urban dialect does not happen to be an evolved form of the rural dialect, three fourth of it is observed to be the copy of English and having the bitterness of Sanskrit in it. The origin of new words is also similar. I strongly desire that there should be a change in the nature of

[628] Priyadarshanan, *Malayalapatrapravartanam*, 89.

> transformation that Malayalam language currently undergoes before the duplicate language completely swallows down the original tongue.[629]

Many more articles published in the magazine expressing similar anxieties about the loss of purity of a rural pure dialect can be seen. Many articles ridiculing the 'modern native' who is obsessed with mixing English, Sanskrit, French and other foreign words in their language and some prescribing guidelines for borrowing 'foreign' vocabulary if it became absolutely inevitable etc. can be found across various issues of these early 20th century magazines. A purist-nativist trend which was visible by the early years of the twentieth century tried to locate an 'original rural tongue' of the folk, free of Sanskrit and English or any other 'foreign' influence. Similar to many other projects of cleansing the vernaculars prevalent in India in the early decades of the twentieth century, the above-mentioned purist attitudes were also "concerned not merely with the cleaning of the language, but also with singularizing and homogenizing the subjectivity of its speakers, for ultimately the speaker of the pure" tongue will be the only one who will be "worthy of being called as" a Malayalee.[630]The complex nexus between linguistic identity and nationalism always operate with a narrative of perceived cultural superiority and accounts of imposed slavery by an 'outsider' on one's language and culture.

On Standardizing the Bhasha:

The need to standardize the dialectal variations spread across regional and community differences by bringing uniformity in form for the written language was perceived to be another essential step in reforming the vernacular language. Standardizing the vernacular through the spread of journalism and prose works and publishing works which can entertain the readers

[629] "Malayalabhasha," *Rasikaranjini* 1, no. 2 (1078 M.E.-1902): 35-36.
[630] Ramaswamy, *Passions of the Tongue*, 154.

like popular novels, plays etc. were the other means suggested or experimented upon in order to achieve this goal. These steps turned out to be the earliest taken in the direction of projecting a linguistic nation with well demarcated territorial boundaries, since the standardization or consolidation of various dialects based on a prescriptivist attitude would lead to the creation of a national language. Calls for undertaking standardization efforts came from Varughese Mappila and a few other authors including Kumaramangalam Neelakanthan Nampoothiri, who later became active members of the Bhashaposhini Sabha. Articles which expressed similar concerns appeared in *Malayala Manorama*, soon after its inception, at a time when it was not a daily and was just a periodical. Kumaramangalam Neelakanthan Nampoothiri's June, 1891 article with the title "Bhasha Kavisamajam" stands proof to this:

> It is evident from the columns of the *Malayala Manorama* that we have several native poets. Regional differences and varying backgrounds make their contributions considerably different. Regional difference in language is a universal feature. In the written form of language, however there should be some uniformity. This can be achieved through conscientious efforts. If the writers who are presently in contact through journals alone can come together physically, it will be more beneficial to them. The general public also will get its benefits by way of attaining a better form of language.[631]

To reduce the linguistic differences manifest in the early Malayalee literary public sphere, to deal with the multiplicity of dialects used in the early periodicals which appeared through the writings of authors from all the three regions was thus an important objective of *Malayala Manorama*, *Bhashaposhini* and for many of the later literary associations. An interesting fact about the first meeting of the Bhashaposhini Sabha was the presence of the white Principal of Kottayam C. N Institution, Rev. Jacob Thompson. His speech foregrounded the idea that the unity of the English people amounted to their progress over and above others.

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[631] Neelakanthan Nampoothiri, "Bhasha Kavisamajam," (Association of Bhasha Poets) *Malayala Manorama* (June, 1891) quoted in Dr. M. V. Thomas, *Malayalam Newspapers and the Freedom Movement in Kerala* (Ernakulam: Kerala Press Academy, 2014), 101.

He also tabled the idea that there was "a need for better camaraderie between the class of feudal lords and commoners in India" and that such an alliance between classes was "a necessity in the field of language reforms which can ease the transfer of criticisms from a few who held those criticisms to others as well."[632] This notion that language reform should be taken as an instrument for bridging class differences thereby expanding the sphere of public opinion to a wider native populace whose unity was crucial for civilizational progress fueled the need for reforming the language so it could take the role of a common medium for native communication. The urge to standardize at least the written language across all regions and castes which later became the major goal of the Bhashaposhini Sabha and its magazine falls in line with such a conceptualization of language reform. It can be noted that "as early as 1892 C.D. David, a regular columnist in the *Vidyavinodini*, wrote that Malayalam language is the equal right of everyone in the Malayalarajyam ... and must be treated as a community wealth (*samudayaswathu*)."[633] Yet, in fact, Malayalees began to perceive themselves as a separate linguistic community quite later, long after other communities in Madras and various parts of South India started using their projected linguistic identities for political purposes.[634]

Eric Hobsbawm's observation about how language becomes an element of group cohesion is relevant here. He states that when the members of a nascent middle class try to displace a small ruling class which uses a high-culture language, this class will impose its own language, the vernacular as a 'national language' and this would be a crucial step in national evolution.[635] Hence, the standardization of Malayalam, which earlier existed as the Bhasha with its dialectal variations and multiple writing forms was a crucial step in replacing the status

[632] Mappila, *Bhashaposhini Sabha*, 29.
[633] C. D. David quoted in G. Arunima, "Imagining Communities Differently: Print, Language and the Public Sphere in Colonial Kerala," *Indian Economic Social History Review* 43, no.1 (2006): 71, accessed June 23, 2012, http://ier.sagepub.com/content/43/1/63.refs.html
[634] Ranjith, *Malayaliyude Bhoothakalangal*, 155.
[635] Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789-1848* (UK: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1962), 135.

enjoyed by classical languages of liturgical relevance which defined separate community identities. In this process of creating group cohesion as a single linguistic group, an isomorphism between the presence of a marked linguistic form and a denoted geographico-cultural boundary becomes inevitable in furthering the interests of any linguistic nationalism. Hence, this urge to standardize a language to bring a uniform linguistic form which we saw in the passage written by Neelakanthan Nampoothiri and in the passage by Varughese Mappila stated below were also directed towards bringing about uniformity of language variants within the boundaries of a specifically identified geographical area. Sheldon Pollock's observation that "vernacularization can't be explained by a natural history of cultural change," and that "it doesn't stand outside history," is noteworthy in this context. Mapping of a region in which the 'Malayalim' language is spoken and fixing the territoriality of this tongue with fixed features already demonstrated through Peet's and Springs works in colonial linguistics (which were discussed earlier), functioned as adoptable models for those natives who were interested in promoting the vernacular. Hence, Varughese Mappila held that the spread of journals across the length and the breadth of the 'defined region' could be undertaken. He wrote:

> The variations in Malayalam dialects are discernible in the Malayalam of Mangalore Christians and Trivandrum Hindus. Removal of such variations and development of a standard form of language acceptable to all is possible only through the spread of journals. If journals are published from different parts of the country and if they maintain sufficient contacts with one another, the saying that 'each area has its own Malayalam' will necessarily lose its meaning.[636]

As a pioneer investor in the field of publishing in Kerala, Varughese Mappila's interest in promoting a standardized Malayalam language is well explainable. His Malayala Manorama Company was the second joint stock company within the territorial boundary of present-day Kerala and to bring uniformity in the linguistic form of the region would also expand the

[636] Roy, *Kandathil Varghese Mappilai*, 53.

possibilities of having a wider market for the printed products from Varughese Mappila's company. At the same time, Achyuta Menon in his 1894 essay titled "Bhashaparishkaram" (Language Reform) stressed that, "it is impossible to bring a unity in form for the spoken language of people living across the stretch of Kannur to Kanyakumari, by erasing off the local dialects altogether."[637] He also added that the efforts of the Sabha members needed to be in the direction of "bringing a standardization of form only for the language that is used in books."[638]

Thus, it can be noted that though the initial purist- prescriptivist attitudes to language emphasized a romantic view of the 'people's spoken language,' the discussions on standardization that took place with the objective of achieving 'linguistic uniformity'- a prerequisite for nation building, were restricted to the language on the printed page. Therefore, the standardization of Malayalam was supposed to be restricted to the common sphere of print transactions. Thus, by the turn of the twentieth century, a standardized Malayalam prose capable of facilitating 'public' interactions was already in place and "any reader could belong to a putative community that was bound together by this demotic prose, now being standardized and modernized in print."[639]G. Arunima holds that: "Of this putative community of readers, there could also be those who could be further drawn into a community of faith. The older liturgical languages, be they Syrian, Chaldaic, Arabic or Sanskrit, were giving way to Malayalam, thereby making way for what would appear, paradoxically, both an increasingly ethnic (a Malayali) as well as a communitarian (Christian, Muslim or Hindu) identity."[640] Attempts to re-define the vernacular in terms of its purity and corruptness according to the new prescriptive standards proposed by the new middle classes, accompanied by attempts to

[637] Achyuta Menon, "Bhashaparishkram*," Bhashaposhini* (1894) quoted in Sam, "Malayala Manoramayum Bhashaposhiniyum," 170.
[638] Ibid.
[639] G. Arunima, "Imagining Communities Differently," 69.
[640] Ibid.

standardize the tongue in its printed form also coincided with the growth of a patriotic sentiment around one's mother tongue in the following years.

Linguistic Patriotism and Loyalty to the Mother Tongue

The gradual evolution of a patriotic sentiment around the 'mother tongue' and the very formation of the concept of a 'mother tongue' among Malayalee literates occurred only towards the beginning of the 20th century. Lisa Mitchell's research about the "rise of 'widespread and unprecedented commitments' to what are today claimed as 'mother tongues'" emphasises the idea that it was "a concept not attested in any Indian language prior to the second half of the nineteenth century."[641]Though a fuzzy idea of a linguistic region or territory and a loosely defined identity based on an affinity that one shared with the fellow-speakers of the same language would have been there, an elaborately developed idea of a linguistic community added with certain personal emotions attached to the language spoken would have been absent in Kerala, until the end of the 19th century.The influence of missionary discourses along with the publication of linguistic survey reports and census reports of 1881 that also characterized the mother tongue as a benchmark to classify populations had already resulted in various kinds of nativist demands in Travancore by the end of nineteenth century. The demand to remove Tamil from the Travancore king's court, which went back to the 1860s, when Tamil Brahmin scribes occupied important positions in the court, later paved way to a demand from the cultural elites for replacing English with Malayalam in the colonial legal courts by the 1890s. An editorial published in *Nazrani Deepika*, titled "Kaccheri Malayalam Kayyezhuthu" had also expressed the same concern by emphasizing the connection between public interest and the language of governance. By the 1890s, this demand is put forth as the claims of a quantified,

[641] Mitchell, *Language, Emotion and Politics*, 2.

enumerated linguistic community presenting its concerns to the Travancore government. The report states that:

> The disconnect between the government and the people will be reduced, if matters of governance are discharged in Malayalam language, which is the language spoken by 98.5 percentage of people in the land. Public participation will increase. A government which is bound to fulfil public interests has the duty to adopt the mother tongue of its subjects as the language of governance.[642]

Articles that appeared in the issues of early twentieth century periodicals can throw light on the way a native Malayalee identity was further promoted in relation to the concept of mother tongue and about the growing sentiment of Malayalee linguistic patriotism as well. By the early years of the twentieth century, a clear distinction was made between a person inhabiting any region or country in the world who could manage to speak in Malayalam and a 'proper Malayalee' for whom Malayalam was the mother tongue.[643] In addition to foregrounding the above-mentioned circular arguments about 'proper Malayaleeness' through his article, Mayyanatt V. J. Joseph proclaimed in 1908 that the "majority of the inhabitants of Keralam had Malayalam as their mother tongue."[644] Joseph was one among the earliest native writers to delineate the nature of Malayalee identity and its essential connection to the concept of mother tongue along with proclaiming that as far as Malayalam was concerned, the majority of the native castes and communities that inhabited 'Keralam' that he named in the article could make equal claims on the language.[645] He also added that "though the riches of Malayalabhasha, divided among many communities might be tangibly different in form, the fact that all these castes shared the same mother tongue remained to be irrefutable."[646] So, for Joseph, Malayalam

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[642] "Kaccheri Malayalam Kayyezhuthu," (Malayalam Scribal Culture in Courts) *Nazrani Deepika* (September 1, 1890).
[643] Mayyanatt V.J. Joseph, "Malayala Bhashabhivriddhikku Kristhianikali lNinnu Labhichittulla Sahayyangal," (Contributions Made by Christians for the Enrichment of Malayalabhasha) *Bhashaposhini*12, nos.9 & 10 (Medam& Edavam, 1083M.E.- 1908):277- 78.
[644] Ibid., 277.
[645] Ibid.
[646] Ibid.

is the common tongue owned by all who speak it, and all of whom also belong to the land of Kerala; emphasizing the secular credentials of the language was more important for him than going into the details of which among the various communities of the land possessed a larger claim over its riches or capacities.

At the same time, certain transformations that occurred in ways of conceptualizing a language with the passing of time are worth exploring here. The earlier conception of language as 'the shared usage of a specific, named, linguistic medium,' gradually underwent transition to one in which language began to be seen as the marker of one's identity by the end of the 19th century. The accompanying "transition from a vague and never clearly defined relationship between territory and language to the emergence of language as a foundation for the imagination of a new form of community and political identity during the twentieth century"[647] is also notable. The term Malayalam which primarily denoted the Malabar coast and hence a 'region,' and the term 'Malayalabhasha' which was used in the public sphere discussions of the nineteenth century referring to the language of this land no longer had the same distinct meanings attached. The word Malayalam increasingly began to refer to the language in itself whereas its connections to the people, its speakers, was of primacy than its connections to the land. The term Malayalam as well as Malayalabhasha became synonymous and began to denote the language of the people mostly inhabiting a land which was by the early 20th century named as 'Keralam.'

[647] Mitchell, *Language, Emotion and Politics*, 48.

Feminizing the Tongue:

The personification of one's language which resulted in further imaginations of it in the form of a woman was another phenomenon of the early twentieth-century southern India.[648]As discussed in an earlier chapter, the already available genealogical description of the tongues was replete with a vocabulary of 'parenthood', 'offspring', 'sibling' relation etc. since it was derived from the vocabulary of language 'families'. Sumathi Ramaswamy considers this "feminization of the language as…symptomatic of a fundamental re-gendering of culture and community under colonial rule and modernity."[649]Hence, many of the native accounts which followed them also extensively relied on the same feminine model for the language personified.

A speech made by K.C. Keshava Pillai in the Malayala Samajam meeting of Trivandrum College, which later appeared in print in 1908, attempted to sketch the history of the vernacular. In it, Pillai referred to Malayalam as "the youngest sister of all the other languages belonging to the Dravidian family of languages, viz. Tamil, Telung, Karnatakam and Tulu."[650] The following statements in the article mentioned that though Malayalam initially used to have a lot of resemblance to Tamil, since 'she' was nurtured by the 'elder sister' Tamil for a long time, later it chanced upon this younger sister to have an association with Sanskrit, 'the hero'. The marriage between the younger sister Malayalam and the "scintillating, handy bride-groom Sanskrit" was mentioned in the article as a reason for the "gifting of much wealth to the vernacular by the 'groom' including some formal features like rhyme scheme, figures of speech etc." to factors like a rich vocabulary and some philosophical insights.[651]

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[648] Ibid., 18.
[649] Ramaswamy, *Passions of the Tongue*, 121.
[650] K.C. Keshava Pillai, "Bhashakavitha," *Bhashaposhini*12, nos. 7 &8 (Kumbham& Meenam, 1083 M.E.-1908), 193-94.
[651] Ibid., 194.

This ‘life-history’ of Malayalam in which the language was personified as a woman relied on the Dravidian proof as an adoptable model. Though this personified image of the tongue put forward by Pillai opens up the the possibility for the vernacular to possess an older stage where it was completely uninfluenced by Sanskrit, when the ‘helpless youngest sister' was taken care of and 'given protection' by the elder sister Tamil for a long time, it is only her love and marriage with the able and wealthy husband Sanskrit that results in her riches. Krishna Pillai also adds that because of this, "She (Malayalam) even stopped thinking about her own Taravad (the Nayar matrilineal joint family/ the Dravidian family of languages) ...Malayalam has thus got many such riches because of her association with Sanskrit." It can be inferred that while cultural elites like Pillai personified the Bhasha as a woman who was ‘enriched’ by Sanskrit, they were in turn affirming the very association of the Bhasha with Sanskrit as defining the modernity of Malayalam- and consequently of the Malayalee subject, while admitting the fact that there is an underlying Dravidian connection. An important feature of this description is that while “Malayalam” is talked about as a woman belonging to a matrilineal joint family (Nayar Taravad), her marriage and association with Sanskrit is shown to be converting her to a woman who cohabits with her husband for the rest of her life. Thus, the personified image of Malayalam is imagined and presented in the lines of a ‘modern’ Nayar woman who doesn’t leave her “civilized” husband and lives in a new patrilineal family for the rest of her life, after the Nayar family re-organization. Moreover, the narrative intends to say that it is the wealth and ability gifted by the superior Aryan tongue, consequently referring to the ‘modern civilizational’ heritage brought in by the Brahmin intermixing with the Dravidian race that resulted in the refinement and ‘modernity’ of Malayalam and its speakers. The interesting fact is that similar histories about the evolution and development of a ‘modern Malayalee identity’ got reiterated in the coming decades. Dilip Menon illustrates how the Marxist leader E. M. S. Nampoothiripad has also presented the “Brahmins as having provided

the political and cultural cement within a fragmented, primitive society," in *The National Question in Kerala* (1952) and has "argued against the idea of a pristine Dravidian civilization invaded by an Aryan one" in his *Keralam: Malayalikalude Mathrubhoomi* (Kerala: The Motherland of Malayalees, 1948).[652]

Similar feminine imaginings of the tongue, enabling the "bourgeois nationalist discourse of modernity"[653] are also visible in later native accounts about the language. Narratives which projected Malayalam as the legitimate "mother tongue" endowed with historicity and as deserving more attention than Sanskrit began to appear by the next decade. Moorkkoth Kumaran's article which appeared in *Keralachinthamani* in 1911 also told the story of Malayalam, but by throwing light on the socio-historical factors which led to the ascription of an inferior status to the language. His article "Bhashakavikal" (Bhasha Poets) is originally based on a speech which he delivered during the inauguration of a library in Malabar. He opened his speech/article by complaining about "the lack of respect that the people of Malabar, especially from its northern regions had towards their 'mother tongue'" and their "lack of interest and passion in reading books and newspapers."[654] Kumaran also explicated the reason for the negligence shown towards Malayalam by the great scholarly poets from the region. According to him, they considered it as "an inferior tongue while their own works in Sanskrit were well acclaimed across the length and breadth of the Indian subcontinent."[655]After commenting on the attitudes of scholars and Brahmins who debased the Bhasha, he tried to justify the idea that the 'mother tongue' was worthy enough to be respected and promoted since it had a commendable history of its own though Brahmins would never use the language except

[652] Dilip M. Menon, "Being a Brahmin the Marxist Way: E.M.S. Namboodiripad and the Pasts of Kerala," *The Blindness of Insight: Essays on Caste in Modern India* (Pondicherry: Navayana, 2006), 49-58.
[653] Ramaswamy, *Passions of the Tongue*, 121.
[654] Moorkkoth Kumaran, "Bhashakavikal," (Bhasha Poets) *Keralachinthamani* 6, nos.3 & 4 (Kanni& Thulam, 1087M.E.- 1911): 88
[655] Ibid., 88-89.

in cases where they had to speak to their servants and people of lower castes. He supposedly felt that it was the ignorance among his contemporaries about the glorious literary past of the Bhasha that caused the lack of loyalty to the mother tongue since its riches were overshadowed by certain later attitudes of negligence to it. Hence, he tried to remind his readers/audience about a strand of vernacular literature and the poets in the Bhasha whose works supposedly extended back into the B.C.s and were later flourishing on the parallel track to the above-mentioned scholarly Sanskrit compositions.[656]

Kumaran's story about the vernacular and the imagination of the tongue that he puts forward is quite different from Pillai's. His picturization of the vernacular as the respectable 'mother, having a glorious literary past' whose 'riches' were overshadowed by 'later attitudes of negligence' is based on the idea of a pristine and glorious civilization of Dravidians which was invaded by an Aryan race. Besides discussing the works of vernacular poets like Ezhuthachan and Kunjan Nambiar, Moorkkoth Kumaran invited the attention of readers to a list of folk hymns and heroic songs including the Thacholippattu from Malabar and Mavaratam Pattu from Travancore which remained in the field of oral literature. He urged for the need to print those folk literary works in the Bhasha to document the older forms of northern and southern Malayalam,[657] probably because he considered the lack of preserved evidence as reasons for the lack of loyalty and absence of respect for the Bhasha among his contemporaries. Thus, the imaginings of the mother's glorious past by Kumaran, who was a social reformer among the lower caste Tiyyas of Malabar, is also a return in history to the point where a supposedly casteless society existed. A striking feature of his narrative is that it showcased a

[656] Ibid., 89.
[657] Ibid.

'contestatory classicist attitude to language'[658] by mentioning the Brahmin's lack of loyalty to the mother tongue and by attracting the reader's attention to the antiquity of poets and their works in the Bhasha which in turn resulted in raising the vernacular to the status of a classical tongue. The ideal Malayalee identity and society that is imagined through such a narrative about the tongue is one which is free of Aryan/ Sanskritic influence and whose glorious past has been foreshadowed by later acts of negligence on the part of natives. As Anderson has commented on linguistic patriotism "what the eye is to the lover-…language- whatever language history has made his or her mother tongue is to the patriot."[659]

Kairali: The Tongue of Keralam:

A criticism directed at the educated youth which got published in the monthly *Keralakesari* is another instance which shows the growing sentiment of linguistic patriotism that was there among the natives. The essayist had a clear intention to correct the students of 'Keralam' who were 'caught up' in the trench of attraction towards foreign languages.' Hinting at the prevalent lack of loyalty towards the mother tongue among the youngsters, the author of the article M.P. Krishna Iyer mentioned in 1919 that "it is a public secret within the Keralite brotherhood that they just hold a scornful and disrespectful attitude towards Kairali, the mother tongue."[660] The mother tongue embodied as a woman began to be increasingly referred to as Kairali, the language of Kerala by the end of the second decade of the twentieth century. The term Kairali from then onwards stood not only for the tongue but for an evolving cultural milieu denoting a standardized Malayalee identity in general picking up meanings like 'originating

[658] Sumathi Ramaswamy observes that in the context of Tamil, "contestatory classicism reversed Orientalism's claim that the true genius of India lay in its Aryan past." It also shows the Arya- Brahmins as responsible for the end of Golden age. For details see Ramaswamy, *Passions of the Tongue*, 36-46.
[659] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 154.
[660] M.P. Krishna Iyer, "Kairaliyum Keraleeya Vidyarthikalum," (Kairali and the Students of Kerala) *Keralakesari* 4, nos. 5&6 (Dhanu& Makaram, 1094 M.E.- 1919) quoted in A. Indira, "Keralakesari" in *Kedavilakk: Malayalatile Adyakala Masikaparichayam*, (Thrissur: Kerala Sahitya Akademy,2012), 135.

from the land of Kerala'. Moreover, it was the dangerous attraction towards the foreign tongues that was snatching the sons of Kairali away from her, resulting in their disrespectful attitude towards her. Sumathi Ramaswamy's observations about the developing discourse of linguistic patriotism in early twentieth century Tamil Nadu is worth mentioning at this juncture. She states that "English, it was argued, would only turn Tamil speakers (and other Indians) into clerks and accountants; their "mother tongue," however, would transform them into patriots and citizens."[661]

A mapping of the spaces occupied by the mother tongue as distinct from 'foreign' tongues like English and the allocation of the 'private,' 'cultural' and 'national' spaces as the denotations of the mother tongue could bring forth an added sentiment of patriotism and anti-colonial identity associated with it. The anxiety that Iyer expressed in the same article about the consequences of neglecting one's mother tongue went on thus: "if there is a lack of pride about one's mother tongue among these students at a young age, won't it result in a sorry state of affairs for our mother country 'Keralam?'" The interesting fact here is that the above-mentioned narrative projects the role of Kirali, the tongue as primary in making connections between 'a people and their land;' native pride about the tongue and the respect shown to her (Kairali) are shown to be crucial in the betterment of the 'mother-country' (Keralam) too. The need to uphold patriotic sentiments and to showcase loyalty towards one's language (swabhashabhimanam) which was also extendable to having pride related to one's region or nation (swadeshabhimanam) was thus newly connected through the notion of mother tongue. The inherent connection drawn out between revering Kairali and ensuring the goodwill of 'Keralam' was brought through similar feminine images used for land and language. Thus, a personified tongue which had to be respected by a patriot just like he respected his own mother,

[661] Ramaswamy, *Passions of the Tongue*, 57.

along with efforts to be undertaken by him for the betterment of one's country which was also personified as the mother were common themes of early twentieth century public sphere discussions.

Conclusion

Many administrative reports and nationalist accounts about Kerala and literary histories of Malayalam presuppose the presence of a well-defined Malayalee linguistic community that has been existing for centuries. This presumption in itself is based on the primordiality of a well-demarcated geographical territory called 'Keralam,' within which Malayalam as a popular standardized language is considered to have been spoken for centuries. Looking at the connections that have been historically invoked between the Malayalam language and its speakers termed as Malayalees as a 'modern' construct within colonial discourse which simultaneously fixed the territorial contours of 'Keralam' can subvert the above-mentioned popular notions about the antiquity of the Malayalee linguistic identity. In this connection, an attempt to re-view notions like 'territoriality' and 'a unified linguistic community' has been made to consider them as outcomes of a series of socio-political changes. The objective is to re-cognize these concepts as products of individual and community efforts or to view them as the result of the consolidation of certain changes that happened in administrative mechanisms and economic systems over a period of time. A different historical picture of such categories like language, linguistic territory and linguistic community is made available by re-thinking the manifold efforts of 'reform' taken up by missionaries, colonial administrators and a section of natives who lived in Southern India, in the 19th and 20th centuries. A close examination of the interventions of various social actors in the fields of journalism, language teaching and comparative philology as well as the use of print as a technology that is embedded in certain strategies of governmentality when it was used by individuals or groups presents a different picture of how people, languages and cultures were classified by the discourses of colonialism.

This phenomenon calls our attention to the drastic changes brought about in the status and function of the vernacular over a period of over five centuries, from the 15th to 20th

centuries C.E. The transition of the Bhasha from its minimal function i.e., as the medium for revenue record-keeping, to become the language of medieval epic literature during the Bhakti movement was the first major shift. Its further transition from the state of a medium constituting the documentary prose of label inscriptions or a tongue flourishing in the oral narratives of commoners' speech and songs to one which could function as the language of liturgy and devotion was another remarkable step. The most important functional shift under colonialism was caused by the devising of a Biblical prose which was 'closer to common people's speech' by various mission groups and by adopting the same as the language of pedagogy, thereby projecting the Bhasha as emblematic of European faith, science and philosophy.

Apart from the functional changes that the language underwent, the changes in its status which occurred at each of these transformational stages are also noteworthy. They include its transformations from a technical register restricted to record-keeping, from the status of an ethnolect and from a mode of orature to that of a devotional and literary register and into an assortment of dialects/ caste-lects popular among the masses by the 16th and 17th centuries. The introduction of Western philology and its classificatory models identified the Bhasha (read Malayalam) as an important vernacular language among the South Indian tongues. The consequent use of the medium as a label for classifying the people inhabiting that region was the first instance when it was raised to the status of the lingua-franca of the Malabar Coast. It's suitability for disseminating principles of Protestant Christianity that resulted in its transition to the status of a 'print language' made it available as a static register that could be employed as the medium of modern missionary education and as the vehicle for rendering the principles of Western liberal thought. After the establishment of colonial rule, it slowly acquired the status as an official language of administration widely used across the princely states of Travancore

and Cochin and in the Malabar District of the Madras Province towards the end of the 19th century.

The freezing of dialectal differences through the establishment of a uniform orthographic pattern was achieved by the adoption of the Grantham script as a standard form while it transitioned into a print language. Thus, the printed Bhasha which was often made available as the re-generated form of common people's speech was pitted against a more Sanskritized formal register of the elite classes and castes from the very beginning, and thus it was embedded in 'the colonial reform discourse.' At the same time, its orthography, phonology and even to a limited extent, its morphology was also dependent on the Sanskritized register, owing to the adoption of a Grantham based script for printing it.

The Bhasha acquired the status of a 'modern tongue' from the second half of the 19th century when the printed vernacular was used as an instrument to translate European modernity and when it was subsequently used by the native literate Malayalees to define their own 'modernities,' and in their endeavours to experiment with models of 'a modern Malayalee subjecthood.' The inauguration of journalistic efforts by the indigenous elites in Malayalam by the 1870s and the publication of essays and literary works about the new Malayalam language and literature that was in the making by the 1880s marked this era of change. The consequent discourses about 'reform' that took place in the Bhasha and were at times directed towards the 'Bhasha' itself as its object were thus crucial in defining not only the 'modernity' of the Bhasha, but also in defining the language that was suitable for shaping a modern Malayalee subjectivity. The currently existing Malayalee linguistic identity which brings together people within a well demarcated territory on the lines of language is based on such recent imaginations of a community cutting across religious and caste differences and one that has clearly drawn out

politico-physical boundaries. It also relies upon the presence of a standardized language which ensures mutual intelligibility in transactions among the speakers of the language.

The role of translations in bringing a new prose and a standardized literary register in the Bhasha that suited the utilitarian goals of colonial modernity is noteworthy in this connection. The missionary and colonial translations of the 19th century focussed on cultivating a taste for useful knowledges in prose and in shaping a new canon for the vernacular which could fulfil this goal. Numerous Shakespeare translations and translations of knowledge text books from English that appeared in Malayalam during the time were endeavours in the direction of reforming the 'native tastes' and updating their 'scientific temper' according to the standards of that time. The indigenous debates about the need for devising a new Malayalam also were based on the rudimentary prose models of the vernacular in print which evolved through these translated works published in missionary periodicals and textbooks.

The proclaimed goal of most Malayalam periodicals that were established by the indigenous cultural elites was to compensate for the lack of books in Malayalam which could impart knowledge, intellectual progress and entertainment to the natives. Translating classics from Sanskrit, English and other European languages was considered as the immediate step to 'make good the lack' of works in the Bhasha. A series of highly Sanskritized translations, like Kerala Varma's *Shakuntalam* rendering from Sanskrit to *bhasha* and similar retellings of Sanskrit kavyas, attakkathas and epics that were published by literary stalwarts like Udayavarma Thampuran appeared in the 1880s and 1890s. These translations which were in the mixed form of verse and prose were to form the modern literary beginnings of Malayalam. This neo-classical trend which depended on a Sanskrit textual tradition was opposed by educated elites like Varghese Mappila who labelled such works as inadequate for the needs of

the time. The era of translations from English into the Bhasha began with Mappila's and Chidambara Vadyar's Shakespeare translations in 1882 and 1894 and was followed by Kumaran Asan's translation of Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia* and Pilo Paul's translation of Johnson's *Rasselas*, both in 1913. Parallel to these new translations of novels, plays and modern lyrical poetry into the Bhasha, attempts to create 'original' works in the vernacular modelled on Western genres of writing were also underway.

The discourse of reform which was soaring high in the Malayalee public sphere across the turn of 20th century not only resulted in the re-examination of prevailing social institutions and cultural norms but also led to discussions on reforming Malayalam and to make it suitable for the creation of a new literary sensibility. Various native attempts at translating European modernity into the vernacular context as well as efforts towards defining an indigenous strand of modernity emanating from discussions on reforming the language culminated in the introduction of new Western literary genres like the novel in the vernacular towards the end of the 19th century. The introduction of new ideas of reform necessitated the adoption of new literary forms in a language which could act as the instrument of reform. Further adoption of the Bhasha as the language of 'modern Malayalee subjectivity' constituted by the shaping of a 'simplified,' 'accessible' and 'useful narrative prose' in it was an important feature of its 'literary modernity.' This led to the writing and publication of the first short stories and essays in the vernacular by the Malayalee cultural elites in the newly established literary journals which was followed by the publication of a series of novels that established the long narrative in prose as an acceptable literary model in the Bhasha. O. Chandu Menon who worked as a sub-judge in Calicut stated his reasons for writing his novel *Indulekha* in the letter that he wrote to the first translator of his novel, S. W. Dumergue. In it he mentioned that his aims were:

> to create a taste amongst my Malayalee readers, not conversant with English…
> finally- to contribute my mite[sic] towards the improvement of Malayalam

> literature which I regret to observe is fast dying out by disuse as well as by abuse. The book is written generally in the style of Malayalam which I speak at home with such Sanskrit words as I might use in conversation with an educated Malayalee.[662]

Apart from using the Bhasha-novel to render and inculcate 19th century English tastes among his fellow Malayalee readers, Chandu Menon intended to improve Malayalam literature by writing the novel in 'the ordinary spoken Malayalam' which he used at home. According to him, while closing off the gap between the spoken form of the tongue and the written/ literary style constituted the key 'to improve Malayalam,' using a few Sanskrit words which were used by educated Malayalees in conversations were also permissible. This urge to reform the language was driven by the principle of 'universal accessibility' of texts which had its basis in the new conceptions of a 'public,' referring to the newly literate Malayalee reading public in the making. Thus, a 'reform of language' in order to translate a new taste and literary sensibility into it was an important objective of literary compositions as far as many members of the new middle class were concerned. These 'modern' discourses about the vernacular, thus replete with efforts to establish the relation between people and the languages they spoke projected the printed versions of the spoken tongue as models of the reformed language, which later became emblematic of an expanding 'reading public in Malayalam.'

This ongoing effort to transfer the qualities of the spoken tongue to the language of print was paralleled by the effort made in the opposite direction to impose the standardizing powers of print on the spoken language. The discourses about the 'language of reform' that were widespread in the era of socio-political reform were thus searching for a standardized tongue for a 'modern Malayalee subject' who was evolving through multiple discourses of

[662] O. Chandu Menon, *Indulekha: A Novel from Malabar*, trans. S. W. Dumergue (Calicut: Mathrubhumi Printing and Publishing Company, 1890), xvii.

reform. Detailing on the role of a lexicon in bringing about reform of the language, a 1906 article which was published in *Keralan* explained:

> What constitutes reform in this case? The feature of reform is to bring those words which lay astray without following any rule, from a situation of chaos to one of order. Instead of this, if a separate rule is derived for each mode of occurrence, the Bhasha cannot attain a unitary form. The objective of sciences is also to bring this above-mentioned order.[663]

The definition of reform as an effort to bring chaos over order is striking here. This emphasis on the principles of scientific order, unitary form etc. is in fact a call for certain standardized universal models. This urge to have universal classificatory models and to freeze the specificities inherent in individual modes of occurrence is itself the trait of the 'modern,' which began to be seen as applicable for words, languages and even for people-groups. Therefore, the reform of language which constituted the reform of its speakers stressed on a 'uniformity of signs' ranging from the ordering of word-forms and meaning patterns to ordering populations under neatly compartmentalized linguistic labels. After Chandu Menon's *Indulekha* was published, numerous efforts of a similar kind aimed at popularizing the reformed tongue led to a proliferation of printed literary works in Malayalam. Hence, the multiplicity of the spoken varieties which got into print, thus violating the principle of 'modern scientific order' and the notions of 'fixity and uniformity of the sign' had to be arrested. Therefore, it can be inferred that 'the language of reform' which could act as the harbinger of 'modernity' for the new Malayalee self was also to be based on the principle of standardization; or in other words, a standardized modern Malayalee self that is based on a fixed, uniform system of signs was to be created through 'this language of reform.'

[663] "Chila Prayogabhedangal," (Certain Differences in Usage) *Keralan* 3, no.4 (Midhunam, 1082 M.E.- 1906): 51.

It can be observed that the discourse of language-reform was constituted thus by opinions about both the ‘reform of language’ and about the ‘language of reform’ which were the two opposing forces that constituted the ‘modernity of Malayalam language.’ The multiple printed versions of the spoken tongue that acted as models of the reformed language and which were seen to be emblematic of an expanding Malayalee reading public could not become capable of interpellating a standardized modern Malayalee self. Therefore, the impetus of the 20th century debates which focussed on devising the standard literary tongue was to install the models of a standardized modern Malayalee self and popularize it as the identity marker of an expanding Malayalee reading public. The notion of the Malayalee linguistic identity that was evolving by the 20th century, like most other modern linguistic identities, was one which had to rest on the idea of the speaker of this standard printed language, who in turn happened to be the standardized Malayalee subject of reform created by the discourses of modernity, and one who is a representative of the larger public of Malayalee readers. Hence, modern Malayaleeness was predicated on the standard printed Malayalam that was etched out of the spoken tongues of those English educated elites in the literary sphere like Chandu Menon, and it was to be an admixture of the intimate registers of their homes and the more Sanskritized formal register of their elite-class conversations. Thus, by 1920s, the differing conceptions of ‘modernity’ which varied across castes, religions and classes began to consolidated into a modern singular political identity and a nascent nationalism based on the printed language which gradually led to the imagining of a territorial unity and nationhood by the 1950s.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that though Ms**. Niveditha K (08HAPT06) is a** 2008 batch student, has published and presented the following papers and has passed the following courses in 2009 as suggested by the Doctoral Committee in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** in **Translation Studies** from the University of Hyderabad and has carried out research work under my supervision. I am issuing this certificate as the system of issuing Marks Cards was not a practice in 2009.

A. Publications

1. Kalarikkal, Niveditha. "Mediating Cultures, Languages and Confronting the 'Other': Ethnographic Writings and Inter-lingual Translations" In *Vaagartha: A Festschrift to Padmakar R. Dadegaonkar*, edited by Shivarama Padikkal and Tariq Khan, 180-89. Hyderabad: CALTS, University of Hyderabad, 2012.

2. Kalarikkal, Niveditha. "Malayalam, Malayalee, Malayaleeness: Glancing Back to the Early Malayalee Public Sphere in Print" In Folklore: Arivatayalangal. Edited by C. R. Rajagopalan, 44-53. Kannur: Kerala Folklore Akademy, 2015.

3. Kalarikkal, Niveditha. "Fixity of the 'Other': Post-Coloniality and Difference in M.G. Vassanji's Novel *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall* and Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger"* In *Critical Perspectives on the Post- 1980 Indian Novel in English*, 184-93. Jaipur: Y King Publishers, 2016.

B. Presented papers in the following Conferences:

1. Niveditha, Kalarikkal. “Imagining the Tongue, Language Debates in Colonial South India: Transitions and Interfaces” In RAWCON 2012, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad.

2. Niveditha, Kalarikkal. “Historicity and Il/legitimacy: The Ideology of Identity Narratives in Colonial Kerala” In PLTL 2012 ed. by Dr. G.N. Shinde & Mr. S.B Mirza, Feb 2012.

C. Further the student has audited and passed the following courses towards the fulfilment of the coursework requirement for Ph.D. in 2010.

Sl. No.	Title of Courses	Credits
1	Research Methodology (CALTS)	4
2	Culture and Communication (Department of Communication)	4
3	Introduction to Critical Theory (CCL)	4

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Mediating Cultures, Languages and Confronting the 'Other': Ethnographic Writings and Inter-lingual Translations

Niveditha K.

Abstract

Two different genres of writing, least identified as possessing any mutual resemblance are kept side by side, to look into the underlying signified of culture present in both. Ethnographic writing as a product of extensive field-work done by an ethnographer to describe cultures, peoples, their customs, beliefs and behaviours is often viewed upon as the outcome of a scientific and systematic research. So also is its mother discipline, anthropology, endowed with such a methodology which is drawn out to produce 'objective' and 'realistic' accounts of the 'unknown'/ 'Other'. Translations between languages irrespective of their classifications as poetry, travel writing, social theory, or text books of medicine are tested against scales of fidelity, originality and by theories of equivalence. The medium through which an ethnographer makes an 'alien culture' comprehensible, and the one with which a translator narrates is the same, so also is the nature of transaction which takes place in both these tasks. The translator who unlocks the meanings embedded in the source text and the ethnographer who treats language as a 'key to culture' use 'language' as a medium to depict 'culture', always the culture of the 'Other' to his/her readers. Each language being a product of a specific culture, when used as a tool to illustrate details of another culture would in fact create novel representations and images, which in turn end up in creating new identities. Here, the translator and the ethnographer face the interference of concepts from his/her language and culture, as a pertaining intrusion which cannot be warded off forever. The paper tries to draw out the theoretical and methodological trajectories through which both these above-said activities of representation have passed through and tries to figure out the differences in perceiving 'language' in these

junctures of shift, since approach towards language is a decisive factor to be examined in questions related to representation.

The age-old urge to represent the 'Other' and the ethical issues related to such an act of representation has always been a matter of great concern and has often become the nucleus of many debates. Ethnographies and translations looked upon as pieces of or acts of representation are bound by similar ethical parameters in their judgment. Ethnography and translation though perceived as entirely different kinds of activities and fostered by different disciplines, lacking homogeneity at a superficial glance, always work together when examined for the relations of power that constitute these disciplines. Not only do they create identities, they play a crucial role in the re-telling of history, thereby leading to the origination of multiple discourses. The irrefutable connectedness of the birth of these endeavours (within their respective disciplines) with the project of colonialism also binds them and the link thence continues in terms of the similarities in the theoretical and methodological trajectories through which both of the above-said activities of representation have passed through.

On Representation and Faithfulness: Positivism and the Universal Subject

Ethnographic writings which are products of intensive field work and inter-lingual translations involving contiguous or distant languages are bound together by the underlying signified of culture which is commonly present in both. Both these genres of writing are tested often against standards of fidelity and originality, though it happens in slightly varied forms in each case. We often come across criticisms of translated texts which try to judge the degrees of faithfulness of the text to its original, whereas ethnographic accounts are supposed to be crystal clear representations of the cultures, peoples and beliefs they tend to describe. The fact is that ethnographies as well as translations have to confront the same question, which is centred on the issue of representation.

Malayalam, Malayalee, Malayaleeness: Glancing Back to the Early Malayalee Public Sphere in Print

Niveditha Kalrikkal,
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"Print released great psychic and social energies by breaking the individual out of the traditional group while providing a model of how to add individual to individual in massive agglomeration of power."[1]

-Marshall McLuhan

The technology of print reached Kerala's soil as early as the 16th century. The Portuguese traders and the Jesuit missionaries who reached Kerala in the following centuries took the initiative to print the first book in Malayalam, *Samkshepa Vedartham* (1772)[2] which dealt with the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. The advent of protestant missionaries belonging to BMS, LMS and the CMS and establishing of new printing presses for the purpose of proselytization resulted in the spreading of the printed word much easier. Most of the early printed books were either

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This is to certify that Ms./~~Mr.~~ Niveditha. K [UoH] presented a paper titled Imagining the Tongue: Language Debates in Colonial South India. in the three-day National Students' Conference, RAW.CON 2012, held during Sep. 25th-27th 2012 at the **Centre for Comparative Literature**, University of Hyderabad.

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of Centre for Comparative Literature & Translation Studies, C.U of Gujarat

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Print, Colonialism and the Early Malayalee Public Sphere: Discourses of Language Reform and Linguistic Nationalism (1820-1920)

by Niveditha K

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